

# **The Transformation of Political Community Towards ‘A Cosmopolitan System of General Political Security’**

**Andrew Linklater**  
Department of International Relations  
Keele University

YCISS Occasional Paper Number 55  
March 1999

This paper was presented at the Fifth Annual Centre for International and Security Studies (YCISS) Conference, “Culture, Identity and Global Security,” York University, Toronto, Canada, 6-7 February 1997.

Problematizing traditional conceptions of political community and national citizenship is a central theme in recent social and political theory. Envisaging new political arrangements in which sovereignty, territoriality, citizenship and shared nationality are no longer fused together is an important parallel task.<sup>1</sup> Advances in human security are a central aspiration of such efforts to imagine alternatives to the nation-state system. Following the spirit of this inquiry, the argument of this paper defends the Kantian ideal of a cosmopolitan system of general political security which affords protection not just to states but to individuals and their various associations.<sup>2</sup> It also endorses Habermas's observation that national citizenship and world citizenship form a continuum whose contours are steadily becoming more visible.<sup>3</sup>

A few observations about the Kantian ideal are required before proceeding further. Kant believed that widening the moral and political boundaries of national communities was necessary if security were to be provided for the whole human race. In Waltz's terms, Kant was a devotee of inside-out reasoning since he believed that the progress of human security required the transformation of political community as opposed to the continuing reliance on inevitably precarious balances of power.<sup>4</sup> Contemporary writings which problematize traditional realist conceptions of national security and the security dilemma echo this central Kantian theme.<sup>5</sup> The recent critical literature calls for novel forms of political community which do not purchase their identity, security and autonomy by sacrificing or diminishing that of others. This plea for the transformation of political community raises complex questions about the idea of citizenship and the development of modern states. Determining whether the idea of citizenship is necessarily antagonistic to movement beyond the sovereign state which has long been regarded as the main provider of security is the main objective of this paper.

The argument is in three parts. Part one argues that the development of citizenship was largely a response to the monopoly powers which modern states acquired in the context of endemic warfare. It then turns to Marshall's writings about citizenship and social class, and to Honneth's recent reflections upon them, which maintain that there has been a pattern to the development of modern citizenship rights. The extension of these rights has occurred because systematically excluded groups have organized to secure political changes which would provide them with full membership of the political community. But Marshall and Honneth's writings suggest that these developments were always in some sense immanent within modern conceptions of citizenship.

Part two notes that, despite their insights, Marshall's writings and Honneth's later commentary have several deficiencies, the most important being their tendency to assume that citizenship can only have meaning within the boundaries of the sovereign nation-state. Neither

---

<sup>1</sup>The themes discussed in this paper are developed further in my *The Transformation of Political Community: Ethical Foundations of the Post-Westphalian Era* (Cambridge: Polity, 1998).

<sup>2</sup>H. Reiss, ed., *Political Writings* (Cambridge: 1970), p. 49. I am indebted to Richard Devetak for the reference. See his "Critical Theory" in S. Burchill, ed., *Theories of International Relations* (London: MacMillan, 1996).

<sup>3</sup>See J. Habermas, "Citizenship and National Identity", in *Between Facts and Norms* (Cambridge: Polity, 1996), p. 515.

<sup>4</sup>See K. Waltz, *The Theory of International Politics* (Reading Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley, 1979).

<sup>5</sup>See, in particular, K. Booth, "Security and Emancipation", *Review of International Studies*, 17:4 (1991).

considered whether the further development of citizenship rights might require progress beyond the classical nation-state and movement beyond the Westphalian era. This question has become deeply significant in an era in which traditional conceptions of sovereignty and citizenship have come under two powerful challenges. First, in most states, national and racial minorities and indigenous groups protest against the convention that all citizens must have the same national identity and possess identical rights. Their arguments for local or cultural autonomy have become more prevalent where globalization has reduced the possibility of inter-state war and made cohesive nation-states difficult, even impossible, to reproduce. Second, the modern phase of globalization invites states to despatch some of their powers to centres of transnational authority and decision-making. In Europe, especially, the question now arises of whether new forms of transnational democratic control — and related forms of post-national citizenship — are slowly developing.

Traditional conceptions of state sovereignty and citizenship have come under pressure then with the emergence of competing sites of political authority at sub-state and transnational levels.<sup>6</sup> As a result, Europe may be witnessing the emergence of post-national or post-sovereign states in which multiple authorities and allegiances replace earlier systems of close cooperation. The argument below is that these states can revolutionize European international society by building upon the achievements of national citizenship. They hold out the promise of transnational democratic arrangements which promote human, as opposed to national, security.

Whether Europe (and how much of Europe) will develop in this way is a matter for conjecture. Even so, it is necessary to defend the normative ideal of neo-medieval political communities which do not exercise classical state monopoly powers.<sup>7</sup> But as Derrida has suggested, it is just as important to make sure that this kind of community does not close itself off.<sup>8</sup> Part three of the paper takes this point further by commenting on some of the ethical principles which should guide relations between an imagined neo-medieval Europe and those societies which do not share its ethical and political ideals. A key theme here is that the former should act to promote the development of a universal communication community. One of the central obligations of the region ought to be to extend the realm of human interaction which is governed by commitments to dialogue and consent.

