Transnational Democracy: Theories and Prospects

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**Introduction**

Democratic theory (and practice), notes Shapiro, has always appeared ‘...impotent when faced with questions about its own scope’ (Shapiro 1999,p1). Binary oppositions between the public and the private, the domestic and the international have been central to controversies concerning the proper limits to the democratic project. Radical critiques of modern liberal democracy, for instance, have advocated both the widening and deepening of the democratic order to embrace the private spheres of the household and the workplace (Held, 1996). Yet, until comparatively recently, democratic theorists rarely ventured beyond the state since prevailing orthodoxy presumed a categorical distinction between the moral realm of the sovereign political community and the amoral realm of the anarchical society; the domestic and international arenas respectively (Connolly 1991; Walker 1991). In effect, theorists of modern democracy tended to bracket the anarchical society whilst theorists of international relations tended to bracket democracy. Of course, there were exceptions. Classical liberal internationalism, expressed in the ideas of Bentham, Woodrow Wilson, and proponents of functionalism, such as Mitrany, advocated a more democratic international order (Mitrany 1975; Mitrany 1975). But, for the most part, it is only in the post Cold War era that the historically estranged literatures of international relations theory and democratic theory have begun to exhibit a shared fascination with the idea of democracy beyond borders, that is...
transnational (or global) democracy (Held 1995; Clark 1999). This ‘transnational turn’, as it may be described, articulates a profoundly significant shift in thinking about the modern democratic project which deserves serious critical scrutiny.

In contributing to that critical scrutiny this chapter commences with a discussion of the factors which have precipitated this ‘transnational turn’. This establishes the context for taking seriously the literature on transnational democracy. In surveying this literature section II identifies different accounts of transnational democracy rooted in distinctive traditions of democratic thought. Critical reflection on these four contemporary re-imaginings of democracy – liberal-internationalism, radical democratic pluralism, cosmopolitanism, and deliberative democracy – raises fundamental questions about the desirability and possibility of transnational democracy. These issues are addressed in section III. Responding to these sceptical arguments section IV delivers a robust defense of the idea of transnational democracy. Finally, section V considers the prospects for the transnational democratic project and reflects on the plausibility of the four very different re-imaginings of democracy elaborated in section II.

Globalization and Transnational Democracy

The burgeoning literature on transnational democracy has to be set in the context of several contemporary developments: an intensification of
globalization, the Third Wave of global democratization and the rise of transnational social movements. These interrelated developments – the significance of which is contested – have encouraged reflection upon the conditions and possibilities for effective democracy. Economic globalization, many argue, has exacerbated the tension between democracy, as a territoriality rooted system of rule, and the operation of global markets and transnational networks of corporate power. In a world in which even the most powerful governments appear impotent when confronted by the gyrations of global markets or the activities of transnational corporations the efficacy of national democracy is called into question. For if, as Sandel observes, governments have lost the capacity to manage transnational forces in accordance with the expressed preferences of their citizens, the very essence of democracy, namely self-governance is decidedly compromised (Sandel 1996). Moreover, in seeking to promote or regulate the forces of globalization, through mechanisms of global and regional governance, states have created new layers of political authority which have weak democratic credentials and stand in an unambiguous relationship to existing systems of national accountability. Under these conditions it is no longer clear, to use Dahl’s classic formulation, ‘who governs?’ For instance, in the midst of the South Korean general election in 1997, just following the East Asian crash, both candidates for the Presidency were requested by the IMF to sign a confidential declaration to abide by the conditions of its proposed financial
rescue package, irrespective of the election outcome. In an era in which public and private power is manifested and exercised on a transnational, or even global scale, a serious reappraisal of the prospects for democracy is overdue.

This rethinking of democracy has also been encouraged by the global diffusion of liberal democracy as a system of political rule. In comparison with the early twentieth century democracy – and liberal representative democracy at that – has emerged as the dominant system of national rule across the globe – at least in a formal sense (Potter and et.al 1997). Putting aside Fukuyama’s misconceived triumphalism, whatever the causes of this Third Wave, democracy has become an almost universal political standard. Of course, for many new democracies the aspiration and political rhetoric far exceeds the realization of effective democracy. While public disenchantment with elected politicians and the capacity of democratic governments to deal with many of the enduring problems – from inequality to pollution – confronted by modern societies suggest that all is not well within the old democracies. Despite such failings, both old and new democracies in particular have become increasingly sensitive to the weak democratic credentials of existing structures of global and regional governance, the more so as the actions of such bodies directly impinges on their citizens. As democratic states have come to constitute a majority within global institutions the pressures to make such bodies more transparent and
accountable have increased (Governance 1995). Somewhat ironically, many new democracies which have been subject to strictures from the IMF and World Bank about the requirements of good governance are now campaigning for similar principles and practices to be applied in these citadels of global power. But how to combine effective international institutions with democratic practices remains, according to Keohane, amongst the most intractable of contemporary international political problems (Keohane 1998).

One powerful response to this problem has come from the agencies of civil society. The global associational revolution, expressed in the enormous expansion of NGO activity and transnational networks of advocacy groups, labour, professional and religious associations amongst others, has created the infrastructure of a transnational civil society (Matthews 1997; Rosenau 1997; Boli and Thomas 1999). Although at present considerably unrepresentative of the world’s peoples the agencies of transnational civil society have come to be instrumental in articulating the concerns of citizens and collectivities in international fora (Boli, Loya et al. 1999). But the democratic credentials of transnational civil society remain seriously ambiguous. Whether transnational civil society is a significant force for the democratisation of world order or simply another arena through which the

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1 Of course the idea of global or transnational civil society remains contested. Although taken here to refer to the transnational sphere of voluntary associations the distinctions between state and non-state, non-profit and corporate sectors is extremely blurred. Moreover, whether the sphere of economic relations is to be excluded from conceptions of civil society remains a significant point of contention between Marxist and liberal conceptions. See (Keane 1998). Should exclude the economic sphere.
privileged and powerful maintain their global hegemony remains a matter of contention (Wapner 1996; Weiss and Gordenker 1996; Burbach, Nunez et al. 1997; Boli and Thomas 1999).

Academic reflections upon the normative principles and potential institutional forms of transnational democracy thus speak to the concerns and interests of many diverse forces concerned about the democratic credentials of existing systems of global governance. Transparency, accountability and representation are terms which have become the new mantras of those pressing for the reform of global institutions: from the United Nations to the IMF and World Bank (General 2000; Summers 2000 (April 16th)). Such political and diplomatic rhetoric, laudable as it may be, nevertheless tends to lack much specificity. Within the academic literature on globalization and democracy, however, a substantive conversation has been joined concerning the normative and institutional foundations of democracy beyond the state. The result is the beginnings of a theoretical debate about what transnational democracy might mean.

