

## **Interview:**

### ***Globalization, Cosmopolitanism and Democracy***

An interview with David Held, Graham Wallas Professor of Political Science at the London School of Economics, by Montserrat Guibernau, Senior Lecturer in Politics at the Open University

The interview was first published in the journal IDEES of the Centre d'Estudis de Temes Contemporanis, Generalitat de Catalunya, this article will also appear in *Constellations* 8:4.

It is also available online on the website of Polity Press: [www.polity.co.uk/global](http://www.polity.co.uk/global)

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# **Globalization, Cosmopolitanism and Democracy: an Interview**

**Interview with David Held, Graham Wallas Professor of Political Science at the London School of Economics, by Montserrat Guibernau, Senior Lecturer in Politics at the Open University.**

MG: Globalization has become a fashionable concept in the social sciences and a catch-phrase for journalists and politicians of every stripe. It has been employed to refer to the proliferation of multinational and supranational organizations, to illuminate significant transformations in the nation-state system, to explain changes in the world economy, and to account for the revival of national and minority cultures. However, the meaning of globalization is by no means exhausted by these examples and there seems to be no agreement among scholars about how globalization can be best understood. Much of your work in recent years has been concerned with globalization. How would you define it?

DH Globalization is fundamentally a spatial phenomenon; it lies on a spectrum with the local and national at one end, and the (supranational) regional and global at the other. It is about the stretching of connections, relations and networks between human communities, an increase in the intensity of these, and a general speeding up of all these phenomena. Globalization denotes transcontinental or interregional flows and networks of activity, interaction and power. It is, in short, about the interconnections between different regions of the world - from the cultural to the criminal, the financial to the environmental - and the ways in which they change over time.

Globalization can be examined by breaking it down into a number of dimensions, involving the extent, intensity, velocity and impact of change. By looking at each of these separately, it is possible to distinguish different historical forms of globalization, and to develop a clear account of the expanding scale, growing magnitude, increasing velocity and deepening effects of interregional flows and patterns of social interaction today.

MG: There has been a lively debate concerning the very nature and definition of globalization. Among those who are sceptical about it are Paul Hirst and

Grahame Thompson, for whom globalization is largely a myth. How would you react to this assertion?

DH There has been, as you say, a heated debate about whether globalization is occurring at all - between those who claim that it marks the end of the nation-state and the death of politics (I call this thesis the hyperglobalist view) and those who dismiss the arguments about globalization as so much hype (the sceptical view). Paul Hirst and Grahame Thompson have contributed a great deal to disclosing the real weaknesses of the hyperglobalist position. In so doing, they have helped to raise the whole standard of debate about globalization. But they have tended to throw out 'the baby with the bathwater'! That is to say, in criticising the hype, they have lost touch with what has changed. Moreover, their overall position is misleading in key respects. I can't explain all the reasons for this now, but let me just mention two or three key arguments.

For Hirst and Thompson, the present economic world order, judged in historical terms, remains far from closely integrated. They emphasize that the actual net flows between major economies are considerably less than a century ago. However, they argue that the main test of globalization is whether world economic trends confirm the existence of a single global economy. In this respect, they suggest, the evidence falls far short of any such claim.

But a number of points need to be separated here. First, while certain net economic flows (foreign direct investment above all) were higher for some countries during the late nineteenth century and the era of the classical Gold Standard, the contemporary global economic position is much more complicated. More countries are enmeshed in transnational economic flows than ever before, and they are enmeshed more intensively. For instance, the world has never been more open to trade than it is today; and trade has continued to expand as a proportion of GDP. Export- and import-GDP ratios were around 12-13 per cent for the advanced industrial countries during the Gold Standard era, but rose to 15-20 per cent - and even higher for some developed countries - from the late 1970s. It's true that in the 20th century the development of trade - and finance and multinational economic activity - was massively disrupted by the First and Second World Wars, the great depression and so on. But we've now reached new levels of economic interconnectedness which dwarf those of earlier periods.