Given that a radical break with the principle of state sovereignty is highly improbable across the world as a whole, this discussion may seem little more than an indulgent exercise in utopian cosmopolitanism. The response is that societies which are committed to citizenship are obliged to bring a universal communication community into existence. A universal community of this sort is a normative ideal which may never be realized completely but it can be promoted by devising a range of world-wide public spheres. The English School or rationalist analysis of three different types of international society (the pluralist, solidarist and neo-medieval forms) is an important way of conceptualising these global public domains. The argument below is that each of these societies can make a distinctive contribution to developing a universal communication community. This community is the framework within which further progress

---

<sup>6</sup>See R. Reiner, ed., *Theorising Citizenship* (Albany: State University of New York, 1995), p. 3.

<sup>7</sup>For further discussion of a neo-medieval Europe, see H. Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics* (London: MacMillan, 1977), p. 254-5.

<sup>8</sup>J. Derrida, *The Other Heading? Reflections on Today's Europe* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992).

towards the Kantian idea of a cosmopolitan condition of political security is possible. It is one way of checking the possibility that any regional progress towards a neo-medieval polity causes harm to the identity, security and autonomy of other societies. It is one means of ensuring that the achievements of national citizenship are carried forward into the international domain with the result that the wider world makes progress towards a post-Westphalian order.<sup>9</sup>

## **State Monopoly Powers, Political Resistance and Citizenship Rights**

Modern states have enjoyed five monopoly powers. Weber's definition of the modern state stressed the first of them which is the state's monopoly control of the instruments of violence. A second was emphasized by Elias who added the state's monopoly control of the right of taxation, a right born in war to finance the establishment of large standing armies and complex administrative structures.<sup>10</sup> A third was added by thinkers such as Hegel who argue that the state claims the monopoly right to order the political loyalties of citizens, and to place allegiance to the state before loyalties to local or transnational communities. A fourth is the state's monopoly power in the sphere of the judicial settlement, aptly captured in the idea that as far as sovereign states are concerned there is no higher court of law. A fifth is the state's claim to have an exclusive right of representation in international organizations and the absolute power to bind the whole community in international law. The last two of these monopoly powers were conceptualized by the theorists of sovereignty such as Hobbes and Bodin.

Modern states claimed these monopolies to weaken other sites of power and to undermine potential contenders in the struggle for human loyalty. They asserted these rights in large part because of the need to organize for, and take part in, major inter-state war. Following Corrigan and Sayer in their book, *The Great Arch*, we can call this "the totalizing project". The aim of this project was to create relatively cohesive political communities by containing demands for the recognition of cultural difference, by subordinating the interests of aliens to the interests of the nation-state, and by denying representation and voice to actual or potential challengers within and outside national borders. The point of the totalizing project was to create a society whose members were tightly bound together and clearly separated from outsiders.<sup>11</sup> The upshot of that project in the nineteenth century was the emergence of communities which fused sovereignty, territoriality, citizenship and nationality together. The success of the totalizing project is reflected in the proposition that citizenship cannot have any meaning apart from the modern sovereign state. Its parallel achievement was the idea of an international anarchy which cannot be domesticated so that human beings are condemned to live indefinitely in permanent insecurity.

Modern states tried to ensure that citizenship rights did not compromise their ability to wage war. They wanted to be able to count on human loyalty in times of international conflict

---

<sup>9</sup>The distinction between a neo-medieval and post-Westphalian order is set out below.

<sup>10</sup>See N. Elias, *The Civilising Process, Volume 2: State Formation and Civilisation* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982).

<sup>11</sup>As Charles Tilly points out, absolutist states initiated policies which reduced variation within states and increased variation between states. See *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), p. 19.

— hence their goal of merging citizenship and national loyalty. Arguably, many states are losing this capacity to bind citizenship and nationality together with the consequence that a new stage in the development of citizenship rights may be unfolding. Under these conditions, alternative forms of political community and citizenship which break up territorial concentrations of power and allow higher levels of universality and difference to develop become possible. Globalization and fragmentation are the two main forces which expose modern states to these dramatic processes of change. One of their effects may be to release some of the cultural potentials which are implicit within modernity and invested in conceptions of citizenship.<sup>12</sup>

Prior to developing these points further, it is useful to consider some of the connections between state monopoly powers, the totalizing project and the development of national citizenship. Stalin's Russia and Hitler's Germany are two illustrations of the devastating consequences of the totalizing project, two examples of the unprecedented forms of domination enjoyed by those in control of modern state monopoly powers. Yet these states have been the exception rather than the rule. In the history of European states, the rise of state monopoly power has repeatedly triggered demands for representation and participation on the part of subjects. As Otto Hintze argued, the rise of large standing armies and the introduction of national conscription in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries led to popular demands for representative government.<sup>13</sup> Of course, this right of political representation has been just one part of the ensemble of rights which comprise modern citizenship. Insistence on the right of representation has invariably been linked with demands for legal rights (for the protection of the rule of law) and for social rights (for the fair distribution of significant resources and meaningful opportunities including access to the educational system). Pressures for social rights have been a response to the inequalities inherent in capitalist industrialization and to the modern state's compliance with the bourgeoisie and use of various strategies of displacement to placate dominant groups.<sup>14</sup> To understand the conceptual linkages between these rights, it is useful to turn to the writings of T.H. Marshall.