**Theorizing Transnational Democracy**

Within the burgeoning literature on transnational democracy, four distinctive normative theories can be discerned, namely: liberal-internationalism; radical pluralist democracy; cosmopolitan democracy; and deliberative democracy. Although a somewhat crude typology, which is open to challenge
on a number of grounds, it provides nevertheless a simple mapping of a complex field in so far as it identifies a clustering of arguments. Typologies always court the danger of caricature for it is evident that individual theorists tend to draw upon a range of democratic traditions. In effect these four clusters can therefore be regarded as ideal types: that is general syntheses of normative arguments and theories which reflect a shared conception of the fundamental principles which define transnational democracy. As such this typology provides a basis for a systematic analysis of what is at stake in the debate about transnational democracy.

Common to all of these accounts is an attempt to give meaning to the idea of transnational democracy and to clarify the normative principles, ethical ideals and institutional conditions which are necessary for its effective realization. Each account is rooted in a political cosmopolitanism which seeks to prescribe general principles, structures and practices essential to the construction of a more humane world order in which peoples needs come to take precedence over the interests of states and their geo-political machinations (Hutchings 1999, p35 and p153). Cosmopolitanism, whether of a political or moral kind, is therefore to be distinguished from internationalism which, commencing from the communitarian premiss that states constitute the principal moral and political foundations of world order

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2 Radical democratic pluralism and deliberative democracy tend to reject a moral cosmopolitanism in so far as they dispute the existence of universal moral principles of action which apply irrespective of cultural
Finally, these four accounts share a belief that, under conditions of contemporary globalization, transnational democracy is a necessary, desirable and politically feasible project: in other words that democracy is to be valued over alternative systems of authoritative rule. Leaving this presumption to one side for the moment, what distinguishes these different conceptions of democracy beyond borders?

**Liberal-Internationalism**

In its earliest manifestations liberal-internationalism presented a radical challenge to the prevailing realpolitik vision of world order: that is of might as right. From Locke, through Bentham and Mill, to Woodrow Wilson the essence of the liberal-internationalist project has been the construction of an international order based on the rule of law and cooperation between states (Doyle 1999). Other strands of liberalism, such as the commercial pacifism of Paine, Cobden and Bright amongst others, considered trade and international economic interdependence would eventually create a world in which states would eventually wither away (Hinsley 1967; Carr 1981). As Long argues, however, contemporary variants of liberal-internationalism have lost this radical edge promoting instead the reform, rather than transformation, of world order (Long 1995). Although a liberal radicalism of kinds survives, in

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or social differences. Thus Hutchings makes an important distinction between moral and political cosmopolitanism which is followed here. See also on these issues (Cochran 1999).
the guise of orthodox economic neo-liberalism, it is not surprisingly deeply antagonistic to notions of global governance and transnational democracy advocating instead a world of unfettered global markets.

Given the prominence (within international relations theory) of liberal-institutionalism - concerned as it is primarily with illuminating the rational calculus of international cooperation - the question of transnational democracy tends to be conceived principally in procedural terms such as creating more representative, transparent and accountable international institutions (Falk 1995) (Governance 1995). Keohane, for instance, understands democracy at the international level as a form of 'voluntary pluralism under conditions of maximum transparency' (Keohane 1998). A more pluralistic world order, in this view, is also a more democratic world order. Underlying this philosophy is an attachment to some of the central principles of classical pluralism: an emphasis upon political and civil rights, representation through organised interests, the diffusion of power, limited public power and rule by consensus. In effect, it advocates the reconstruction of aspects of liberal-pluralist democracy at the international level shorn of the requirements of electoral politics. In place of parties competing for votes, a vibrant transnational civil society channels its demands to the decision makers whilst in turn, also making them accountable for their actions. Accordingly, 'accountability will be enhanced not only by chains of official responsibility but by the requirement of
transparency. Official actions, negotiated amongst state representatives in international organizations, will be subject to scrutiny by transnational networks (Keohane 1998). International institutions thus become arenas within which the interests of both states and the agencies of civil society are articulated. Furthermore, they function as key political structures through which consensus is negotiated and collective decisions legitimated. This represents a largely procedural view of democracy as a technique for taking and legitimising public decisions.

Although other significant articulations of the liberal-internationalist position exist, amongst the most well known being the report of the Commission on Global Governance, they share with the above a common commitment to more representative, responsive and accountable international governance (Governance 1995; Rosenau 1997). Such ideas also tend to dominate current thinking about the reform of global institutions, from the IMF to the WTO. This is not surprising given that liberal-internationalism reflects the aspirations and values of the Western states and elites which dominate the institutions of global governance. But, as Falk argues, it is a philosophy which offers a restricted and somewhat technocratic view of transnational democracy (Falk 1995). As with liberal-pluralism more generally it fails to acknowledge that inequalities of power tend to make democracy the captive of powerful vested interests. Critiques of classical pluralism, from those of Dahl to Lindblom, have recognised how corporate
power distorts the democratic process (McLennan 1989). But the insights of neo-pluralism find little expression in the liberal-internationalist literature which tends to overlook structural inequalities of power in the global system and, in particular, the power imbalances between the agencies of transnational civil society and global capital. In making ‘naked preference into the motor of social life’ pluralism – at whatever level – tends to expose ‘all weakly placed individuals to the naked preferences of the stronger’ (Pettit 1997, p. 205). Advocating transparency and accountability is insufficient by itself to combat such inequalities of access and influence. While the principles of transparency and accountability are necessary to the achievement of transnational democracy without mechanisms for ensuring more effective representation of the world’s peoples in the political process they remain decidedly insufficient for its substantive realization. In this respect institutional tinkering is unlikely to resolve the democratic deficit which afflicts global governance. Despite acknowledging the significance of transnational civil society the liberal-internationalist account remains singularly Western and state-centric in so far as transnational democracy is conceived effectively in terms of enhancing the transparency and accountability of international institutions to national governments.

