Can NGOs Make a Difference?

The Challenge of Development Alternatives

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The Ambivalent Cosmopolitanism
of International NGOs

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NGOs, therefore, can unequivocally be viewed as genuine cosmopolitan actors. Their establishment of an agenda and political community that transcends the state or local community, their 'transnational competence', particularly their transnational analytical skills, and their moral legitimacy are pivotal features in demonstrating their cosmopolitan character. This places NGOs in a position to act as legitimate advocates for humanity and wider concerns. (Carey, 2003)

In the global neoliberal age, an increasing number of tasks, missions and capacities are being ascribed to development NGOs.[1] Not least of these is their association with cosmopolitanism. The simultaneous search for future roles for NGOs alongside attempts to identify the foundations, values and structures of a cosmopolitan politics may seem to offer a political and strategic marriage of convenience. The link between NGOs and cosmopolitanism also seems intuitively sensible. The notion of a 'citizen of the world' would seem to fit rather well with the image of the globetrotting humanitarian worker, addressing need regardless of ethnicity, gender and nationality, and perhaps personal safety. Supporters of development NGOs would seem to be moving beyond national affiliation and transcending difference in response to distant suffering. Through their demands on states, corporations and global institutions such as the World Bank, NGOs are surely part of the development of a cosmopolitan democracy. Through their stated commitment to human rights and the alleviation of poverty, surely NGOs are developing the kinds of universal values on which cosmopolitanism rests.

In this chapter we argue that the relationship between cosmopolitanism and NGOs demands greater caution and serious interrogation. This is not to deny the broad thrust of the connections we have just identified, but to highlight that the relationship is contested and, in some senses, rather more

ambivalent than intuition would allow for. We do not necessarily seek to undermine a connection between NGOs and a cosmopolitan politics. But a more systematic exploration of the relationships between development NGOs and cosmopolitan politics can help us understand the capacity of NGOs to offer serious development alternatives, most notably in the form of a transnational politics of justice based on the values of solidarity.

This chapter is motivated by conceptual, strategic and normative agendas. We start as authors strongly committed to supporting the future development and practice of NGOs. Our involvement in research on NGOs is informed not only by intellectual interests, but by our experiences as staff of NGOs and through our collaborative work alongside NGOs. As a result, our interest is both conceptual and applied. We hope not only to contribute to the conceptualization of NGOs but to inform debates outside and within NGOs about their future roles and the strategic choices organizations may have to make. We also hope to contribute to debates around the meaning of cosmopolitanism, and at the same time to ground discussion of cosmopolitanism in the complex practices of NGOs. We believe this is particularly important in the light of a growing disjuncture in debates around NGOs and global politics. International development NGOs are facing growing scrutiny of their legitimacy, authority and effectiveness, and yet are also being ascribed increasingly important roles in the reshaping of global politics and society. This not only reflects strategic contradictions and dilemmas, but also hints at the separation of some of the voices speaking on the future of NGOs and the development of cosmopolitan politics. Since much of the research on NGOs is conducted in order to respond to NGO needs, there is a strong emphasis on 'practice' rather than 'grand theory'. On the other hand, much of the writing on cosmopolitanism is rooted in social and political theory which is articulated in highly abstract and sometimes inaccessible language. This chapter represents an initial attempt to start to bridge this gap by identifying key points of contact between NGOs and cosmopolitanism.

The first section offers an outline of the key aspects of cosmopolitanism on which the chapter is focused. Whilst we do not offer a definitive overview, we do aim to map some of the levels and dimensions of cosmopolitanism in order to provide a foundation for the exploration of the points of contact between NGOs and cosmopolitanism. We explore these in section two, outlining the potentially diverse ways in which NGOs and cosmopolitanism can be linked. In section three we explore the connections in more detail and more critically through the prism of two areas of NGO practice: development education and advocacy. We conclude by offering some suggestions about the significance of further research in this area.

Ideas of Cosmopolitanism

Recent years have seen a growing interest in a broad set of ideas under the heading 'cosmopolitanism'. But, despite the confident assertion that 'cosmopolitanism is back' (Harvey cited in Vertovec and Cohen, 2002a: 1), what exactly has returned is less clear:

> For some contemporary writers on the topic, cosmopolitanism refers to a vision of global democracy and world citizenship; for others it points to the possibilities for shaping new transnational frameworks for making links between social movements. Yet others invoke cosmopolitanism to advocate a non-communitarian, post-identity politics of overlapping interests and heterogenous or hybrid publics in order to challenge conventional notions of belonging, identity and citizenship. And still others use cosmopolitanism descriptively to address certain socio-cultural processes of individual behaviours, values or dispositions manifesting a capacity to engage multiplicity.