In his influential account of the development of citizenship in Britain, T.H. Marshall argued that the enlargement of rights was governed by a certain pattern or logic. In Britain during the eighteenth century, the struggle for citizenship took the form of a call for equal protection under the law; in the nineteenth century, the achievement of legal rights was held to be inadequate without rights of political participation; and in the twentieth century, civil and political rights were deemed incomplete if citizens did not have the social and economic power to exercise their entitlements. Marshall was concerned with Britain rather than with the global

---

<sup>12</sup>This theme will be developed in more detail later. Suffice it to note these three points for now: first, much of the moral capital which has been accumulated in the course of resistance to the growth of state power and the rise of capitalism is invested in modern conceptions of citizenship; second, the idea of citizenship is an important moral resource which can be used to imagine communities which make deeper inroads into domination and unjust exclusion; third, increasing transnational harm and the politics of recognition create irresistible pressures to use these resources to create post-national social and political relations. Transnational harm refers to the harm which societies do to one another, and the harms to which all are exposed by global actors and processes.

<sup>13</sup>O. Hintze, *The Historical Essays of Otto Hintze* (edited with an introduction by Felix Gilbert) (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975).

<sup>14</sup>On strategies of displacement, see D. Held, *Models of Democracy* (Cambridge: Polity, 1996), p. 252.

development of citizenship rights, but his argument has wider significance as Honneth has argued in his recent book.<sup>15</sup>

In his comments on Marshall, Honneth argues that two developmental pressures are evident in all societies with investments in citizenship: first, the development of citizenship has revolved around the claim that differences of class, gender, ethnicity or race lack moral relevance. Modern societies have come under pressure to remove barriers to the equal enjoyment of rights so that the distribution of rights and resources is no longer decided by morally spurious distinctions between persons. But, second, increased sensitivity to difference has been a crucial aspect of the evolution of citizenship. The introduction of welfare rights sprang from a recognition that individuals cannot make full use of their legal and political rights where they are the victims of structural social inequalities. There have been pressures within most societies to maintain protection for the most vulnerable members of the community and, more recently, to ensure that citizenship is not further stripped of its welfare dimension by members of the New Right. What the struggles to extend and deepen citizenship rights have aimed to do is create political communities which care for the security of all members.

### **Neo-Medieval International Society**

Honneth's discussion focuses on two developmental pressures within societies which have made significant investments in the idea of citizenship, but it is possible to take his discussion further. There are two respects in which Marshall's account can be extended. Each is deeply significant for any analysis of alternative forms of political community and novel conceptions of citizenship which break with the totalizing logics associated with the modern nation-state and its monopoly powers.

In the first place, as Nancy Fraser and other feminist writers have argued, Marshall's account of the development of citizenship, especially social citizenship, was principally concerned with the impact of capitalism on the white male population; his analysis ignored inequalities of gender, ethnicity or race.<sup>16</sup> This interpretation seems correct since Marshall had little to offer on the subject of minority nations, racial minorities and indigenous populations. To build upon Marshall's account of citizenship, it is therefore necessary to take account of a third developmental pressure which often involves demands for the introduction of group-specific rights or for granting significant local autonomy.<sup>17</sup> The point behind this third developmental pressure is that citizens do not all have to possess exactly the same rights; they do not all have to stand in exactly the same relationship with the sovereign state in accordance with the dictates of the totalizing project. Social justice requires movement beyond difference-blind forms of citizenship, a movement which is already pronounced in many states and which is encouraged by international organizations such as the European Union following the establishment of the Committee of the Regions.

---

<sup>15</sup>A. Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts* (Cambridge: Polity, 1995).

<sup>16</sup>See N. Fraser and L. Gordon, "Civic Citizenship Against Social Citizenship?", in B. Van Steenberghe, ed., *The Condition of Citizenship* (London: Sage, 1994).

<sup>17</sup>See W. Kymlicka, *Liberalism, Community and Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989) and I. M. Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

There is a second respect in which it is possible to develop Marshall and Honneth's positions on citizenship. Their writings concentrate on the relationship between citizenship and the state, and there is no sustained analysis of how citizenship rights might be secured internationally, especially in the present phase of globalization. This is a troubling omission since efforts to create domestic security communities have not always encouraged just and peaceful relations with other societies.<sup>18</sup> Visions of transnational citizenship in Europe are important in this context. The discussion of European citizenship within the European Union raises crucial questions about how a further stage in the evolution of citizenship might develop. It has been argued that European citizenship at the present time rests on a thin conception of citizenship (which facilitates mobility between member states and creates elementary rights against the state in which one has residence) rather than on a thick conception of citizenship (which upholds an Aristotelian conception of active participation).<sup>19</sup> Those who are wedded to traditional conceptions of sovereignty and citizenship may argue that the state alone provides the conditions under which individuals can enjoy thick citizenship rights. For example, outside the state, according to the communitarian point of view, there can be nothing other than a thin version of citizenship because there is no strong sense of membership of a political community.<sup>20</sup> By the terms of that argument, there are no grounds for supposing that citizens and aliens can associate as equals within a system of transnational political rule. This standpoint assumes that the main legal, political and social or cultural rights of citizens are best upheld by separate, sovereign states.

There are several ways of challenging this attempt to maintain close ties between citizenship, nationality, sovereignty and territoriality. The possibility of legal appeal beyond the state to international courts of law, the international provision of welfare and the international recognition of cultural differences are three ways in which citizens can have valued rights upheld by agencies other than the state. There are possibilities here for relying on international institutions to supplement the activities of nation-states. But the important question, which Aron posed over thirty years ago, is whether national citizenship must remain primary, and whether multinational citizenship is at all possible.<sup>21</sup> The central question is whether all one can imagine

---

<sup>18</sup>E.H. Carr addressed this theme in intriguing ways. For further discussion, see my "The Transformation of Political Community: E.H. Carr, Critical Theory and International Relations", *Review of International Studies*, 23:3 (1997), pp. 1-18.