**Radical Democratic Pluralism**
In her overview of political cosmopolitanism Hutchings identifies radical democratic pluralism as a project which eschews the reformism of liberal-internationalism in favour of direct forms of democracy and self-governance alongside the creation of alternative structures of governance from the global through local levels (Hutchings 1999,p16ff). It rejects vigorously the liberal-reformist position because existing structures of global governance are considered to involve a structural privileging of the interests of a wealthy and powerful cosmocracy whilst excluding the needs and interests of much of humanity. Advocates of radical pluralist democracy, including amongst others Burnheim, Connolly, Patamoki and Walker are therefore concerned with the normative foundations of a ‘new politics’ which involves the empowerment of individuals and communities in the context of world of globalizing power structures (Burnheim 1985; Burnheim 1986; Connolly 1991; Walker 1991; Burnheim 1995; Walker 1995; Patomaki 2000). It represents a substantive view of democracy in so far as its advocates are concerned with the creation of ‘good communities’ based upon normative principles of equality, active citizenship, the promotion of the public good, humane governance and harmony with the natural environment. This is a normative vision which ‘represents something of a cocktail of elements of post-modernist, Marxist and civic republican democratic theory’(Hutchings 1999,p166-7). It seeks to adapt notions of direct democracy and self-governance to fit with an epoch in which transnational and global power
structures regulate the conditions of daily existence of communities and households across the world.

Radical democratic pluralism is essentially a ‘bottom up’ theory of the democratisation of world order. The new democratic life politics, as opposed to the old politics of emancipation, is articulated primarily through the multiplicity of critical social movements, such as environmental, women and peace movements, which challenge the authority of states and international structures as well as the hegemony of particular (liberal) conceptions of the ‘political’. In ‘politicising’ existing global institutions and practices, not to mention challenging the conventional boundaries of the political (the foreign/domestic, public/private, society/nature binary divides) critical social movements are conceived as agents of a ‘new progressive politics’. Such a politics builds on the experiences of critical social movements which demonstrate that one of the ‘... great fallacies of political theory is the assumption that a centralized management of power ... is necessary to assure political order’ (Burnheim 1986). There is no reason therefore to presume that democracy and democratic legitimacy have to be grounded in territorially delimited units such as nation-states. Rather ‘real’ democracy is to be found in the juxtaposition of a multiplicity of self-governing and self-organizing collectivities constituted on diverse spatial scales – from the local to the global (Connolly 1991). The spatial reach of these self-governing communities is defined by the geographical scope of the collective problems or activities.
they seek to manage, although there is a strong presumption in favour of the subsidiarity principle. Transnational democracy, in this account, is defined by the existence of a plurality of diverse, overlapping and spatially differentiated self-governing ‘communities of fate’ and multiple sites of power without the need for ‘sovereign’ or centralized structures of authority. It identifies, in the political practices of critical social movements, immanent tendencies towards the transcendence of the sovereign territorial state as the fundamental unit of democracy.

Radical democratic pluralism reflects a strong attachment to theories of direct democracy and participatory democracy (Held 1996). It also draws upon neo-marxist critiques of liberal democracy. For democracy is conceived as inseparable from creating the conditions for effective participation and self-governance including, amongst other things, the achievement of social and economic equality. Furthermore it connects to the civic republican tradition in so far as it considers the realization of individual freedom has to be ‘...embedded within and sustained by a [strong] sense of political community and of the common good’ (Barns 1995).

To the extent that advocates of radical pluralist democracy argue that the effective conditions for the realization of transnational democracy require the construction of alternative forms of global governance it is subversive of the existing principles of world order. Amongst its critics it is precisely this
rejection of the constitution of world order that is problematic (Held 1995; Hutchings 1999,p178). In challenging the principle of the rule of law in global politics and rejecting the principle of the sovereign political community the very conditions of democracy, it could be argued, are decidedly compromised. Without, for instance, some conception of sovereignty it is difficult to envisage how the competing claims of a plurality of communities, even within the same borders, might be reconciled short of force. Furthermore, in the absence of the present rather imperfect liberal world order – embodying (to varying degrees) the principles of the rule of law and normative constraints on the exercise of organized violence – it might be argued there is no secure basis for constructing and nurturing transnational democracy. Territorial democracy, history suggests, has only thrived in circumstances where the rule of law exists and political violence is absent. A compelling critique of the radical pluralist argument might therefore be found in its ambivalence towards the very conditions – the rule of law and sovereignty – which make democracy (at whatever level) possible.

Cosmopolitan Democracy

By comparison with the radical pluralist account, cosmopolitan democracy pays particular attention to the institutional and political conditions which are necessary to the conduct of effective democratic governance within, between and across states. In its most sophisticated formulation Held
develops an account of cosmopolitan democracy which, building upon the existing principles of the liberal international order (e.g. the rule of law and human rights), involves the construction of a new global constitutional settlement in which democratic principles are firmly entrenched (Held 1995). Advocating a ‘double democratisation’ of political life the advocates of cosmopolitan democracy seek to reinvigorate democracy within states by extending democracy to the public realm between and across states. In this respect transnational democracy and territorial democracy are conceived as mutually reinforcing rather than conflicting principles of political rule. Cosmopolitan democracy in effect seeks ‘a political order of democratic associations, cities and nations as well as of regions and global networks’ (Held 1995, p.234).

Central to this model is the principle of democratic autonomy, namely the ‘entitlement to autonomy within the constraints of community’ (Held 1995, p.156). This is to be assured through the requirements of a cosmopolitan democratic law, that is, law which establishes ‘...powers and constraints, and rights and duties, which transcend the claims of nation-states’ (Held, McGrew et al. 1999, p.70). Accordingly, the principle of democratic autonomy depends upon ‘... the establishment of an international community of democratic states and societies committed to upholding a democratic public law both within and across their own boundaries: a cosmopolitan democratic community’ (Held 1995 p.229). This does not presume a requirement for a
world government, nor a federal super-state, but rather the establishment of a ‘... a global and divided authority system – a system of diverse and overlapping power centres shaped and delimited by democratic law’ (Held 1995, p.234). Rather than a hierarchy of political authority, from the local to the global, cosmopolitan democracy involves a heterarchical arrangement. Conceptually this lies between federalism and, the much looser arrangements implied by the notion of, confederalism – what some have referred to as the Philadelphian system (Deudney 1996). For it requires ‘... the subordination of regional, national and local ‘sovereignties’ to an overarching legal framework, but within this framework associations may be self-governing at diverse levels’ (Held 1995, p.234). The entrenchment of cosmopolitan democracy therefore involves a process of reconstructing the existing framework of global governance.