Whilst cosmopolitanism has increasingly entered debates over the last fifteen years, it is not a new concept and can be traced back at least to the political philosopher Immanuel Kant. This return has not been uncontested, and serious debates are ongoing within sociology and international relations concerning basic precepts that underpin cosmopolitanism. Although these debates have significance for thinking and acting around development, for reasons of space we focus here on identifying the key features of cosmopolitanism that offer analytical and normative purchase in relation to development NGOs.

The return of cosmopolitanism has been reflected in growing debates around its desirability and feasibility, the forms it takes, and the consciousnesses, legal frameworks, institutions and dispositions and commitments that it might demand. It also crosses the normative and analytical domains, at one level being seen as an opportunity to map alternative modes of social, political and cultural organization, whilst at the same time being deployed to capture existing practices. Vertovec and Cohen disaggregate the diversity outlined by Harvey, outlining six ways in which cosmopolitanism can be 'viewed or invoked as a) a sociocultural condition; b) a kind of philosophy or world-view; c) a political project towards building transnational institutions; d) a political project for recognising multiple identities; e) an attitudinal or dispositional orientation; and/or f) a mode of practice or competence'(2002a: 18–22).

As such, cosmopolitan thinking is a rich area and we find that there are diverse views as to what cosmopolitanism is; there is not one unified theory of cosmopolitanism and it is not, in Fine's terms, 'a body of fixed ideas' (2006: 242). The breadth of cosmopolitan theorizing provides a range of contact points with NGOs and the search for development alternatives.

A conceptualization of contemporary socio-cultural conditions which challenges traditional conceptions of cultural borders and acknowledges and even celebrates the importance of multiple and overlapping identities presents a markedly changed context to the one into which international development NGOs emerged in the middle of the last century. Whilst 'cosmopolitan' may have been an epithet applied to the staff and experts of the development industry since that time, cosmopolitan theorizing which recognizes the skills, competences and knowledge that make up an 'ordinary cosmopolitanism' (Lamont and Aksartova, 2002: 1) presents a challenge to this. This presents a challenge to some of the assumptions around subjectivity, authority and knowledge that have underpinned international development NGOs' work, highlighting the skills, knowledge and agency of the poor, and, in doing so, suggesting alternative ways of understanding and promoting development. As organizations increasingly working across national borders and addressing transnational issues – such as development – NGOs could be seen as the expression of a key cosmopolitan norm. In seeking to communicate global ideas and persuade individuals to respond to the welfare of the 'distant other', development NGOs could be seen as promoting a post-national cosmopolitan agenda which challenges difference and which seeks to change dominant attitudes and dispositions. Underlying these connections is a contestable notion of NGOs as values-based organizations seeking 'alternatives' which better address poverty and injustice.

Many cosmopolitan theorists have already made the connection between cosmopolitanism and development (e.g. O'Neill, 1986), and are now increasingly exploring the strong connections between the ways NGOs are represented and understood, and the development and construction of cosmopolitan theory itself. For one,

> Even the ideas of cosmopolitan democracy and humanitarian activism ... reflect an awareness of the world that is made possible by the proliferation of NGOs working to solve environmental and humanitarian problems, and by the growth of media attention to these problems. These are important – indeed vital – concerns. (Calhoun, 2002: 91)

This is not without its difficulties. As Calhoun goes on to suggest, 'Nonetheless, the concerns, the media and the NGOs need to be grasped reflexively as the basis for an intellectual perspective' (2002: 91), and the links between NGOs and cosmopolitanism cannot be assumed. However, there has been surprisingly little effort to conceptualize development NGOs in terms of a cosmopolitan framework. This is somewhat surprising. If, as Lu (2000: 265) argues, cosmopolitanism is fundamentally concerned with humanity, justice and tolerance, then at an immediate and superficial level we can begin to see connections between NGOs and cosmopolitanism.

Indeed, it could be argued that NGOs' public commitments to universal rights, to global and post-national representing and advocating, and to aiding and engaging with distant strangers, suggest a thoroughly cosmopolitan position.