This is the case not only for trade, but also for gross financial flows and MNC activity. The global financial system now embraces virtually every nation-state and economy, while the magnitude of gross financial flows is unprecedented as is the turnover on global financial markets. In addition, multinational business activity is increasingly embedded in regional and global networks. So I would want to argue, and I do at length (with Anthony McGrew) in *Global Transformations*, that even on their own terms, that is, in terms of economic argument, Hirst and Thompson are wrong. But that is not all there is to say, because the challenge of globalization is not just economic, it is also, among other things, political, cultural and environmental. Hence, we need to examine a confluence of factors, which together are changing the situational context of political communities and states.

MG: In your work, you have mentioned that globalization can be better understood by breaking it down into a number of dimensions, one of these concerns what you have called 'the reconfiguration of political power'. What do you mean by this?

DL: Consider, for example, that in the 19th century heads of states had only one or two possible interstate conferences per annum to attend. Today, they could go to over 4,000 annually! Politicians can barely keep up with global political events, never mind remain in control of them. There's been an explosive growth of IGOs, INGOs, regional fora like the EU, interregional fora (including increasing interaction between the EU, Pacific Asia and NAFTA) and so on. The political circumstances of the contemporary world are very different from those of 100 years ago. States now find themselves embedded in much more complicated sets of social and political relations. Now this is not to say, and in this sense I agree with the sceptical position, that the intensification of globalization leads simply to the diminution of state power and the collapse of sovereignty. I don't think that's what's happening. Hence, I use the phrase, 'the reconfiguration of political power'. The rights, duties and powers of states are being rearticulated in a much more complex way, involving the development of a world of multilayered power, multilayered authority and complex forms of governance. Forms of governance are being diffused below the level of the nation-state to sub-national regions, and above the level of the nation-state to supranational regions and

global institutions - the WTO, the IMF and so on. A shift is taking place from states as simple 'containers of political power' to states as just one layer, albeit an important layer, in a complex political process in which state sovereignty is a 'bargaining chip' for use in negotiations over extensive transnational phenomena.

MG: But what is prompting such transformations in the classic nation-state; and to what extent is the nation-state being forced to adjust to new socio-economic and political circumstances? Further, what reasons may prompt the nation-state to bargain with its own sovereignty?

DH: I think the reasons for the development of 'political globalization' are very complicated. I don't myself hold to any sort of mono-causal account, for example, the expansion of capitalism, or the expansion of some aspect of political power. In order to understand, as it were, why states collaborate, we have to grasp the complexity of historical change. There are many issues involved. Let me just give you two or three examples. One of the great impetuses to global collaboration and international change were the First and Second World Wars, and in particular the Holocaust. The Holocaust (and later Stalinism) were phenomena of such horror that they provided enormous impetus to create new and different forms of regional and global governance, based on and locked-into human rights. The human rights agenda cannot be fully explained without understanding the crisis of 1939-45. I would emphasize that one of the great impetuses to international regulation and change in the last five decades has been war and the appalling destruction we are capable of visiting on each other. But clearly this is not a sufficient explanation; there are many other significant factors.

A second set of pressures for change concerns the emergence and increasing awareness of huge global challenges such as ozone depletion, global warming and so on. These problems transcend the capacity of individual states to deal with them. This realization has created a new political agenda, and a new set of political circumstances. So here we have a second reason for why cross-border collaboration is possible: the emergence of massive new social problems which transcend the borders of states and can only be dealt with by states if they work together.

Why would individual states be motivated to seek to solve problems together? First, they may be forced into it by powerful social agents or movements of various kinds. I think this is one reason why today states talk to each other about global problems. It's not necessarily because they've found their own way to these problems, it is that they were forced to confront them. Secondly, and related to this, I think states have learnt that, through collaboration and the creation of common regimes and common international regulatory frameworks, they can find ways of co-ordinating their activity which reduce the costs to them of acting alone; reduce uncertainty and risk; spread and share information; produce public goods which they can't develop in isolation; and increase their collective effectiveness.

MG: You have argued elsewhere that national democracies require an international cosmopolitan democracy if they are to be sustained and developed in the contemporary era. But how is cosmopolitan democracy to be implemented? Furthermore, how can cosmopolitan democracy avoid being overrun by a powerful state capable of imposing its own rules of the game?