Essential to the realization of this democratic reconstruction, it is argued, is the requirement that democratic practices be embedded more comprehensively ‘... within communities and civil associations by elaborating and reinforcing democracy from ‘outside’ through a network of regional and international agencies and assemblies that cut across spatially delimited locales’ (Held 1995, p.237). Only through such mechanisms will those global sites and transnational networks of power which presently escape effective national democratic control be brought to account so establishing the political conditions befitting the realization of democratic autonomy.
Cosmopolitan democracy represents an enormously ambitious agenda for reconfiguring the constitution of global governance and world order. Its genealogy is eclectic in so far as it claims significant continuities with a variety of traditions of democratic thought. Whilst it draws considerable inspiration from modern theories of liberal democracy it is also influenced by critical theory, theories of participatory democracy and civic republicanism. It is distinguished from liberal-internationalism by its radical agenda and a scepticism towards the primacy of state-centric and procedural notions of democracy. Whilst accepting the important role of progressive transnational social forces it nevertheless differentiates itself from radical pluralist democracy through its attachment to the centrality of the rule of law and constitutionalism as necessary conditions for the establishment of a more democratic world order. But the idea of cosmopolitan democracy is not without its critics.

Sandel considers the ethic which informs notions of cosmopolitan democracy notions of that ‘... is flawed, both as a moral ideal and as a public philosophy for self-government in our time’ (Sandel 1996, p.342). This, he argues, is because at the core of cosmopolitanism is a liberal conception of the individual which neglects the ways in which individuals, their interests and values, are ‘constructed’ by the communities of which they are members. Accordingly, democracy can only thrive by first creating a democratic community with a common civic identity. Whilst globalization does create a
sense of universal connectedness it does not, in Brown's view, generate an equivalent sense of community based upon shared values and beliefs (Brown 1995). Nor, it can be argued, do theorists of cosmopolitan democracy deliver a convincing account of how the ethical and cultural resources necessary for its effective realization are to be generated. It can also be criticised for a kind of top-down approach in which re-constructing the constitution of global governance along more democratic lines is taken as key to realizing transnational democracy. Such faith in a new constitution for global governance, however, overlooks the inherent tensions which exist between the democratic impulse and the logic of constitutional constraints upon what the demos may do (Saward 1998). Nor, as Thompson identifies, is it necessarily clear how, within this multilayered system of global governance, jurisdictional conflicts between different layers of political authority are to be reconciled or adjudicated by democratic means let alone how accountability in such a system can be made more effective (Thompson 1999). This raises important issues of consent and legitimacy. As Thompson argues the problem is one of 'many majorities' such that 'no majority has an exclusive and overarching claim to democratic legitimacy' (Thompson 1999). Furthermore, he claims that cosmopolitan democracy will only serve to intensify the enduring tensions between democracy and the protection of individual rights since rights claims may be pursued through international authorities so challenging the legitimacy of democratically sanctioned local
policies or decisions (Thompson 1999). Finally, as both Patomaki and Hutchings suggest, in presuming the universal validity of Western democratic values the cosmopolitan democracy project becomes vulnerable to charges of legitimising a new mode of imperialism (Hutchings 1999, p177; Patomaki 2000).

**Deliberative (Discursive) Democracy**

One sympathetic attempt to address some of the criticisms inherent in both the cosmopolitan and radical democratic pluralist projects is to be found in the work on deliberative democracy and related conceptions of stakeholder democracy (Dryzek 1990; Deudney 1998; Thompson 1999; Dryzek 2000). Rather than proposing a new constitutional settlement for the global polity or the creation of alternatives structures of global governance, advocates of deliberative democracy are concerned with elucidating ‘the possibilities for democratizing the governance that does exist in the international system rather than the government that might’ (Dryzek 2000, p120). Deliberative democrats are interested in the discursive sources of existing systems of global governance and the role of transnational civil society ‘in establishing deliberative democratic control over the terms of political discourse and so the operation of governance in the international

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3 Dryzek makes a distinction between deliberative and discursive democracy. The latter represents a more radical conception of deliberative democracy which seeks to move beyond its origins in liberal and critical theory. For simplicity, however, both versions are used interchangeably here. See Chapter 1 of (Dryzek 2000).
system’ (Dryzek 2000, p138). In effect they are concerned with the principles and necessary conditions for the creation of a genuine transnational public sphere of democratic deliberation. Such principles include: non-domination, participation, public deliberation, responsive governance and the right of all-affected to a voice in public decisions which impinge on their welfare or interests (Dryzek 1990; Petit 1997; Saward 1998, p64-5). As Dryzek argues the realization of transnational democracy depends upon a recognition that ‘the essence of democratic legitimacy is to be found not in voting or representation….but rather in deliberation’ (Dryzek 1999).

While advocates of deliberative democracy do not discount totally the value of a liberal attachment to institutional reform of global governance, nor the cosmopolitan requirement for a democratic constitution for world order, both visions are regarded as insufficient in themselves for the grounding of transnational democracy. Instead the deliberative ideal looks to the creation of ‘an association whose affairs are governed by the public deliberation of its members’ (Cohen quoted in Saward 1998, p64). This involves, its advocates argue, the cultivation of transnational public spheres in which there can be genuine dialogue between the agencies of public governance and those affected by their decisions and actions. Rational and informed deliberation amongst all those affected, rather than simply those with an declaratory interest in the matter in question, is ultimately tied to realizing the common good. This is to distinguished from a liberal-pluralist conception of democracy.
in which the achievement of consensus amongst the expressed interests and preferences of citizens or organized interests is taken to have primacy in public decision making (Dryzek 1990; Petit 1997; Saward 1998, p64). Furthermore, public authorities are expected to justify their actions whilst those affected must have the right to contest such actions since governance is regarded as democratic only “...to the extent that the people individually and collectively enjoy a permanent possibility of contesting what government decides” (Petit 1997, p185). Accordingly, deliberative democracy requires informed and active citizens as well as the vigorous promotion of those rights and conditions necessary to their empowerment (Petit 1997). Given the significance of the all-affected principle, the criteria and procedures for inclusion within the deliberative political process become critical.