Our use of these elements of cosmopolitan theorizing does not mean they are not problematic. There are a wide range of critiques of cosmopolitanism and we will reflect on some of these as we explore NGOs' connections to cosmopolitanism, suggesting not only an ambivalent cosmopolitanism on the part of NGOs, but also that in expressing some elements of cosmopolitanism NGOs are reproducing their weaknesses and problems. Prior to this, however, it is important to note some key difficulties with cosmopolitanism.

Thomas Pogge (2003: 169) outlines three elements that are essential in the universalism which cosmopolitans embrace. Individualism: the unit of analysis is the human being rather than a group, community or country. Universality: where concern is focused on every human being equally. Generality: this special status has a global force – people are ultimate units of concern for everyone, not only for their own compatriots. However, Van der Veer (2002: 166) has a different view of cosmopolitan universalism: 'Cosmopolitanism is the Western engagement with the rest of the world and that engagement is a colonial one, which simultaneously transcends the national boundaries and is tied to them.' Critics of cosmopolitanism's colonialism argue that, far from being from nowhere and expressing universal values, cosmopolitanism is very definitely from the West. If this is the case, then some would say that these interventions can be characterized as 'colonial' in their imposing of external value systems as part of a process of domination and appropriation. Cosmopolitanism, then, has roots in modernity and colonialism and engages with the 'other' in order to shape it in the image of the 'self' (Van der Veer, 2002: 168).

This would appear to contrast strongly with conceptions of cosmopolitan democracy which argue for a fuller recognition of voice and demand greater accountability. Cosmopolitan democracy, as we discuss later, is based on the assumption that certain objectives, such as control of force and respect for human rights, will be obtained only through the extension and development of democracy (Archibugi, 2003: 7). However, it can be argued that such a democracy will be highly uneven, since its constitution cannot be abstracted from existing global inequalities of power. Some critics have criticized cosmopolitan democracy as a means of creating a world government, and, although this has been countered, there remain significant difficulties around the framing and definition of legitimacy in the absence of a nation-state framework.

The development and possibility of 'thinking and feeling beyond the nation' is also not without significant problems. At the heart of normative

ideas of cosmopolitanism is a view of all people in the world counting equally – one human does not count any more than another, regardless of their nationality or geographical locale. Therefore, some would argue a cosmopolitan would have the same obligation to their next-door neighbour as they would to someone living in a distant place whom they have never met. This connection to the 'distant stranger' is a defining characteristic of cosmopolitan ideals. However, as the response to Nussbaum's paper (2002) on patriotism shows, the meanings and implications of this are highly contested (Cohen, 2002), with critics questioning both the feasibility and the political desirability of any undermining of parochial identities (Appiah, 2002; Barber, 2002):

> It is because humans live best on a smaller scale that we should defend not just the state, but the country, the town the street, the business, the craft, the profession, and the family, as communities, as circles among the many circles that are narrower than the human horizon, that are appropriate spheres of moral concern. (Appiah, 2002: 29)

Here, we have sought to outline some of the key issues in cosmopolitan theory. In particular, we have focused on the normative elements of cosmopolitanism, the commitment to multiple affiliations, the emphasis on universals and on the relationships with the 'distant stranger'. Whilst there are significant critiques and difficulties with elements of cosmopolitan theorizing, we start from the perspective that they express broad values to which we subscribe and that we identify as offering normative and analytical purchase in understanding NGOs' roles in engendering development alternatives. The critiques outlined here urge caution against elitism, ethnocentrism and a lack of attention to political economy, but do not in themselves undermine attempts to realize the goals and values that underline the elements of cosmopolitanism we identify here as most significant for conceptualizing NGOs. What they do highlight is the importance of the processes through which cosmopolitan values, systems and commitments are defined and grounded. Given this, in the next section we explore some of the connections between these elements of cosmopolitanism and the work of international NGOs, and argue that, despite the apparent resonance between NGOs and cosmopolitan norms, NGOs' cosmopolitanism is currently somewhat ambivalent.