<sup>19</sup>See A. Linklater, "Citizenship and Sovereignty in the Post-Westphalian State", *European Journal of International Relations*, 2 (1996), 77-103.

<sup>20</sup>Walzer draws out the significance of these claims for citizenship in any intriguing way, rejecting any efforts to replace national with cosmopolitan citizenship: "I am not a citizen of the world . . . I am not even aware that there is a world such that one could be a citizen of it. No one has ever offered me citizenship, or described the naturalisation process, or enlisted me in the world's institutional structures, or given me an account of its decision procedures . . . or provided me with a list of the benefits and obligations of citizenship, or shown me the world's calendar and the common celebrations and commemorations of its citizens". Walzer does not argue that communities can ignore moral duties to the rest of humanity. Indeed the question of how these might be balanced is an important part of his work. But in his critique of the supposition that cosmopolitan morality requires the creation of a universal political association, Walzer asks whether it is not enough to be a "cosmopolitan American". See his "Spheres of Affection", *Boston Review*, XIX:5, 29 (1994).

<sup>21</sup>See R. Aron, "Is Multinational Citizenship Possible?", *Social Research*, 41 (1974), pp. 638-56.

is a European society of peoples who come together as European citizens for the purpose of protecting say legal and welfare rights but quickly divide again into their separate national constituencies for the purpose of electing governments and exercising the right of democratic control. Perhaps that is as far as like-minded states (states with similar conceptions of the rights of citizens) can go in the attempt to promote transnational or European citizenship - possibly that is as far as they can go in making significant progress together towards the Kantian condition of general political security.

It is worth contrasting that view with the more ambitious project suggested by David Held and Daniele Archibugi: this is the project of cosmopolitan democracy which maintains that citizens and aliens can, and should, come together as participants in joint rule.<sup>22</sup> The argument here is that they should associate in systems of shared rule where they are closely interdependent and can cause one another significant harm. Under these conditions, national citizens cannot justify confining the political community to themselves. They have moral duties to involve the citizens of other states in open dialogue about matters which affect their vital interests. To refuse to create a transnational citizenship of this kind is to fail to recognize that the distinction between citizen and aliens is morally irrelevant under conditions of close interdependence. In this context, the belief that the distinction between the citizen and the alien has deep moral significance resembles the practice of assuming that differences of class, ethnicity, race and gender are morally relevant, even decisive, distinctions.

The argument thus far can be summarized by suggesting that four dimensions of modern states uphold the ideals of citizenship: the first is the practice of universalizing rights across the social barriers within the community; the second is the demand for reducing social inequalities which make it impossible for the vulnerable to exercise citizenship rights; the third is the critique of difference-blind conceptions of citizenship so that minority groups will at last feel at home in their political community; and the fourth is the pressure on the distinction between fellow-citizens and aliens in the context of increasing cross-boundary harm. Ideally, these four dimensions can be combined within post-national political communities in Europe. Were this to occur, a different kind of polity would emerge which institutionalizes the potentials which are already inherent within national conceptions of citizenship. By breaking the nexus between sovereignty and citizenship, this polity would overcome the moral deficits of societies which have been profoundly shaped by the totalizing projects which generated permanent insecurities for subaltern insiders and alien outsiders.

Whether such a form of political organization will develop is uncertain. However, current developments including the relentless advance of globalization, the pacification of core areas and the concurrent ethnic revolt make national communities harder to reproduce with the consequence that citizenship can begin to be invested in post-sovereign arrangements. As the embryonic notions of European citizenship reveal, Western Europe is the most promising site for a remarkable experiment in creating political systems which no longer weld sovereignty, territoriality, citizenship and shared nationality together. A crucial argument here is that, increasingly, the political aspirations which are invested in citizenship cannot be preserved by independent sovereign states. Because of globalization, many writers have argued, the rights of citizens — whether civil, political, social or cultural — can only be protected by establishing a

---

<sup>22</sup>See D. Archibugi and D. Held, eds., *Cosmopolitan Democracy: An Agenda for a New World Order* (Cambridge: Polity, 1995), and A. Linklater, "Citizenship and Sovereignty in the Post-Westphalian State", *European Journal of International Relations*, 2 (1996), 77-103.



cosmopolitan democracy.<sup>23</sup> These structures would be post-sovereign because states would not retain their traditional monopoly powers.<sup>24</sup>

The very idea of citizenship requires movement of this kind. In short, citizenship establishes certain rights to security which individuals and their associations have been able to claim against their respective national communities, but not against the members of other societies. Yet the idea of citizenship is only contingently connected with the sovereign nation-state.<sup>25</sup> In principle, the ideals which are invested in citizenship — the right to security, identity and autonomy — were a response to the growing power of the state and to the impossibility of organizing political community along different lines under conditions of probable warfare. Although many groups continue to think that the state is the primary means of safeguarding their citizenship rights, it has long been the object of suspicion for first peoples and minority nations, and it is increasingly clear that even the groups which are most attached to the sovereign nation-state need to look to international institutions if they are to preserve the values upheld by citizenship. Globalization and the ethnic revolt have problematized traditional conceptions of citizenship and made alternative forms of political community ethically desirable and politically necessary.