Central to the deliberative argument is the principle of stakeholding: that all those affected by, or with a stake in, the decisions of public authorities have the right to a voice in the governance of those matters (Burnheim 1986; Deudney 1998; Eckersley 2000; Saward 2000). On any issue membership of the relevant deliberative community is therefore contingent upon the specific configuration of stakeholders involved, that is those whose interests or material conditions are directly or indirectly implicated in the exercise of public power. In effect the process of deliberation itself becomes constitutive of the relevant deliberative community (Thompson 1999). This reflexivity
argin its advocates, makes deliberative democracy admirably suited to a world in which there are overlapping communities of fate and in which the organization and exercise of power no longer coincides with the bounded territorial political community (Dryzek 1999) (Eckersley 2000). Unlike liberal representative democracy, in which the demos is defined in relation to fixed territorial boundaries, deliberative democracy presumes a largely functional or systemic conception of the demos uninhibited by pre-existing territorial, cultural or human boundaries. As Dryzek notes, ‘Deliberation...can cope with fluid boundaries, and the production of outcomes across boundaries. For we can look for democracy in the character of political interaction...without worrying about whether or not it is confined to particular territorial entities’ (Dryzek 2000, p129).

Advocates of deliberative democracy argue that it offers a set of principles upon which inclusive, responsive and responsible transnational democracy can be constructed. Its more orthodox variants tend to emphasise its reformist ambitions in so far as deliberation is conceived as a mechanism for enhancing the democratic legitimacy of public decision making, from the local to the global level (Saward 1998). By contrast, more radical manifestations highlight its transformative potential to the extent that it is concerned with the contestation of global institutional agendas, challenging unaccountable sites of transnational power, and empowering the progressive forces of transnational civil society (Dryzek 1999; Eckersley 2000).
tension between a rather procedural, as opposed to substantive, interpretation of deliberative democracy arises from its rather eclectic philosophical origins which embrace the traditions of critical theory, discourse analysis, republicanism, participatory and direct democracy.

Critics of deliberative democracy argue that it is not a discrete model of democracy so much as a mechanism for resolving and legitimising public decisions. In this respect it only has value in the context of an established democratic frameworks (Saward 1998). This criticism is valid whether the focus is transnational, local or national democracy. Furthermore, despite its emphasis upon discourse, paradoxically it tends to overlook the problems which language and cultural diversity present to the construction of a genuine transnational deliberative public sphere. This cannot simply be wished away as a technical matter of translation but on the contrary raises serious issues about the role of language and culture in defining the conditions of possibility of genuine political deliberation (Kymlicka 1999). In arguing too that the deliberative communities are essentially constituted through the all-affected principle the basis upon which stakeholders are to be incorporated – whether as direct participants or through representatives – is never clearly specified. Indeed the emphasis upon self-organization tends to ensure that the procedural requirements and institutional conditions of effective deliberation remain somewhat vaguely stipulated. Finally, there is significant silence about how intractable conflicts of interests or values can be
resolved deliberatively without recourse to some authoritatively imposed solution. In this respect deliberative democracy may be of marginal value in dealing with many of the most pressing global distributional or security issues – from debt relief to humanitarian intervention respectively - which figure on the world political agenda. As with each of theories of transnational democracy reviewed above, deliberative democracy is also vulnerable to a more fundamental critique.

Transnational democracy: plausible or desirable?

Whatever the intellectual merits of any particular design for transnational democracy serious scepticism has been voiced about the very plausibility and desirability of the idea. Communitarian, realist and some radical critiques take issue with the advocates of transnational democracy on a number of important grounds: theoretical, institutional, historical and ethical.

Political communitarians, such as Kymlicka, are unconvinced by the cosmopolitan premiss’s which inform theories of transnational democracy. Democracy, argues Kymlicka, has to be rooted in a shared history, language or political culture: the constitutive features of modern territorial political communities (Kymlicka 1999). These features are all more or less absent at the transnational level. Despite the way globalization binds the fate of communities together the reality is that “the only forum within which genuine democracy occurs is within national
boundaries’ (Kymlicka 1999). Even within the European Union transnational democracy is little more than an elite phenomenon (Kymlicka 1999). If there is no effective moral community beyond the state there can be, in this view, no true demos. Of course, advocates of transnational democracy argue that political communities are being transformed by globalization such that the idea of the demos as a fixed, territorially delimited unit is no longer tenable (Linklater 1998). However, problematizing the demos in this way, contest the sceptics, poses the critical question of who or what agency decides how the demos is to be constituted and upon what basis? Without some unequivocal specification of the principles by which the demos is to be constituted it is difficult to envisage either how transnational democracy could be institutionalised or would necessarily provide the basis for more representative, legitimate and accountable global governance. By failing to respond to this question with a theoretically rigorous or convincing argument, suggest the sceptics, the advocates of transnational democracy fatally undermine the plausibility of their project (Gorg and Hirsch 1998; Dahl 1999; Kymlicka 1999; Saward 2000).

For political realists sovereignty and anarchy present the most insuperable barriers to the realization of democracy beyond borders. Even though elements of an international society of states may exist, in which there is an acceptance of the rule of law and compliance with international norms, order at the global level, suggest realists, remains contingent rather than
enduring. Conflict and force are ever present and a daily reality in many regions of the world. These are not the conditions in which any substantive democratic experiment is likely to prosper since a properly functioning democracy requires the absence of political violence and the rule of law. In relations between sovereign states organized violence is always a possibility and the rule of law largely an expression of realpolitik. International order is always order established by and for the most powerful states. In this respect global governance is merely a synonym for Western hegemony whilst international institutions remain the captives of dominant powers. States act strategically to encourage international governance, only where it enhances their autonomy or circumvents domestic scrutiny of sensitive issues, so generating a political imperative prejudicial to the democratization of global governance (Wolf 1999). Short of a democratic hegemon, or alternatively some form of world federation of democratic states, imposing or cultivating transnational democracy the conditions its realization must accordingly appear theoretically and practically implausible. Few sovereign democratic states are likely to trade national self-governance for a more democratic world order whilst no authoritarian state would ever conceivably entertain the prospect. Transnational democracy remains, for realists, a signally utopian ideal.

Even if transnational democracy was a more plausible ideal it remains, many sceptics conclude, a politically and ethically undesirable
At the heart of theories of transnational democracy is an intractable conflict between a normative commitment to effective national democracy and the desire for democracy beyond the state. This dilemma arises from the fact that the democratic practices and decisions of one have enormous potential to override or negate the democratic credentials and requirements of the other. In most mature democracies this dilemma is resolved through constitutional mechanisms but these are signally absent in the international arena. A telling illustration of this dilemma concerns the EU’s ‘democratically mandated’ intervention in Austrian politics following the electoral success of the far right in early 2000. Collectively the EU threatened to withhold official recognition of any coalition government in which Mr. Haider, the leader of the main far right party, played a role. This despite the democratically expressed preferences of the Austrian electorate. Whatever the ethics of this particular case, the general point is that transnational democracy has the potential to extinguish effective self-governance at local or national levels (Hutchings 1999, p166). Without effective safeguards – which in the absence of a global constitution cannot be institutionally grounded - the danger of transnational democracy is that it is susceptible to crude majoritarian impulses which have the potential to negate the legitimate democratic rights and wishes of (national) minorities. Conversely, without the institutional capacity to enforce the democratic will of the majority
against the entrenched interests of the Great Powers of the day transnational democracy simply becomes hostage to the interests of the most powerful geo-political forces. Herein lies what might be referred to as the paradox of transnational democracy, namely that without a capacity to enforce the transnational democratic will on the most powerful geo-political and transnational social forces democracy beyond the state is necessarily inconsequential yet the very existence of such a capability creates the real possibility of the tyranny of transnational democracy thereby subverting the desirability of the democratic ideal.