NGOs and Cosmopolitanism

The combination of diverse forms and practices of NGOs and complex and diverse theories of cosmopolitanism presents significant challenges for this chapter. We cannot hope to speak of the practices of all NGOs, but focus

instead on large international development NGOs because of their geopoliti-
cal and cultural significance, as well as their association with practices that
are frequently defined as cosmopolitan. These organizations are increasingly
identified as crucial players in international development, humanitarianism
and democratization. They are also powerful players in diverse national
settings, have the capacity to attract global media attention, maintain a bold
image as fighters for the poor and maintain capacity to engender emotional
and, increasingly, political engagement from diverse publics. Moreover, the
links between cosmopolitanism and the practices of development NGOs
can be made in myriad ways. The focus here on development alternatives
leads us to emphasize the normative political senses in which cosmopolitan-
ism can be deployed. In particular, we identify four commitments within
cosmopolitan political theorizing that offer an analytical frame for consider-
ing the ways in which NGOs are or can contribute to the formation of
development alternatives: the commitment to and promotion of a form
of cosmopolitan democracy; the promotion of political authority beyond
the nation-state; the recognition and promotion of universal values; the
development and expression of 'thinking and feeling beyond the nation'.
This does not mean that NGOs would necessarily recognize their practice
as fostering these cosmopolitan norms, but we see significant elements of
NGO practice as resonating in different ways and at different levels with
these norms. This provides a more specific way of exploring the complex,
contradictory and, we argue, ambivalent relationship between NGOs
and cosmopolitan theories. Finally, we draw particularly on our ongoing
research on the ways NGOs present a 'public face of development' (Smith
and Yanacopulos, 2004; Yanacopulos, 2004; Smith, 2004b) and the ways
these NGOs engage with publics. Not only is this aspect of their practice
under-researched, but it is central to the ways NGOs engender engagement
in transnational politics, inform global consciousness and construct notions
of difference and universality, providing important conceptual connections
between notions of cosmopolitanism and development NGOs.

Whilst we need to be cautious about the global political roles sometimes
ascribed to NGOs, not least in terms of their purported capacity to supplant
aspects of the state, it is nonetheless the case that NGOs have become sig-
nificant global players whose agendas, interests and actions are not primarily
defined by the nation-state. Lupel (2003: 28) suggests that

> an emerging global civil society populated with a diversity of movements and
> institutions based in a variety of communities with transnational interests con-
> tinues to be an integral part of the project of transcending an international order
> constituted by the narrow competition of national state interests.

Of course, the establishment of this basis is not without problems. Alleged
differences between the UK and US Save the Children Funds over state-

ments from the former about the conflict in Iraq – denied by SCF UK – demonstrate that NGOs are not immune from national boundaries and orientations (Maguire, 2003; Save the Children Fund UK, 2003). Indeed, whilst maintaining a transnational profile and identity, the recent emphasis on devolution within the large NGOs, and the development of national members of wider NGO families, hint at difficulties with maintaining a post-national organizational form. However, their wider roles within transnational governance (Yanacopulos, 2005), the recognition of their 'expertise' and their interventions across national borders demonstrate that NGOs do exercise some form of authority beyond the nation-state, the legitimacy of which is often framed by a claimed connection to cosmopolitan democracy.

NGOs' roles in shaping a global democracy are seen by some to signify their cosmopolitanism (Carey, 2003; Linklater, 2002). David Held, a key cosmopolitan democracy theorist, outlines the need for democracy on several layers, from the local to the international level, such that 'Today, if people are to be free and equal in the determination of the conditions which shape their lives, there must be an array of fora, from the city to global associations, in which they can hold decision-makers to account' (2003: 387). Given that 'people will have to have access to, and membership in, diverse political communities' (2003: 387), individuals are then defined as global citizens, and citizen participation at different levels acts as a means to globalize democracy and as a means of democratizing globalization. As such, the work of NGOs in seeking to open participatory spaces from the transnational through to the local level can be closely aligned with this particular cosmopolitan project.

When set in opposition to the 'top-down' nature of state governance and in terms of their early support of participatory methodologies, NGOs have often been seen as enhancing or deepening democracy. As alluded to at the start of this chapter, NGOs are often associated with ideas and ideals of world and global citizenship. Whilst acknowledging the problems of an obligation rather than a rights-based approach, due to the lack of political community and common culture, Linklater (2002: 265) suggests that

> Cosmopolitan citizenship is an important weapon in the critique of exclusionary forms of political community and in the development of global harm conventions which reject the assumption that the welfare of co-nationals matters more than the welfare of other members of the human race. Judged by these criteria, many non-governmental organizations can be regarded as the latter-day custodians of the ideal of world citizenship.