To conclude this section: in modern European history, citizenship has been linked with the concepts of sovereignty, territoriality and nationality. Citizenship rights developed in response to the accumulation of state power and the increased surveillance of society. Current trends in Europe promise to release the idea of citizenship from territorial sovereignty and shared nationality. On the empirical level, it is possible that citizenship rights may become attached to state structures which collaborate to create a transnational, multi-cultural social democracy which protects the legal, political, social and cultural rights of all European citizens. Whether an international security community of this kind will come into existence depends ultimately on how far the societies of Europe can create a demos which is not already an ethnos, and some have pointed to Switzerland to reveal that polities of this kind are perfectly feasible.<sup>26</sup> But whether or not a distinctive kind of European international society which is committed to

---

<sup>23</sup>The principal defence of this line of argument can be found in D. Held, *Democracy and the Global Order: From the Modern State to Cosmopolitan Governance* (Cambridge: Polity, 1995).

<sup>24</sup>In political systems which recognized the multiplicity of political loyalties and authorities there would inevitably be a lack of clarity about where sovereignty actually rested. As Bull put it; “We may envisage a situation in which, say, a Scottish authority in Edinburgh, a British authority in London, and a European authority in Brussels were all actors in world politics and enjoyed representation in world political organisations, together with rights and duties of various kinds in world law, but in which no one of them claimed sovereignty or supremacy over the others, and a person living in Glasgow had no exclusive or overriding loyalty to any one of them. Such an outcome would take us truly ‘beyond the sovereign state’ and is by no means implausible . . .” There might be considerable doubt both in theory and in practice as to whether sovereignty lay with the national governments or with the other centres of political responsibility. See H. Bull, *The Anarchical Society* (London: MacMillan, 1977), p. 266. In this way, the state’s monopoly rights can be eroded without creating new territorial concentrations of power. For further discussion, see Linklater, “Citizenship and Sovereignty in the Post Westphalian State”, *op. cit.*, note 21.

<sup>25</sup>See K. Hutchings, “The Idea of International Citizenship”, in B. Holden, ed., *The Ethical Dimensions of Global Change* (London: MacMillan, 1996).

<sup>26</sup>See J. Habermas, “Citizenship and National Identity”, *Between Facts and Norms* (Cambridge: Polity, 1996), p. 500.

overcoming unjust systems of exclusion based on class, ethnicity, gender, race and alien status comes into existence, the neo-medieval world is still worth defending as a normative ideal.<sup>27</sup>

The reason for this claim is that a European international society which revolved around these ideals would bring citizens and aliens together within wider communities of discourse; it would extend the same rights to participate in open dialogue to various minorities including the members of minority nations; it would expand the sphere of politics governed by dialogue and consent, and secure economic resources for the weak. Movements in this direction would reconfigure the modern form of political community: they would reduce the possibility of the return of totalizing projects and they would institutionalize the Kantian commitment to a condition of cosmopolitan political security, although only on a regional scale.

### **Neo-Medieval International Society and The World Beyond**

Just how far the entire society of states will enter the neo-medieval era is clearly a matter of dispute but, within Western Europe, some evidence of movement in this direction already exists. Significant parts of Europe are distinguished from the rest of the world because they have undergone the transition from a system of states in which rivalry and suspicion prevail to a more solidarist society of states and peoples involved in an unusual experiment in transnational political cooperation. This system of cooperation promises to involve larger numbers of human beings in relations of dialogue and consent rather than in the politics of power and force. Devising forms of citizenship which will guide Europe towards a multicultural, transnational social democracy is one of the central challenges facing the contemporary political imagination. A related challenge is to link this experiment in close political cooperation with the larger project of increasing security and autonomy across the world. Here it is necessary to agree with Derrida's argument for a Europe which does not turn in on itself.<sup>28</sup> Forms of regional cooperation which internationalize the achievements of citizenship are worthy of support, but they are radically incomplete without larger efforts to promote the ideals of world citizenship.

The remainder of this paper addresses the question that a Europe which wishes to avoid closing itself off has to ensure that it does not repeat the practice of nation-states of purchasing its own security, identity and autonomy by reducing that of others. It notes how different conceptions of the society of states can contribute to the Kantian condition in which security and autonomy are not appropriated by communities without regard for one another but are distributed to all human beings fairly. Special importance is attached to the ideal of a universal communication community in this stage of the argument. It is suggested, following Habermas, that human agents have a duty to create a universal communication community which recognizes the *prima facie* right of all human beings to participate in open dialogue about matters which impinge upon their interests. Exactly how a universal communication community is to be

---

<sup>27</sup>The point is not to assume that a European international society of the kind which has been outlined here would or should replace nation-states. Its purpose ought to be to complement their activities. That said, transnational democratic structures can develop without a common *ethnos* for two reasons. First, transnational structures can be built upon the rights of persons: on the right to the rule of law, for example. Second, these structures offer means of recognizing the minority identities, including those of minority nations, which many states have failed to respect in the past. A neo-medieval international society does not replace nation-states but it enlarges upon their activities by ensuring simultaneous advances in ethical universality and respect for cultural difference.