It is partly for such reasons that even those of a more radical or progressive persuasion harbour significant doubts about the desirability of transnational democracy. Amongst some radical critics the very idea of transnational democracy is conceived as concealing a new instrument of Western hegemony (Burbach, Nunez et al. 1997; Elmandjrja 2000). As with the philosophy of ‘good governance’ promulgated by G7 governments and multilateral agencies, it is considered primarily a Western preoccupation. There are, in other words, few constituencies for transnational democracy to be found amongst the dispossessed in Africa, Asia and Latin America (Cheru 1997). For most of humanity it is a distraction from the most pressing global problems, from AIDS, famine, desertification to poverty. As the UNDP puts it, the most pressing issue for humankind is whether globalization can be given a human face (UNDP 1999). In this context transnational democracy may be an
entirely inappropriate and irrelevant response given that the critical problem is how to ensure that global markets and global capital work in the interests of the majority of the world’s peoples without destroying the natural environment (Cox 1996; Burbach, Nunez et al. 1997). Democratising global governance, even if it were feasible, may be more likely to strengthen and legitimise the hegemony of global capital than it is to challenge its grip on the levers of global power (Gill 1995; Burbach, Nunez et al. 1997). The historical record of advanced capitalist societies, argue the sceptics, demonstrates how the imperatives of capitalism take precedence over the workings of democracy (Miliband 1973). Therein lies the prospective fate of transnational democracy. Accelerating global inequality and looming environmental catastrophe simply cannot be resolved by a dose of transnational democracy. On the contrary, as Hirst suggests, what is required are powerful and effective, rather than democratic, global bodies which can override the entrenched interests of global capital by promoting the common welfare – social democracy at the global level (Hirst and Thompson 1999; Hirst 2000). Alternatively, the deconstruction of global governance and the devolution of power to self-governing, sustainable local communities is a strategy favoured by radicals of a green persuasion (Dryzek 1997; Laferriere and Stoett 1999). On both political and ethical grounds sceptics of a progressive kind consider transnational democracy to be a flawed project. Accordingly, the ethical preference of many radical critics is for strengthening existing
systems of social democratic governance and new forms of participatory democracy below the state (Mittleman 2000). Real democracy, for these sceptics, is always local (national) democracy.

There are powerful reasons for exercising critical judgment in respect of the relevance, plausibility and desirability of transnational democracy. What the various sceptical arguments share is a sense that transnational democracy is neither necessarily an appropriate response to globalization nor a project which is as ethically and theoretically persuasive as its advocates suppose. On the contrary it is fraught with theoretical shortcomings and practical dangers. Not the least amongst these, suggests Dahl, is the danger of popular control in respect of vital matters of economic and military security (Dahl 1999). Furthermore, the development of national (territorial) democracy has been strongly associated with force and violence whilst the history of modern democracy illustrates how, even within the context of a shared political culture, it remains a distinctly fragile system of rule (Dahl 1999). In a world of cultural diversity and growing inequality the possibility of realizing transnational democracy must therefore be judged to be negligible without either its forceful imposition either by a concert of democratic states or a benign democratic hegemon. Not surprisingly, for most sceptics, self-governance within states, whether democratic or not, is considered ethically preferable to the likely tyranny of a more democratic global polity.
Can transnational democracy be dismissed?

In response, advocates of transnational democracy accuse the sceptics of a too hasty dismissal of the theoretical, ethical and empirical arguments which inform their designs for democracy beyond borders. More specifically, they argue, that by discounting the significant political transformations being brought about by intensifying globalization and regionalization the sceptics seriously misread the possibilities for significant political change towards a more democratic world order (Elkins 1995; Castells 1998; Linklater 1998; Clark 1999; Held, McGrew et al. 1999; Mittleman 2000). These transformations irrevocably alter the conditions which made sovereign, territorial, self-governing political communities possible, for in a world of global flows the local and the global, the domestic and the foreign, are largely indistinguishable. To dismiss such developments is to fall to prey to a timeless, essentialist conception of modern statehood and political community which disregards their historically and socially constructed nature (Devetak 1995; Linklater 1998).

Modern political communities are historical and social constructions. Their particular form, coinciding with the territorial reach of the ‘imagined community’ of the nation, is a product of particular conditions and forces. This form defines the metric by which the unit of modern democracy is calibrated. Historically the state has been the primary incubator of modern
democratic life. But, as Linklater observes, political communities have never been static, fixed creations but have always been in the process of construction and reconstruction (Linklater 1998). As globalization and regionalization have intensified, modern political communities have begun to experience a significant transformation whilst new forms of political community are emerging (Linklater 1998). According to Held, national political communities coexist today alongside ‘overlapping communities of fate’ defined by the spatial reach of transnational networks, systems, allegiances, and problems (Held 2000). In Walzer’s terms, these may be conceived as ‘thin’ communities, as opposed to the ‘thick’ communities of the locale and nation-state. Nevertheless, they constitute necessary ethical and political pre-conditions for the cultivation of transnational democracy. In essence, these overlapping communities of fate define the contours of new possible transnational articulations of the demos.