This connection could be in terms of the extension of global citizenship rights to NGOs – among others – as part of cosmopolitan democratic structures (Calhoun, 2002: 94). It could be argued that the 'formation of

transnational bonds among humankind through the construct of NGOs establishes a new transnational political community' (Carey, 2003). In other words, NGOs are producing a form of global citizenship in which the foundational social relationships are defined beyond the nation-state. However, this is problematic on two levels. First, the concept of citizenship demands the existence of a recognizable political community, and there is little evidence to suggest significant numbers of people are re-imagining themselves as global citizens. Second, in his discussion of NGOs' relationships with their Northern supporters, Desforges suggests that the need for organizations to reproduce themselves financially means that the global citizenship they offer is 'highly circumscribed' (2004: 566). However, it is worth noting that Desforges does not extend his focus to the development education element of NGOs' activity, the remit of which is more explicitly centred on global citizenship, as discussed below.

A second way in which NGOs are aligned with cosmopolitan democracy is through their role as 'key players in the development of a worldwide public sphere' (Linklater, 2002: 265), which begins to address what we have just identified as an apparent absence of such a political space for 'global citizens' to engage in. By their very existence, and as part of an emergent global civil society, NGOs are contributing to the formation of political spaces which go beyond the nation-state. This is significant for Carey (2003) for two reasons:

> regardless of a specific commitment to spreading and promoting adherence to democratic values, NGOs are also indirectly responsible for propounding democratic ideals by virtue of the process of giving voice to ordinary citizens of the world, thus facilitating the construction of a more cosmopolitan and democratic world order.

Here, the formation of a global public sphere also provides a forum in which to 'ascertain the validity of cosmopolitan norms through discourse and argumentation, ultimately leading to the building of consensus' (Carey, 2003). If NGOs are playing such a key role, then this shaping and opening up of new political spaces in which to articulate alternatives is surely a crucial political role. However, and aside from the continued dominance of nation-states as the pre-eminent political space, writers such as Anderson and Rieff (2004) have highlighted a lack of democratic legitimacy and authority of NGOs in terms of who they can they claim to speak for and on what basis their views are representative. In some senses the difficulties faced by NGOs in this context point to the wider conceptual and practical difficulties of global civil society; celebratory accounts of its democratizing capacity and political importance often skirt over the history of the concept and what this suggests for its capacity to effect change (Colas, 2002). Nonetheless, we

would argue that by virtue of taking political and moral debates beyond the confines of the nation-state, NGOs are in some respects supporting the development of a cosmopolitan order underpinned by global values.

The issue of universal values provides a third dimension of cosmopolitanism which connects with NGOs. At the centre of this is the view that NGOs are committed to humanity as a whole, perhaps best exemplified in Kofi Annan's characterization of them as the 'conscience of the world' and Chandhoke's (2002: 41) view that NGOs set a 'moral frame' for the international community. One could argue that NGOs are based on principles and values which are also central to conceptions of cosmopolitanism: humanity, justice and tolerance. One element of this global moral frame is a challenge to distance, seen in NGOs' facilitation of assistance to the distant needy. This intersects with debates around affiliation and patriotism, exemplified in Nussbaum's treatise on education and the responses to it (Cohen, 2002) and centred on the challenging of the local as taking precedence. NGOs would certainly seem to be in line with the idea of 'thinking and feeling beyond the nation', although it is less clear how and when they connect with Nussbaum's view that 'only by seeing oneself in the eyes of the other can one recognize what is deep and shared rather than local and unnecessary' (Fine and Cohen, 2002: 155). Perhaps more significant is the critique of the ways NGOs – and the development industry more generally – has proclaimed universal values which are in effect firmly rooted in the particular Western liberal traditions and histories from which NGOs have emerged. This, then, reproduces Van der Veer's (2002) notion of a colonial cosmopolitanism in which the desire to empathize and understand the 'other' is part of a system of controlling and managing the 'other'.

A second problem with this proclamation of universal values allied to an engagement with the distant 'other' has been the way it has largely been realized in terms of charity towards the 'other' as opposed to justice (Yanacopulos, 2007). There has been a lively debate within the cosmopolitan tradition concerning the relative merits of charity vis-à-vis justice-based approaches, often centred around a much publicized debate between Kuper (2002) and Singer (2002). For Singer, the surplus income of individuals in rich countries should be sent to those in poor countries through international aid organizations such as Oxfam and UNICEF, thus placing charity-based finance at the centre of his cosmopolitan project. Against this, other cosmopolitans argue that charity commodifies cosmopolitanism – by giving money, individuals can feel better about themselves. In arguing against the 'myopic communitarian or realist', Lu suggests that charity results from the mistaken conception of distant injustice as 'misfortune' (Lu, 2000: 262). For such critics, moving towards a cosmopolitanism founded on justice cannot be derived from an impulse to give to the poor, but rather from changing

the terms of engagement. Kuper (2002: 120) supports Edwards (this volume) in arguing that

> there remains the deep disjunct between the perspective of a system of global justice and the sedimented power structures of the current global order. Part of what a clearly articulated theory reveals is that some individuals' giving away income may do little to remedy this schism. While charity may produce improvements, it may at worst cause harm, or at least the relevant resources might be better used in another way.