<sup>28</sup>See Derrida, *op. cit.*, note 8.

brought into existence is one of the most intriguing questions raised by this normative commitment. The position taken here is that rationalist analyses of different forms of the society of states provide important resources for thinking about this question. The pluralist, solidarist and neo-medieval forms of international society which have been analyzed by members of the English School — especially by Hedley Bull — can complement one another by promoting the ideal of a universal communication community. This use of rationalist approaches to international society will be linked with the Kantian goal of a cosmopolitan condition of general political security in the conclusion to the paper.

Bull distinguished between three different forms of international society: the pluralist, the solidarist and the neo-medieval societies of states.<sup>29</sup> A pluralist international society is an arrangement between sovereign states which are capable of limited cooperation to maintain order between themselves. Respect for the principles of state sovereignty and non-intervention, observance of international law, recognition of the need for constraints on violence, cooperation to maintain the balance of power and reliance on diplomacy to resolve international disputes form the principal ingredients of a pluralist society of states. States rely on dialogue and consent to establish their most basic principles of co-existence although they continue to have recourse to violence when vital national interests or the institutions of international society are threatened. In the terms used earlier in this paper, they form a universal communication community although one in which the great powers have the most influential voice and in which the threat of violence has not been eradicated. The diplomatic dialogue within this arrangement is concerned with maintaining order between radically different societies which are keen to maintain their sovereign independence: it is not concerned with collective action to build global institutions which promote shared moral goals.

A solidarist society comes into existence when states agree to collaborate to protect shared moral values such as the rights of individuals. Whereas pluralist arrangements are built around the notion that states are the basic members of international society, and intervention always poses a threat to international order, solidarist forms of cooperation assume that individuals are as morally relevant as states, and humanitarian intervention is one of the means by which states can protect fundamental moral values. Put differently, whereas a pluralist international society is designed to cope with the security problems of states, solidarist institutions seek to reduce threats to the security of individuals and their primary or voluntary associations.

Bull argued in the 1960s and 1970s that the prediction that a more solidarist international society is emerging was “seriously premature.” In the 1980s, he stressed the growing importance of global values such as human rights, international social justice and environmental management, thereby implying that more solidarist sentiments might be appearing, at least within certain pockets of international society.<sup>30</sup> Since that time, the literature on the democratic peace has lent some force to the conviction that solidarist relations between liberal states have developed within a larger pluralist framework which includes states which are suspicious of, and

---

<sup>29</sup>The distinction between pluralism and solidarism is set out in Bull’s essay, “The Grotian Conception of International Society”, in H. Butterfield and M. Wight, eds., *Diplomatic Investigations: Essays in the Theory of International Politics* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1966). Neo-medievalism is discussed in his later work, *The Anarchical Society*, see note 7.

<sup>30</sup>Or that a few limited solidarist themes had penetrated the skin of an essentially pluralist world order.

often hostile to, liberal beliefs and values.<sup>31</sup> Analyses of the growing importance of non-state actors in world politics, and more specifically of international non-governmental actors within the United Nations system, have drawn attention to important solidarist themes in contemporary world politics.<sup>32</sup> Accounts of these developments indicate that certain pockets of world society may be undergoing the transition from a pluralist society of states to a more solidarist international society in which states, peoples and individuals participate in a wider community of discourse. The participation of non-governmental organizations and social movements ensures that global public spheres do not simply reflect the interests of the dominant nation-states and the most powerful transnational actors.

Bull was generally sceptical of the view that all members of the society of states would wish to make progress in roughly the same direction. The passage from the European to the first universal society of states had increased the level of cultural difference in world politics. States with dissimilar political and economic systems, and with radically different cultures and normative commitments, would do well in his view to maintain respect for pluralist arrangements. But as noted in the previous paragraph, pockets of solidarism can develop within the larger world of the pluralist society of states. Bull did not discuss these possibilities in great detail, but he did suggest that it was not inconceivable that a third kind of international society, a neo-medieval order, could emerge within Western Europe. Its appearance would witness the decline of state sovereignty and the weakening of the commitment to nationalism. National authorities would share power and authority with sub-state and transnational institutions; and loyalties to the nation-state would co-exist with loyalties to minority nations and a strengthening sense of European identity. Neo-medieval political institutions would extend the concern with the security of the individuals and non-state associations which is also evident in solidarist forms of collaboration. But whereas a solidarist society is firmly grounded in state sovereignty (though some of its normative commitments are cosmopolitan) neo-medieval structures involve a retreat from state sovereignty and progress in eroding classical state monopoly powers. By virtue of belonging to a neo-medieval order, states would break with the traditional habits associated with state sovereignty and relinquish many of their conventional sovereign powers.

In short, the members of a neo-medievalist international society are prepared to collaborate to break the nexus between sovereignty, territoriality, nationality and citizenship. They are willing to surrender many of the monopoly powers which generated the totalizing project. Moreover, these states are prepared to collaborate to create forms of transnational citizenship which protect the legal, political, social and cultural rights of all members. Progressive though these developments may be, these states can still be deeply exclusionary towards the rest of the world. Ideally, they would not simply be concerned with the interests of citizens, irrespective of the cost to outsiders, but would endeavour to ground their external relations in the commitment to dialogue and consent, thereby supporting a cosmopolis which upholds universal rights to security. This commitment would mean that they do not close

---

<sup>31</sup>On the liberal-democratic peace, see M. Doyle, "Liberalism and World Politics", *American Political Science Review*, 80 (1986), pp. 1151-69.