Critics of transnational democracy, as noted, charge that its advocates employ a rather indeterminate conception of the demos. This charge, however, overlooks the indeterminate and constructed nature of the modern (national) demos itself. For the constitution of the demos within the nation-state has always been the object of contestation – witness the struggle for the female vote and current controversies about citizenship – and has evolved historically in response to changing social and political conditions. This suggests, contrary to the sceptical argument, that the demos is not some
pre-formed entity which is the pre-cursor to democratic development but on the contrary is itself constituted through processes of democratization (Linklater 1998). Since classical Greek democracy the constitution of the demos has always been problematic and contingent (Saward 1998). This lends credence to the claims of the advocates of transnational democracy that the indeterminate nature of the demos in their designs does not weaken the plausibility or theoretical coherence of their project. Rather than conceiving of the cosmopolitan demos as a singular, determinate and universal entity – a unified world demos- the literature on transnational democracy tends to emphasise its complex, fluid and multilayered construction: articulated in a multiplicity of settings in relation to the plurality of sites of global power and the architecture of global governance (Held 1991; Walker 1991; Linklater 1998; Zurn 1998; Albert 1999; Dryzek 1999; Thompson 1999; Greven 2000; Held 2000; Mittleman 2000). Such a conception, as indicated by the experience of the EU and federal polities, is certainly not without historical precedent. To this extent the so-called enigma of the demos in theories of transnational democracy is not the fatal flaw which many sceptics assume it to be.

Central to the construction of political communities beyond the state is the growing institutionalisation of transnational public spheres through what some argue is the growing constitutionalization of world order (Gill 1995; Elazar 1998). The accumulation of multilateral, regional and transnational
arrangements (which have evolved in the last fifty years) has created a tacit constitution of a global polity. In seeking to manage and regulate transborder issues states have sought to codify through treaties and other arrangements their respective powers and authority. In so doing they have institutionalised an elaborate system of rules, rights and responsibilities for the conduct of their joint affairs. This has gone furthest in the EU where effectively a quasi-federal constitution has emerged. But in other contexts, such as the WTO, the authority of national governments is being redefined as the management of trade disputes becomes subject to a rule of law (Shell 1995).

Associated with this institutionalisation has been the elaboration and entrenchment of some significant democratic principles within the society of states (Crawford 1994). Thus the principles of self-determination, popular sovereignty, democratic legitimacy, the legal equality of states, have become orthodox principles of international society. As Mayall comments there has been an ‘entrenchment not just of democracy itself, but democratic values, as the standard of legitimacy within international society’ (Mayall 2000). This democratisation of international society also appears to have accelerated in recent years in response to processes of globalization, the activities of transnational civil society and the socializing dynamic of an expanding community of democratic states. Despite its unevenness and fragility it represents, combined with the constitutionalization of world order, the forging of the necessary historical conditions - the creation of ‘zones of peace’
and the rule of law – for the cultivation of transnational democracy (Held 1995).

Further evidence of this process of democratisation is to be found in the growing political response of many governments and agencies of transnational civil society to the consequences of economic globalization (O’Brien and al 2000; Scholte 2000). Such responses are manifest in diverse ways but a common aspiration amongst progressive political forces is a system of global governance which is accountable, responsive, and transparent. Along with the growing perception that power is leaking away from democratic states and electorates to unelected and effectively unaccountable global bodies, such as the WTO, has come increased political pressure on G8 governments especially to bring good governance to global governance (Woods 1999). But a broader global consensus appears to be emerging on the need for such reform, drawing some political support from across the North-South divide and amongst diverse constituencies of transnational civil society. Of course, democracy involves more than simply transparent and accountable decision making and it is interesting to note that the debate about reform draws significantly upon several – liberal-internationalism, deliberative, radical and cosmopolitan - of the discourses of transnational democracy discussed above. In the context of the WTO, for instance, the language of stakeholding has been much in evidence, somewhat curiously in both US official government and civil society proposals for its
reform (Shell 1995; McGrew 1999). But whatever the immediate outcomes of the current reform process it has lodged the problem of the democratic credentials of international governance firmly on the global agenda. In doing so a transnational public sphere has been created within which serious political reflection and debate on the legitimacy of global governance has been joined.

Of course, for sceptics such as Dahl these developments do not invalidate the normative argument that international institutions can not be truly democratic (Dahl 1999). Yet, as advocates of transnational democracy point out this is to overlook completely the significant examples of international or suprastate bodies, from the EU to the ILO, whose institutional designs reflect novel combinations of traditional inter-governmental and democratic principles (Woods 1999). While the EU represents a remarkable institutionalisation of a distinctive form of democracy beyond borders it is by no means unique. The International Labour Organization, for instance, has institutionalised a restricted form of ‘stakeholding’ through a tripartite system of representation corresponding to states, business and labour organizations respectively. Beyond this newer international functional bodies, such as the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the Global Environmental Facility, embody stakeholding principles as a means to ensure representative decision making (Woods 1999). Furthermore, virtually all major international institutions have opened themselves up to
formal or informal participation by the representatives of civil society (Weiss and Gordenker 1996). Even the WTO has created a civil society forum. The sceptical proposition that effective international governance is simply incompatible with democratic practices appears somewhat disingenuous in the light of the historical record of global governance. On the contrary, in certain respects basic democratic principles are constitutive of existing global and regional systems of governance.

Finally, in questioning the value of transnational democracy, socialist critiques raise the serious issue of whether democracy can be trusted to deliver greater global social justice. In regard to liberal democracy in the national context, the historical record appears somewhat mixed. By contrast, advocates of transnational democracy commence from a rather different reading (historical and conceptual) of the relationship between capitalism— as a primary engine of global inequality and injustice— and democracy. This reading recognizes the inevitable contradictions between the logic of capitalism and the logic of democracy. It departs from the fatalism of many structural Marxist and radical critiques in arguing, on both theoretical and historical grounds, that transnational democracy is a necessary requirement for the realization of global social justice (Held 1995; Mittleman 2000). The history of European social democracy, in mitigating the inequalities of market capitalism, is taken as an important case in point. Accordingly, the case for transnational democracy is inseparable from the argument for global
social justice. Indeed the value of transnational democracy, suggest its most passionate advocates, lies precisely in its capacity to provide legitimate mechanisms and grounds for taming the power of global capital thereby promoting and realizing the conditions for greater global social justice (Held 1995). That existing institutions of global governance fail in this task should be no surprise since they are the captives of dominant economic interests (Gill 1992; Cox 1996). However, for the advocates of transnational democracy this is not valid grounds for abandoning the project but on the contrary advocating it more vigorously.

Towards a Democratic Global Polity?

If the idea of transnational democracy cannot be so easily dismissed then the prospects for its realization must be addressed. This involves consideration of two issues: the extent to which it is possible to identify immanent tendencies in global politics which provide the conditions for its potential realization; and the extent to which any of the theories of transnational democracy provide a plausible or persuasive account of the conditions of its possibility (Hutchings 1999). These are necessarily issues which are likely to generate radically divergent conclusions for they invite speculative judgments and are inseparable from prior ethical convictions.