DH: Well this is a very big but important question. Let me just make a few points about it. First of all, in the 17th century - it might seem very odd to go back to this period in order to answer your question! - the idea of the modern state was first championed as a set of political institutions, separate from ruler and ruled and separate from religious authority. This idea of a modern secular state, set out by Hobbes and others, seemed a most utopian notion. And yet, 200 years or so later, it became the dominant form of the modern political world. My arguments about cosmopolitanism and cosmopolitan democracy are not arguments which simply assume that suitable transformations can be made here and now. The development of a set of cosmopolitan arguments, and the championing of cosmopolitan democracy, presupposes that we understand history as the *longue durée*. But having said that, I think my arguments connect to a number of important contemporary changes, some of which we've already talked about. To begin with, states find themselves in new situations. We talked about this under the heading of 'the reconfiguration of political power.' States today are locked into a world of multilayered authority and multilayered governance.

Secondly, most of our key political ideas, to do with self-determination, accountable government and so on, were ideas formed in the era in which states were being created and consolidated. The challenge now is somewhat different. Today, some of the most fundamental problems we face, for example, the regulation of trade, the management of financial instability, exploding inequalities, the protection of the environment and the defence of the genetic basis of humankind are not issues which can any longer be solved by states or a people acting alone. Most modern political theory presupposes the idea of a self-determining people that can set its own fate. Today, we're in a world of 'overlapping communities of fate', where the fate of different peoples is interconnected, set either by powerful states or by processes - from financial markets to the environment - which are global in their scope and ramifications.

What response can we have to this? Well, we can either leave it, as it were, to markets and states to try to sort out the problems. In this case many of the issues will be 'resolved' by the most powerful countries, e.g., the United States, according to their geopolitical aims, or they'll be 'resolved' by the most powerful companies in their own interests. As you know, many of the latter now dwarf the size of most states in terms of resources they can command. So we could just shrug and leave it to a world of big states and unregulated markets. Or, we can argue that we have to create new forms of transparency and accountability, new forms of democracy, and more effective regulation which can subject these processes to greater political control and management. The idea of cosmopolitan democracy belongs to this latter consideration - a refusal to leave pressing regional and global issues to the simple interests of particular parties, states or market forces.

MG: Traditionally the nation-state has acted as the guarantor of its citizens' rights within its own territory. If we were to move into a cosmopolitan democratic era, who or what do you envisage as a possible guarantor of cosmopolitan rights?

DH: Well, first of all, I think that some of the changes which are essential to a cosmopolitan future are part of the process of globalization. When we think of globalization we tend to think only of neo-liberal deregulation, the creation of global markets, free-trade enforced by the WTO, or we think of the global

financial system etc. But since 1945, and in some respects predating that, the law war, human rights regimes and so on have created a basis in international law for some of the most remarkable elaborations of the rights and duties of persons. Clearly, the history of the entrenchment and enforcement of these rights is another matter and a very mixed story. If we just take the most 'glorious champion' of the liberal Enlightenment, Europe, and reflect on the 20th century, we see that states alone are no guarantee of anything. The history of states in Europe is, in part, the history of the most abominable violation of human rights. I talked earlier of the Holocaust, but we can add, of course, Stalinism and Fascism (in Italy and Spain). So history in the 20th century shows very clearly that even in Europe, or perhaps one should say particularly in Europe, that states are no guarantee of human rights. Now that is not to say that states aren't important. Secure states, competent states, well-managed states, legally-defined, politically sophisticated states are crucial. And where citizens don't enjoy these, for example, where they are subject to rogue states or imploding politics, we see the most devastating and appalling consequences (Rwanda). So, of course, modern states are important. But they are no guarantee of anything alone. Accordingly, what's important about global (and regional) legal change over the last 50 years is the increasing diffusion of responsibility for the maintenance of human rights, or the defence of cosmopolitan rights and duties, across different agencies at different levels of governance.