<sup>32</sup>Willetts traces the entry of non-governmental organizations into the diplomatic dialogue promoted by the UN system. See P. Willetts, "From Stockholm to Rio and Beyond: The Impact of the Environmental Movement on the United Nations Consultative Arrangements for NGOs", *Review of International Studies*, 22 (1996), 57-80. The promise of solidarism is the partial dissolution of the international society of states within such wider communities of discourse.

themselves off, and do not purchase their own security, identity and autonomy by imposing costs on outsiders. Societies which are devoted to further enlarging the boundaries of the security community may be said to have entered the post-Westphalian age.

Another way of making this point is to suggest that post-Westphalian states are deeply committed to eradicating unjust exclusion from their own forms of life and from the conduct of all of their external relations.<sup>33</sup> Reducing state monopoly powers is a vital development if individuals and their various associations are to be spared the worst effects of the totalizing project, and far-reaching experiments in creating a transnational citizenry become mandatory under conditions of close interdependence. The modern nation-state cannot insist on its traditional moral privileges when it is guilty of exporting harms to outsiders while simultaneously denying them effective political representation and voice. It therefore has an obligation to overcome the division between citizens and aliens in agreed forms of transnational rule. Like-minded societies which have made progress in institutionalizing the politics of dialogue and consent cannot confine this project to themselves without contradiction.<sup>34</sup> They must also ensure that progress in this direction takes account of the wider world comprising societies which do not share their normative orientations (or do not share them to the extent of wishing to relinquish sovereign powers). In order not to seal themselves off, states which are committed to building a post-Westphalian international order have to honour fundamental obligations to the societies which lie outside their system of joint political rule. These societies may include adversary powers and radically different states with whom it is possible to enter into pluralist relations; and societies which share enough of their moral commitments to become associates within a solidarist international society.

A neo-medieval international society must be especially concerned about vulnerable groups which lack the economic and political power to resist any harm which its members can cause them. Honouring this obligation requires more than the introduction and maintenance of wider communities of discourse; it requires measures to ensure that all can fully participate within these frameworks.<sup>35</sup> Movements in this direction are not unknown in international relations, as Bull's comments on the revolt against the West have suggested. Although the great

---

<sup>33</sup>Although the three forms of international society differ in important respects they have one quality in common: each involves progress beyond one type of unjustified exclusion. A pluralist international society embodies movement beyond egocentric social systems which deny the rights of outsiders; a solidarist international society breaks with the practice of excluding individuals, minority nations and indigenous peoples as subjects of international law; and a post-Westphalian order overcomes the role which sovereignty has played in obstructing international political action to end transnational harm.

<sup>34</sup>See C. Brewin, "Liberal States and International Obligations", *Millennium*, 17 (1988), 321-38.

<sup>35</sup>O'Neill maintains that the duty to avoid harm to others cannot be discharged simply by declaring the intention not to take advantage of the weakness of others. There must be an effort to ensure that others, including the "most vulnerable", have "the space to refuse and renegotiate offers". Nor is the creation of that space enough to comply with principles of justice. Additional measures are needed "to reduce powerless and vulnerability". See her essay, "Transnational Justice", in D. Held, ed., *Political Theory Today* (Cambridge: Polity, 1991). In similar fashion, Bohler defends the following imperative "Always engage in arguments that would also be capable of achieving consensus in an ideal community of argumentation and endeavour to bring about such circumstances as approximate more closely to the structures and conditions of an ideal community of argumentation". See D. Bohler, "Transcendental Pragmatics and Critical Morality: On the Possibility and Moral Significance of a Self-Enlightenment of Reason", in S. Benhabib and F. Dallmayr, eds., *The Communicative Ethics Controversy* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990), p. 133. The approach to communication communities in this paper echoes these sentiments.

powers have invariably had the greatest capacity to shape the diplomatic dialogue between states, there have been powerful developmental pressures in international society which have made it more responsive to considerations of justice. These pressures led to a massive increase in the membership of international society since the Second World War. Increased membership as a result of decolonization was followed by pressures to remove obstacles to effective participation for the weaker members of international society.<sup>36</sup>

Like-minded societies therefore do not exhaust their international obligations by creating neo-medieval structures which increase human security by protecting the legal, political, social and culture rights of all citizens. They have a duty to increase the possibility that all other human beings can associate with them in security communities which replace force and power with dialogue and consent; and they have an obligation to create the social and economic conditions which will ensure that participation within wider communities of discourse is enjoyed by the largest possible number of the world's population. Measures to improve the operation of each of the three forms of international society described earlier are crucial means of bringing a universal communication community into existence.<sup>37</sup> These are measures which all states and their peoples which are committed to the ideal of citizenship are obliged to take. This is the "promissory note" to promote the post-Westphalian era which cosmopolitan citizens are obliged to issue across space and time.<sup>38</sup>

## Conclusions

Seven observations about the relationship between the transformation of political community

---

<sup>36</sup>Bull and Watson identified five main dimensions of this revolt against the exclusionary nature of the Western-dominated international society: first, the legal revolt in which states such as China and Japan demanded the right to full membership of the society of states; second, the political revolt spearheaded by nationalist movements which contended that the colonies should have exactly the same rights as their imperial overlords; third, the racial revolt against notions of white supremacy; fourth, the economic revolt, exemplified by the demands for compensation for colonial exploitation, for a larger share of the world's wealth and for increased influence in global economic institutions; and, fifth, the cultural revolt against the dominance of Western ideas and practices which is an expression of the resurgence of the cultures which are indigenous to Asia, Africa and the Pacific, and testimony to their renewed confidence in the validity of local beliefs. See H. Bull and A. Watson, eds., *The Expansion of International Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), pp. 220-4.