This section has sought to outline some of the connections between NGOs and cosmopolitanism in relation to: the promotion of cosmopolitan democracy; the promotion of political authority beyond the nation-state; the recognition and promotion of universal values; the development and expression of 'thinking and feeling beyond the nation'. In so doing we have been careful to highlight the contradictions and weaknesses in cosmopolitan theorizing which NGOs may reproduce, and ways in which NGOs' commitment to some of the political values and goals of cosmopolitanism are somewhat ambivalent. However, and although there are some significant challenges for NGOs to negotiate here, we have suggested that it is through some adherence to elements of cosmopolitan politics that NGOs are in a position to offer development alternatives. The next section considers this ambivalence in more detail through an analysis of two key areas of NGO practice: development education and advocacy.

Cosmopolitanism in Practice

Our purpose in this section is to investigate the connection between a number of different functions of development NGOs and cosmopolitan politics. Development NGOs are a diverse grouping with complicated organizational structures and strategies, and whilst it is simpler to speak of development NGOs as a homogenized grouping and of individual NGOs as homogenized organizations, this is simply not the case in practice. Some of these complexities have been previously outlined (Smith and Yanacopulos, 2004) but in using two examples, development education (DE) and advocacy, we hope to briefly illustrate how these functions, found in larger international NGOs, tap into different forms of cosmopolitanism. We argue that these different practices reflect what we term an 'ambivalent cosmopolitanism'. In other words, the degree to which NGOs exemplify a cosmopolitan politics is, in reality, far from clear-cut, not only at the broad conceptual level but also in relation to specific practices.

Development education

Most international development NGOs undertake DE. Like advocacy, DE is orientated towards the wider contexts and causes of inequality. However, it has not traditionally emphasized singular messages but rather, in the UK at least, has focused on developing people's capacity for critical reflection about the world they live in and empowering them to act in response to this. In this sense, DE is about both content and process. Although under-researched, DE is closely linked to wider NGO debates in terms of values and approaches, and projected future political mobilization roles for NGOs (Edwards, 1999: 194). Moreover, critical debates within DE (Humble and Smith, 2007: 26) reflect those focused on in this volume. Bourn suggests that DE is 'rooted in two distinct but interlinked theories: development theory and Freirean liberation education' (Bourn, 2004: 4), whilst Huckle suggests the need for a stronger link to critical theory and Marxism (Huckle, 2004: 29). Such competing perspectives on the political role of DE hold different views of the mainstreaming of DE in the UK in the last ten to fifteen years (e.g. the arrival of a national curriculum in England and Wales) and the arrival in 1997 of government funding for DE via the Department for International Development, with some arguing that DE has been co-opted, and its radical roots compromised (Huckle, 2004: 30). However, within NGOs there are also ongoing debates and negotiation not only in promoting DE in formal settings, but in forging productive relationships with the other aspects of NGO work, such as campaigning, advocacy and fundraising (Smith, 2004a).

Whilst conceptualization of DE remains contested, it is possible to identify ways in which this area of NGO practice intersects with different levels of cosmopolitan thought. We can also see ways in which these connections indicate degrees of ambivalence. If we follow the definition of DE offered by the UK Development Education Association (DEA), which includes exploring 'the links between people living in the "developed" countries of the North with those of the "developing" South' and working 'towards achieving a more just and a more sustainable world' (DEA, n.d.), we can see that DE is explicitly concerned with 'thinking and feeling beyond the nation'; it reflects Nussbaum's assertion that 'through cosmopolitan education, we learn more about ourselves' (Nussbaum, 2002: 11). Emphasis is placed on commonality as well as difference, and on acting on the basis of rights and responsibilities that are defined in global or human rather than national terms. That DE practice is increasingly framed in terms of global citizenship underscores the degree to which DE resonates with cosmopolitanism's emphasis on forms of political action and authority beyond the nation.