Contemporary Europe and the EU are hugely important examples in this respect. The European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and the creation of the European Court of Human Rights, are milestones in the history of states. Citizens in Europe can now sue their own states for the enforcement of certain human rights. This provides a supranational check on states, and is of fundamental significance in the 'thickening' of humanitarian law, human rights regimes and cosmopolitan concerns. Moreover, we're also on the edge of the foundation of the International Criminal Court (ICC), which is a further step in this thickening process. And there are other steps that we can imagine as well, the creation of an International Human Rights Court, for instance. So, we see the progressive thickening of national and international human rights law in the last 50 to 60 years, with increasing numbers of agencies (formal and informal) responsible for their maintenance and

advancement. In a sense, the more the better! The more checks there are on (subnational) regions and states and the more development there is of regional and international law and accountable frameworks of global governance, the better the prospects of the entrenchment of cosmopolitan rights and duties.

MG: At present, there are discussions about the creation of an ICC. This has prompted countries such as the USA to adopt a negative stand against the project. In particular, the USA has warned that the constitution of the ICC could run against its own interests, since some of the actions of its armed forces abroad could be called into question. This doesn't sound very encouraging. How can an International Criminal court work if countries which are strong, powerful and define themselves as democratic oppose its foundation? How can other countries, with less impeccable democratic records, be expected to react?

DH: I think that you are right to stress that powerful geopolitical interests can form an obstacle to the formation of the ICC. My own view at the moment is that the ICC is probably an unstoppable development. It is an element of legal change that stretches back over many decades, including to the International Tribunals at Nuremberg and Tokyo after the Second World War, and to the more recent tribunals that have been charged with the investigation of war crimes in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia. These tribunals have issued many important decisions, and have widened the terms of reference of international reflection by, for example, ruling recently that mass rape and sexual enslavement constitutes a crime against humanity. Looking back over 50 or 60 years, there were always obstacles to progressive international legal development; but with sufficient pressure and struggle, they can sometimes be overcome!

In addition, it's the job of intellectuals, activists, social movements, etc. to call hypocrisy by its right name. The West has been at the forefront of creating legal mechanisms to sue against crimes against humanity and genocide. It seems to me it did so for very important and profound reasons. We have to remind these very same powerful countries what those reasons were, and also to scrutinize and criticize their own foreign and defence policy in relation to those very same standards. Needless to say, there is a long way to go in this regard.

MG: Much has been written about the incipient emergence of a global culture and the homogenizing effects which this could have on national and regional cultures throughout the world. In your view, what role can be attributed to national cultures in the global era?

DH: I think it's very easy to mistake an account of the globalization of communications with an account of the globalization of culture. On the one hand, the world in which we live is one where, increasingly, communications have become global. We live in a world shaped by different forms of mass media, which together have an extraordinary capacity to transmit information across space virtually instantaneously. But you cannot read-off from these processes fixed and given cultural change. People live in a world marked by global communications, but they also live locally and nationally. Socio-cultural identities are tied to fixed locales and abodes, and change in this domain happens rather slowly. We shouldn't be surprised about this at all. To go back to an earlier discussion, the modern state took centuries to consolidate (and of course still remains very fragile in many parts of the world). Moreover, national cultures weren't simply in place as this process unfolded. Pace Anthony Smith, most of the nation-states of the modern world rigorously sought to define what their national cultures were. They didn't leave it to chance. They promulgated it through schools, the media, national celebration and so on. And if you travel through countries such as France and the United States today, it is clear that national culture is not something that's taken for granted. There are constant reminders of 'the flag', reminders which seem to me to suggest that national cultures are much more fragile than many states would like to admit.

Moreover, I think that we live in a world not just of national cultures, but of *multicultures* - a world of increasing cultural hybridity, cultural mix, cultural *mélange*, as it were. Now this could be a very comforting for those of us, like myself, who are of cosmopolitan disposition, but I think one has to be cautious. Cultural change is slow. And therefore I go back to my earlier remarks. Just as the modern state wasn't built in a generation, the emerging world of multinational fora, multinational authority, diverse and diffused forms of community, isn't going to be bound together by a solid cosmopolitan culture and law in any short measure of time either.