Despite the compelling credentials of the sceptical case, there are good grounds for concurring with the advocates of transnational democracy that a
cautious optimism is warranted. Globalization and regionalization are stimulating powerful political reactions which in their more progressive manifestations have engendered an unprecedented public debate about the democratic credentials of governance beyond the state (Beetham and Lord 1998; Dryzek 1999; Woods 1999; Greven 2000; Mayall 2000; Scholte 2000). In the wake of the recent East Asian crisis and the Battle of Seattle, there is evidence of an emerging global consensus concerning the need for more effective regulation of global financial markets and global capital (UNCTAD 1998; UNDP 1999; Jones 2000). The Washington consensus, championing unfettered global capitalism, no longer appears so secure or hegemonic (McGrew 2000). Regulating globalization has become a paramount political issue and this in turn sustains much deliberation about the precise form which such regulation should take as well as the normative principles and values which might inform it. Reform of the major agencies of global governance, as the recent UN Millennium Summit indicated, is now firmly on the world political agenda (Woods 1999; Nations 2000). Transparency, accountability, participation and legitimacy are rapidly becoming the values associated with the dominant discourses of reform. Progressive elements of transnational civil society, such as Charter 99, are organising and mobilising to maintain the political pressure on governments and institutions to follow through on the reform agenda. Understood in the broader context of the democratisation of international society (discussed
these recent political developments acquire a much greater political significance. Acknowledging the potential for ultimate failure or cosmetic reform the present conjuncture of the dissolution of the hegemony of neoliberalism, the vitality of transnational civil society, the urgent requirements for effective and legitimate regional and global governance, and the pervasiveness of democratic values and aspirations, underwrite Dryzek’s sanguine conclusion that the prospects for the transnational democratic project are ‘...in many ways more positive than ever before’ (Dryzek 2000, p139). This is not to discount or trivialize counter trends and forces, nor the limits to democratic reform, but simply to recognize that contemporary developments constitute propitious conditions for engendering progress towards more accountable and democratic forms of global governance. Of course this leaves open the more interesting question of the likely trajectory of democratic reform.

It would be inappropriate to expect that any of the four main theories of transnational democracy elaborated above might offer a persuasive or plausible account of the possible trajectory(ies) of democratic reform. As normative theories each functions primarily both to identify the principles of transnational democracy and the necessary conditions for its existence. At root these accounts reflect distinctive conceptions of democracy which are located within quite different – but sometimes overlapping – traditions of democratic thought. In consequence, rather than ask which, if any, provides
the best blueprint for transnational democracy – which presumes the existence of some objective criteria by which such a judgment might be made – a far more appropriate and interesting question is whether any of these theories provide a convincing and coherent account - rooted in the possibilities of global politics as it is presently configured - of the ethical and political conditions for its own realization?

Since it is largely compatible with the existing liberal world order and the values of dominant Western states and elites liberal-internationalism may appear the most plausible route to transnational democracy. Current deliberations on the reform of global governance, as is evidenced in the priority accorded accountability and transparency, are dominated by the discourse of liberal-internationalism. However, this is very much a limited procedural conception of democracy which is statist and universalist in its assumptions. It is for many progressive social forces the prevailing orthodoxy which the political debate surrounding the reform of global governance seeks to transcend. In other words it aspires primarily to a democracy of states – international democracy- rather than a democracy of peoples – transnational democracy. By contrast the more transformative aspirations of radical pluralist democracy, encouraged by the transversal politics of new social movements, appears tarnished by a failure to specify theoretically or historically how, in the absence of any sovereign authority or the rule of law, transnational democracy can be realized or institutionalised. In a highly
decentralised world order, in which self-governing communities proliferate, the conditions for developing a genuine transnational public sphere or democratising global governance would seem remote. Why such an order would necessarily engender transnational democracy, as opposed to the tyranny of community, is far from obvious. In these respects, radical pluralist democracy lacks a convincing narrative of the conditions of its own realization.

By contrast, theories of cosmopolitan and deliberative democracy deliver more systematic and persuasive accounts of their own conditions of possibility. Normatively ambitious and radical insofar as each aspires to a transformation of world order towards a democratic community of states and peoples yet each is nevertheless profoundly aware of the powerful structural and economic forces which impede the prospects for transnational democracy. Both provide a rigorous account of the necessary pre-conditions and processes for bringing about the democratization of world order. In these respects, they can be considered complimentary accounts of transnational democracy. Whereas the primary concerns of deliberative democracy are with the discursive sources of world order and the significance of the communicative power of civil society in democratizing global governance, the primary interest of cosmopolitan democracy is with the specification of appropriate constitutional and institutional orders for the cultivation and entrenchment of democracy beyond the state (Held 1995; Dryzek 2000).
Moreover, advocates of cosmopolitan democracy and deliberative democracy consider transnational democracy ‘..not as an alternative to national democracy but in part as its salvation as well’ (Clark 1999,p155). Despite an inherent idealism, cosmopolitan and deliberative theories of transnational democracy constitute the most sophisticated and persuasive arguments for democracy beyond borders. Together they represent original and comprehensive attempts at re-imagining democracy to accord with a world in which the organization and exercise of power has acquired significant transnational, regional and even global dimensions.

Conclusion: Reimagining Democracy

The history of democratic theory is the story of successive re-imaginings of the democratic project to fit with new historical circumstances. In responding to contemporary patterns of globalization and regionalization theorists have begun to reflect upon the necessity, desirability and plausibility of transnational democracy to bring to account those global and transnational forces which presently escape existing institutions of territorial democracy. A serious academic and political debate has been joined in which four distinctive re-imaginings of democracy have emerged which, to varying degrees, find expression in current deliberations concerning the reform of global and regional governance – from the EU to the IMF. This paper has reviewed critically the normative and empirical claims of these four theories.
of transnational democracy, namely liberal-internationalism, radical democratic pluralism, cosmopolitan and deliberative democracy. As the chapter has demonstrated these re-imaginings warrant sceptical treatment. However, the argument here has sought to defend the idea of transnational democracy in general against the claims of its most sceptical critics. More specifically it has argued the case for valuing cosmopolitan and discursive democracy, as complimentary projects, over other theories. Together they provide a persuasive and ethically ambitious response to the challenge of globalization and the demands for a more democratic architecture of global and regional governance. Of course, such arguments may fail to persuade those of a deeply sceptical persuasion that the very idea of transnational democracy is not simply utopian. Such scepticism, however, should be tempered with E.H. Carr’s caution that ‘Sound political thought and sound political life will be found only where [utopia and reality] have their place’ (Carr 1981, p10).
References


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