DE's connection to cosmopolitan political formations and cosmopolitan democracy can also be seen in its emphasis on linking the local and global,

and on its emphasis on empowerment. In the UK, NGO DE teams often work in partnership with small local organizations, such as Development Education Centres, and there is considerable emphasis on pedagogies and resources that establish the foundation of learning and engagement in the learners' local experiences. In this regard, we could argue that DE has links to Calhoun's call for a greater emphasis on the local grounding of cosmopolitanism, and on engagement with the foundations of solidarity at local and global levels (Calhoun, 2001, 2002).

However, whilst a critical engagement with difference may support NGOs' wider emphasis on motivating people to respond to the plight of the 'distant other' by engendering feelings of solidarity, it may also undermine NGOs' capacity to generate funds and transfer resources to that 'distant other'. Emphasizing common ground does not fit easily with NGOs' realization of care for the 'distant other' through fundraising, and DE has traditionally challenged representations of the South that produce emotional and, hence, financial responses. This means that a contradictory cosmopolitanism is produced by international NGOs, which, on the one hand, are encouraging solidarity and feelings of commonality in motivating people to 'think and feel beyond the nation', but which, at the same time, need to emphasize difference in ways which undermine notions of solidarity in order to generate funds through a more charitable impulse. This tension perhaps reflects both the selective and the instrumental deployment of cosmopolitan norms by NGOs, as well as the difficulty, in cosmopolitan thought, of recognizing diverse voices and authorities alongside the promotion of universal values and commitments.

Advocacy

To advocate means to promote the causes of others, and involves an inherently political set of actions. Keck and Sikkink (1998: 8) describe NGO advocacy networks as 'plead[ing] the causes of others or defend[ing] a cause or proposition.... [Advocacy groups] are organized to promote causes, principled ideas, and norms.' In line with the challenge of promoting development alternatives, Jordan and Van Tuijl (2000) have defined advocacy as action that attempts to rectify unequal power relations and rectify power imbalances. The advocacy aspect of NGO work thus addresses the causes of unequal development, rather than just alleviating its symptoms (although most development organizations engaging in advocacy are also working in some form of poverty alleviation). However, Jordan and Van Tuijl also challenge the oft-made distinction between NGOs as either 'operational' or 'advocacy' NGOs, noting that all acts which create space for the weak and powerless are political acts. Advocacy is increasingly fundamental to the work of development NGOs, particularly in the form of 'advocacy coalitions'

or 'transnational advocacy networks' that target local and national govern-
ments, as well as international organizations. These exemplify Pogge's (2003)
key elements of a cosmopolitan project in cutting across state boundaries
and focusing on issues affecting individuals. However, tensions have arisen
both between development NGOs and within individual organizations
– tensions around the legitimacy of advocating on behalf of others, tapping
into sentiments of a colonial cosmopolitanism.

Two of the largest international advocacy campaigns during the last
decade have been the Jubilee 2000 debt cancellation campaign and the
Make Poverty History (MPH) campaign. Specifically, the MPH campaign
is useful in highlighting a cosmopolitan ambivalence. At one level, the
campaign emphasizes the capacity of civil society to exert political power
beyond the nation-state, targeting the G8 when it met in Scotland in
2005. It also made it impossible, through the media and political pressure,
to ignore the 'other'. By explicitly rejecting fundraising and emphasizing
the need for justice, the campaign went some way to challenging distance
and the idea that the poor are poor due to 'misfortune' (Lu, 2000: 262).
On the other hand, it has been suggested that many supporters understand
little of the campaign objectives (Baggini, 2005), with additional criticism
of the associated wearing of a white band as a fashion statement rather
than a political one. Also, the level of Southern engagement in the 'global'
campaign was limited. We could see this as an uneasy mix between demo-
cratic and banal cosmopolitanism. It would seem to underline Calhoun's
argument that NGOs rely on categorical identification – 'cultural framings
of similarity among people' (Calhoun, 2001: 25) – to engender solidarity.
Calhoun argues that within international civil society, few of these identi-
ties are linked to 'strong organizations of either power or community at a
transnational level', meaning that international civil society 'offers a weak
counterweight to a systemic integration and power' (Calhoun, 2001: 29). On
the other hand, we could also see MPH more dynamically as exemplifying
Tomlinson's (2002: 253) argument that the cultural openness engendered by
a global consumer culture needs to be built and shaped 'in the direction
of consensually emergent global solidarities'.

Conclusion

Cosmopolitanism requires the confronting of profound and complex chal-
lenges. It is about finding ethical ways to negotiate the universal and the
particular, local and global, nearby and distant. This requires the develop-
ment of capacities for deciding between multiple affiliations and identities in
which the local and familiar may not take precedence. It also requires the
establishment of the means for democratic voice which goes beyond national

political systems. NGOs, meanwhile, work in contradictory ways, expressing
a range of values, working across and within different national boundaries,
expressing varying commitments to diverse forms of democracy.