My final point in this context would be this: it seems to me that we're right to celebrate cultural difference and diverse national cultural traditions. But these cultures alone cannot generate the conceptual and intellectual resources to address many of the most pressing public goods that all communities need - stable financial systems, strong welfare regimes, safe sustainable development, a protected global environment, and so on. These problems will not be solved by national cultures asserting their supremacy. They'll only be solved by peoples and communities coming together to protect and nurture what is important and common amongst them. Thus, while, on the one hand, we should celebrate cultural diversity and difference, we should not allow ourselves to think that national culture alone provides the resources or goods which can solve these global public policy issues. For this we need to find ways of mediating cultural difference; and this is the challenge of cosmopolitanism. Cosmopolitanism is not about stipulating an homogenous cultural world with a homogenous set of political and economic institutions. Cosmopolitanism is about mediating and adjudicating difference. The great cosmopolitan philosophers enjoin and celebrate difference, but they recognise that difference alone is not a basis for solving common problems. Moreover, in order to protect and nurture difference itself, we have to create a stable framework of law, opportunity and accountability, so that all peoples can flourish within the constraints of recognising the fundamental problems they have in common, which presuppose not just rights but also duties and responsibilities to each other.

MG: You refer to 'multicultures' and the diversity embodied in them, but I think it is fair to argue that not all cultures are equal, or to be more precise, not all cultures have the same access to power and resources. In this context, who is going to mediate and adjudicate difference? Who will be in a position to decide on the principles informing the creation of the stable framework of law, opportunity and accountability that you have just mentioned? In a nutshell, aren't many of these cultures and identities which inform diversity bound to disappear under the impact of processes of globalization?

DH: You're absolutely right, of course, to stress that not all identities and communities have access to the same resources. The contemporary world is pervaded by inequalities - massive inequalities of resource, opportunity and life chances. All the evidence we have before us confirms this. So we need to make a distinction between legitimate and illegitimate difference, between legitimate and illegitimate power, between rightful authority and an authority which is coercive and abusive. At the heart of my work, especially from *Democracy and the Global Order* onward, has been an attempt to say what this might be. I have sought to develop a theory of democracy and social justice that places at its centre the requirement that if everyone is to have an equal stake in the processes which govern their lives, then they can only do so by enjoying a 'common structure of political action.' Such a structure is incompatible with the massive inequalities which erode and attack people's agency. If you take seriously that all human beings share a common universe, that all human beings have equal dignity and value and that all human beings have a right to an active agency, then we must be alarmed by any form of political and economic system that systematically denies or threatens the basis of their agency. Now it's impossible in a short interview to elaborate this view at any length, but I would say that any theory of difference that isn't also a theory of justice should give rise to some considerable alarm.

I think there's been a great danger - to come back to your question - especially evident in the last 10 years or so, that many people have thought it's enough to celebrate identity, -that the celebration of identity *per se* is the celebration of autonomy, or the celebration of self-determination and just outcomes. I think that identity *per se* is not justice. The politics of identity and the politics of justice are two separate things. It's an open question whether my particular identity, my particular cultural passion, generates just or unjust outcomes. There is nothing, in my view, in the nature of identity that is automatically linked to justice. So a theory of identity has to be linked with a theory of justice, to a theory of legitimate difference. And thus, I think, we need to distinguish, on the one hand, between those forms of identity, cultural life and cultural style which are about exploring the meaning and nature of social and economic life and which seek a just accommodation with others, and those forms of identity which stipulate or dictate the terms of reference for others. A theory of identity and justice must

applaud the first, and raise serious questions about the second. Hence, a theory of cosmopolitan democracy, which isn't also a theory of social justice, would be a very weakened theory indeed.

MG: But survival does not depend alone on the justice associated with some particular identities. We could be confronted by a situation in which a particular identity dissociated from any theory of justice has the resources to develop and expand, while an identity linked with a theory of justice decays and disappears because it lacks the resources necessary to maintain and promote its specificity. This leads us to another question. Since this interview is for the Catalan journal IDEES, I feel our readers will have great interest to hear your views about the chances for survival of non-state cultures such as the Catalan one.

DH: I think that if one looks at how slowly cultures change, one need not be too alarmed about the prospects of the erosion of cultural difference. Moreover, the globalization of communications highlights not just what we have in common, but also our individuality and diversity. Globalization doesn't just create an enhanced understanding, it can also accentuate what it is that we don't have in common.