These five forms of revolt against international systems of unjust exclusion are not arbitrary and unrelated events. They are the main elements of a broad pattern of global development in which the moral significance attached to the racial and cultural differences between Western and non-Western peoples has sharply declined. The grounds for denying non-Western societies the right of equal membership of the society of states have been eroded in the twentieth century, and the legal and political status which the West once monopolized has come to be shared with the former colonial territories. Awareness of the respects in which economic inequalities reduce the sovereign independence of many new states, and sensitivity to racial and cultural differences, have increased during the transition from a European to a universal international society, although that society still remains largely Western-dominated. Parallels with developments in national citizenship are evident in the belief that fully-fledged membership of international society requires not only the achievement of sovereign rights but continuing efforts to dismantle the forms of racial, economic and cultural exclusion which emerged during the epoch of Western imperialism. Echoes of the developmental pressures which have occurred at the national level will be evident (see above p. 5ff).

<sup>37</sup>See K.O. Apel, "The Conflicts of Our Time and the Problem of Political Ethics" in F. Dallmayr, ed., *From Contract to Community* (New York: Marcel Dekker, 1979), pp. 98-9.

<sup>38</sup>See D.C. Hoy and T. McCarthy, *Critical Theory* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), p. 75.

and the realization of the cosmopolitan condition of general political security are offered in conclusion. First, states acquired various monopoly powers in the context of recurrent systemic war, and they promoted totalizing projects which created profound insecurities for various groups including the members of minority nations and alien outsiders. Second, popular demands for citizenship rights arose in response to the accumulation of state monopoly powers. Various developmental pressures shaped the notion of citizenship with the result that the inhabitants of modern states came to enjoy some combination of legal, political and social rights. Citizenship rights have been important vehicles for promoting the security of fellow-nationals, although often by imposing costs on non-citizens including the members of other societies. Third, globalization and fragmentation combine to make novel forms of political community possible. Globalization invites states with major investments in citizenship to develop transnational democracies, while cultural fragmentation invites the devolution of power to local communities. The declining significance of state monopoly powers in the contemporary era improves the prospects for local autonomy and transnational citizenship. Fourth, while citizenship has long seemed inseparable from the notions of sovereignty, territoriality and nationality, it may yet become linked with innovative political systems which do not claim monopoly powers over a bounded territory and a largely homogenous people. A new stage in the development of citizenship rights may begin with the rise of neo-medieval societies which recognize the value of multiple political authorities and allegiances. A European international society in which the parts cooperate to dismantle unjust systems of exclusion based on ethnicity, race, gender, class and alien status deserves support as an ethical ideal. Societies which have abandoned the totalizing project can cooperate in this way to create an international security community which protects the legal, political, social and cultural rights of all citizens.

As previously noted, if a neo-medieval international society is to develop at all, it will most probably be between the like-minded societies of Western Europe. Visions of a post-nationalist or post-sovereign order have most meaning in that region. But, fifth, societies which collaborate to create a neo-medieval international society do not have the right to shut themselves off from the rest of the world. They must always be troubled by the moral relevance of the differences between citizens and aliens. Regional commitments to eradicate unjust systems of exclusion have global moral consequences, and joint action to ensure that the most vulnerable groups in world society can defend their legitimate interests by participating in communities of discourse is obligatory for those who have these regional commitments. They have a duty to comply with pluralist and solidarist principles when dealing with societies which do not share their moral and political objectives, and they have a duty to assist any developmental tendencies which promise to eradicate unjust exclusion within these frameworks of communication. The ethical foundations of the post-Westphalian era consist of these commitments.

Sixth, to engage all other societies as equals in dialogue within each of these forms of international society is to ensure that a larger proportion of the decisions which are taken about the nature and direction of international society has the consent of all parties with interests at stake. Efforts to preserve these different forms of international society can therefore help concretize the normative ideal of a universal communication community. These are necessary steps to enlarge the sphere of social interaction which is governed by consent rather than force. Seven, quite how far progress in this direction will occur remains uncertain. But it is important not to underestimate the extent to which modernity provides the resources for designing a universal communication community which endeavours “to secure the social bond of all with all

precisely through equal consideration of the interests of each individual”.<sup>39</sup> Wider communities of discourse with this normative commitment can concretize the Kantian vision of “a cosmopolitan system of general political security” not only for Europeans but for the larger realm of humanity. In doing so, they can reveal that national and world citizenship form a continuum whose internal relations are perfectly clear.

---

<sup>39</sup>See J. Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures* (Cambridge: Polity, 1987), p. 346.



**Andrew Linklater** is Professor in the Department of International Relations at Keele University, UK. Some recent publications include: *Beyond Realism: Critical Theory and International Relations* (Macmillan, 1990); edited with John MacMillan, *Boundaries in Question: New Directions in International Relations* (Pinter Publishers, 1995); “Citizenship and Sovereignty in the Post-Westphalian State”, *European Journal of International Relations* (1996); with Scott Burchill, *Theories of International Relations* (St. Martin’s Press, 1996); and *The Transformation of Political Community: Ethical Foundations of the Post-Westphalian Era* (Polity, 1998).