Our discussion of NGOs' potential cosmopolitanism through the prisms
of development education and advocacy highlights the ambivalence within
and also between the different functions of the organizations. For example,
there are contrasts between DE and advocacy in relation to the forms of
democracy that are practised. In one recent instance, the DE team sought to
empower participants to identify what they saw as priorities for campaigns,
while the campaigns team were keen to focus on strategic priorities identified
by a policy team (Baillie Smith, forthcoming). We could argue that each
is working to different conceptions or aspects of cosmopolitan democracy,
with one prioritizing the local, and the other the global.

A number of authors (Calhoun, 2002; Linklater, 2002; Tomlinson, 2002)
emphasize the need for dialogue as the basis for establishing cosmopolitan
values that have relevance to people's daily lives, and that will avoid what
Calhoun (2002: 31) refers to as an 'attenuated' cosmopolitanism which is not
grounded in 'mutual commitment and responsibility'. As Fine and Cohen
(2002: 160) put it: 'The problem with Kant's metaphysics of justice is that it
instructs people and rulers in what they must do, without involving them
in the process of deciding what must or must not be done.' However, what
we find is that democratic dialogue does not necessarily fit easily with NGO
commitments to targets around income generation or focusing political
pressure in relation to particular political opportunities (see Baillie Smith,
forthcoming). In addition, NGOs lack a clear constituency with whom to
engage in dialogue: 'NGOs at the global level can be very large organizations
highly removed from any basic social or political community' (Lupel, 2003:
27). As a result, their policies are a 'product of specialized professionals and
not public deliberation' (27); Desforges quotes an NGO employee comment-
ing that their supporters do not want to be involved in decisions around the
organization's work 'because they trust the organizations' competence in
delivering improvement in people's lives' (Desforges, 2004: 562).

The lack of support for a democratic or deliberative approach indicates a
degree of ambivalence in relation to what could be seen as a foundational
element of cosmopolitanism – the democratic establishment of universal
values. It also undermines NGOs' capacity to counter criticisms of elitism.
If cosmopolitanism remains in the realm of 'abstract universal obligations
at the expense of concrete particular loyalties and affiliations' (Lu, 2000:
249), then it is only likely to exist among 'persons whom fortune has
relieved from the immediate struggle for existence and from pressing social
responsibility and who can afford to indulge their fads and enthusiasms'
(Boehm cited in Lu, 2000: 250).

This points to a fundamental dilemma for both NGOs and cosmopolitanism relating to the balance between expressing and supporting universal values and providing space for their identification and development. On a functional level, NGOs are faced with very practical tensions, one of which is funding. Even the most aspirationally cosmopolitan NGO will have to obtain funding for its operations, and this can present different challenges in how the NGO engages with the varied needs and interests of its different constituencies. NGO attempts to articulate alternatives is strongly circumscribed by being embedded within a neoliberal aid system and by needing to draw support from constituencies in the North whose lives are defined by highly commodified forms of consumption.

The purpose of this chapter has been to explore the relationship between cosmopolitanism and development NGOs and, more specifically, the ambivalent relationships that NGOs have in engaging their publics and the different forms of cosmopolitanism that they tap into. It is important to understand these ambivalent relationships, particularly if we are to look at their changing nature and at the realization of forms of cosmopolitan politics. The practical importance of this research is that, in investigating NGOs' engagement with their constituents, we are looking not only at the future alternatives NGOs can offer, but at the future of NGOs themselves.

Whilst we have demonstrated that there is a strong degree of ambivalence in NGOs' cosmopolitanism, we have also shown that the different elements of NGOs' work strongly resonate with different cosmopolitan ideals as they unsettle other aspects. There are contradictions within and between the different areas of work, adding to the complexity. However, functional separation of these different elements within the organizations means that organizations are able to avoid resolving tensions around the universal and the particular, the local and the distant, and the democratic and the top-down. This not only diminishes NGOs' cosmopolitan credentials, but is likely to become a problem in the context of growing collaboration and networking within and across organizations. More worryingly for cosmopolitans of various shades, it denies their multiple projects a significant source of support.

Note

1. This chapter was authored equally by Matt Baillie Smith and Helen Yanacopulos. For the sake of equity, we alternate the name order in our joint publications.

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