Diversity and difference are the foundation of tradition and cultural understanding. The latter are the framework through which some of the most important questions of life and death are interpreted. We all live in particular communities where the nature and meaning of life, death, sexuality, shame and guilt are begging out for elaboration. In the world where the church no longer has a monopoly of what these things might mean, we necessarily look to our own cultural resources and traditions to help us make sense of them. However, in a world in which we're increasingly aware of the other, in which we're increasingly aware that we're not just part of one cultural tradition - that we live in a world of many overlapping cultural traditions - it seems to me that we have a basis for the exploration and mediation of cultural difference, a process which could enrich the cultural horizon of everyone. So I wouldn't say that the Catalan people need worry excessively about the future of the Catalan culture. I would say they might well be able to look forward to coming to understand the distinctiveness of

Catalan culture in the context of diversity of other forms of life - the disclosure of prejudices (in the hermeneutic sense) and the enhancement of understanding. And in that respect, if aspects of Catalan culture change it may well be that change isn't all for regressive reasons. It may well occur because it reflects a greater understanding and reflexivity. Culture has always changed and we shouldn't be alarmed about the prospect of change. In fact, we should be confident enough, and secure enough, in our identities to embrace it, if we find that change is justified and that there are good reasons for the development of our conceptions of self.

MG: In this context, do you consider cultural globalization as a democratic process?

DH: I think cultural globalization is neither democratic nor anti-democratic. I think, first of all, it certainly has to be recognised that the dominant forms of the globalization of communication are those which are controlled by a relatively small number of states and a somewhat larger number of companies. If what is meant by cultural globalization is, moreover, the increasing dominance of the English language, the increasing dominance of Arnold Schwarzenegger type movies and the music of figures like Madonna and Eminem, we can't say this is automatically a process of political emancipation or a process of democratic change! At the same time, while we may express reservations and scepticism about the Americanisation of global communications and global culture, we also need to recognize that new forms of communication - the internet, satellite TV and so on - are also creating greater access to, and the possibilities of participation in, different forms of cultural activity and expression. It's not just that many of us now eat foods which come from all over the world, but that we are also aware, through radio, television, the internet and the print media, of a huge range of diversity in life styles and value orientations. The new communication systems create access to other peoples and nations - to social and physical settings which may never have been encountered by particular individuals and groups and which enable them to 'overcome' geographical boundaries which once might have prevented contact. As such, these systems can serve to detach, or disembed, identities from particular times, places and traditions, and can have a 'pluralizing impact' on identity formation and the

interpretative schemes with which we operate. To the extent this generates greater understanding, I think we can say that it is progressive and even perhaps democratic. But there's no guarantee of any of this. Nineteenth century figures like Marx in the end just got it wrong. There is no inevitability of history, no inevitable progressive change. They are the changes that you and I decide to make. Illegitimate asymmetries of power need to be exposed and challenged wherever we find them - in culture, politics or economics. Whether the globalization of communications becomes a force that leads to greater understanding, transparency, harmony and so on is up to us. We need to make it so.

MG: You have just set out cultural globalization as a process which might go either way in democratic terms. Where does cosmopolitan democracy fit into this argument? Some would say that the ideal of cosmopolitan democracy, like that of cultural globalization, are culturally limited notions, ie, too linked to Western traditions and processes?

DH: There are people who think that the arguments for cosmopolitanism - that is to say, moral cosmopolitanism, on the one side, and institutional cosmopolitanism, on the other - are very Eurocentric and very Western, tied to the cultural legacy of liberalism and the Enlightenment. Let me say straightaway, guilty as charged! However, just because certain ideas have particular origins in certain locales and places (could it be otherwise?) doesn't invalidate them. To paraphrase (and adapt) the American legal theorist Bruce Ackerman, there is no Islamic nation without a woman who insists on equal rights, no Confucian society without a man who denies the need for deference, and no developing country without a person who does not yearn for work without excessive hours, degradation and hazardous circumstances - or just a predictable pattern of meals. In my view, liberal cosmopolitanism or democratic cosmopolitanism, as I prefer to call it, is the basis for articulating and entrenching the equal liberty of all human beings, wherever they were born or brought up. It is the basis of underwriting the liberty of others, not of obliterating it. It's about protecting and nurturing the autonomy of each and every person so that they can determine the framework of their own lives. But 'equal liberty' means that individual choices and life projects can only

be pursued legitimately to the extent that they not distort or coerce the lives of others. And to the extent that they do, they must be checked and held accountable - locally, nationally, regionally and globally. The arguments for cosmopolitan democracy recognize the importance of enjoying autonomy and difference, but not of affirming asymmetries of power which pervade the life chances of others. If transnational power systems are to be held accountable, we have to have legal and institutional arrangements to make that possible. Cosmopolitan democracy is one proposal for this.

MG: From democratic cosmopolitanism I would like to move on to the much debated Third Way. Your contact and influence over Tony Giddens's work has been acknowledged by Giddens himself in the preface of his recent work *The Third Way and its Critics* (Polity Press, 2000) in which he thanks you as a reader and commentator on his book. You have also taken an active role in the Third Way debate. Do you consider that the Third Way has much to offer as an alternative to the traditional left?

DH: First let me say there's nothing in the name, Third Way. The question is, what does the term connote? In the first instance, we must be aware that the term 'the Third Way' is used differently across Europe. Accounts of the idea in Scandinavia, Holland, Spain and elsewhere are all quite different to that found in the British interpretation. What I'm particularly sceptical about is the British Third Way, which seems to me to owe a particular debt to Margaret Thatcher and the era of neo-liberal deregulation. From the late 1970s, Margaret Thatcher, along with Ronald Reagan, championed a deregulatory neo-liberal economic programme; this involved both removing obstacles to free labour markets and to capital mobility. Their agenda helped shape the agenda of the IMF, the WTO, and became a basis of the famous 'Washington Consensus.' To the extent that British conceptions of the Third Way accept as given the current framework of liberal free trade, deregulatory regimes and so on, then I'm a critic of it, because it concedes too much to those powerful geopolitical interests and economic forces which I've already discussed critically in our interview.

What does Tony Giddens mean by the Third Way? First of all, I think he is right to stress, as he does often, that the deregulatory liberal programme has had its

day. Clearly, free markets alone are frequently unstable; they don't generate many precious and important public goods, and cannot solve fundamental problems concerning the environment, growing inequalities, sustainable development and economic stability. That, I think, we can all agree upon. But we can also agree upon something else that's important; that is, that there's no turning back to state-dominated conceptions of socialism, by which I mean both the communist conceptions that emerged out of Soviet Russia and the orthodox social democratic conceptions of state driven reform. So, if by the Third Way we simply mean that we are critical of unregulated markets, on the one side, and state-dominated socialism, on the other, then I think we can accept that we're all on the ground of the Third Way now. But, of course, to say this is not to say very much, or, rather, it is not to say enough. Because most of life's problems and political challenges lie somewhere in the middle of this ground, and the Third Way *per se*, in my view, hasn't yet produced a precise enough set of principles or policy prescriptions which clearly mark out its ground as a fully coherent and defensible position.

The difficulty I have with Third Way discourse, and in particular with the British variant (including to some extent Tony Giddens'), is that it concedes too much to private power and market forces, on the one side, and not enough to a tough conception of social justice, on the other. The modernization of economy and society is *sine qua non* of Third Way social democracy. The promotion of business, private investment and the free labour markets are among the key policy objectives. However, these must be linked, so the argument goes, to the creation of a skilled, flexible, work-based society; for the root to prosperity, welfare and the alleviation of disadvantage lie in education, training and a willingness to take on paid work. The state must help create a fair framework of opportunity for all citizens to exploit; whether they do or do not is, ultimately, the citizen's responsibility. Within this context social justice connotes the removal of barriers to entry to a work-based society while social inequality should be understood as a form of social exclusion – the unfair marginalization of people in relation to work and the labour market.

This Third Way conception of social justice is a very weak and at best minimalist understanding of the term. My concern, however, is not just, as it were, an old Leftist anxiety about inequalities. For what is at issue is a fundamental matter

relating both to democracy and cosmopolitanism. If everyone has an equal interest in political autonomy, if everyone has equal entitlement to participate in processes of self-determination, if everyone has an equal stake in political processes which govern their lives, then it seems to me that, for democratic reasons, we have to worry about injustice and inequality. Injustice and inequality threaten the extent to which we can all enjoy political liberty. The threat to liberty in the modern world is not, as John Stuart Mill or as Friedrich Hayek put it, from equality. The threat in the modern world is inequality so vast that markets become the dominant organizational forces, and leading geopolitical interests shape and cement the nature of political outcomes.

Democratic and cosmopolitan politics depend on the protection and nurturing of equal rights and obligations. The specificity of such politics can and ought to be conceived as the conjuncture of this commitment with a preoccupation with artificially created inequalities; that is to say, as the protection and nurturing of each person's equal democratic rights and obligations, and the erosion and removal of those structural inequalities which threaten people's standing as equally free members of their communities. This double sided commitment requires governments to check and regulate all those power systems – whether economic, social or political – which invade, undermine or corrupt the possibility of free and equal involvement in public life. Such a commitment provides the basis for an attack on illegitimate asymmetries of power and opportunity. This is a *democratic rationale* for a politics of intervention – not to control and regulate power systems per se, but to provide the basis for self-determination and the deployment of citizens' capacities.

In my view, the programme of the Third Way is very vulnerable on this most pressing matter. And in this sense, I see the diffusion of democratic governance, both below and above the level of the nation-state, and the pursuit of cosmopolitan democracy as a most vital component of a revitalized social democracy.

MG: Do you establish a distinction between more theoretical interpretations of the Third Way such as that offered by Giddens and formulations of the Third Way as defended by the Labour government and by Blair himself?

DH: Yes and no! I think it's very easy to be critical of social democratic governments when they're in power. And I think it would be very easy for me to sit here and hold up my theoretical conceptions of cosmopolitan justice and cosmopolitan democracy and point out how inadequate the Blair regime is. But if this is all I did, I think it would be mistaken. I said earlier in our discussion that one has to think of historical change over the long term. And I think if one does that one shouldn't be blind to significant change when it occurs. For all its limits (and I think they are important limits) the Blair government has been successful in some respects. It's been successful in diffusing political power to subnational regions; it's been successful in the creation of the Welsh and Scottish Assemblies; it has been successful in the reform of the House of Lords, albeit an incomplete process to date. Moreover, it has put the abolition of child poverty at the heart of its programme and some of the early measures in this respect are quite helpful. It's done several notable things to improve the position of women, from the creation of a minimum wage to the extension of nursery places for young children. I could go on. These reforms are significant. Of course, I want to say these changes aren't enough; and I want to say that even the interpretation of the Third Way by Anthony Giddens doesn't press the agenda far enough in the direction that we've been talking about this afternoon. But I think it would be arrogant, and to a degree, lacking in much needed humility, if one also didn't see how useful some of the changes introduced by the Blair government have in fact been. It's not that they have simply been empty; it is, rather, that we need to push them further, and build upon them.

MG: Only one last question, could you tell us about your current research?

DH: My current research is an extension of my work on globalization, global governance and democracy, and is threefold in its orientation. First of all I'm trying to rework the political philosophy of cosmopolitanism. This is a very demanding project, but I want to think through some of the classical conceptions of cosmopolitanism and to help specify what they might mean not only in a world of cultural diversity, but also in a world where what we have in common is as important as some of the things that mark us apart. Secondly, I want to deepen my empirical work on globalization. I'm very pleased with the reception

of *Global Transformations*, but there's still a lot of empirical work that needs to be done, and I'm engaged in doing some of it at the current period. And, thirdly I'm working on new problems of global governance. I do believe we live increasingly in a world of multilayered authority. But the question is: what concepts of governance are most appropriate for grappling with different sorts of challenges. I don't think the institutional structures that might best cope with BSE or AIDS or the spread of malaria are automatically the same institutional solutions that will help us resolve problems to do with global financial instability, the problem of global environmental change and so on. I think we need a much more subtle and complex account of political power in the modern world. And I think we're sorely lacking in it at the present time. We have a lot of rhetoric - even from me! – and we need to go beyond that.

MG: David, thank you very much indeed for sharing with us your views on globalization, cosmopolitanism and democracy.

Cambridge, 11 March 2001.

First published in the journal IDEES of the Centre d'Estudis de Temes Contemporanis, Generalitat de Catalunya, this article will also appear in *Constellations* 8:4.