

*Rooted Cosmopolitans:
Transnational Activists in a World of
States¹*

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It is 1920 in the port of Danzig – now Gdansk -- when a young man named Moishke Tarabur boards a ship. He has left his native *shtetl* of Kletsk in what is now Belarus, then part of Poland, for the United States. Belarus has been caught in the tug of war between Poland and the new Soviet state, and like thousands of others, Moishke leaves to escape poverty, disorder, and the anti-semitism that invariably follow them in this part of the world. Here is his passport photograph –a passport which, incidentally, was printed in both Russian and Polish:

Plate One

Moishke Tarabeur's Passport Picture, 1920



Kletsk in the 1920s was one of hundreds of mostly-Jewish towns in the old Russian Pale of Settlement between Warsaw and Moscow. It had a flourishing cattle trade, but not yet the major shoe factory that would grow out of it. Its 3000-odd Jews worshipped in seven synagogues, alongside Catholic and Orthodox churches and a mosque for the Tatar minority. But there were very few sources of employment for young people and virtually no public services. Through mutual aid and charity, the Jewish community was able to provide itself with schools, both of a religious and a secular nature, but neither they nor their neighbors had a public health service and there was no hospital for miles.

In 1928, Moishke – by now naturalized in the United States with the new “American” name of Morris. took a trip back to his hometown. Here he is, getting on the boat that took him back to Europe.

Plate Two: The Return to Kletsk, 1928



Morris stayed on in Kletsk for six months (I suspect there was a woman involved), carrying with him not only gifts for family members but a cheque from his fraternal organization, the Young Men's Kletzker Benevolent Association, to pay for a new health clinic in the village. By the time he returned to New York, the clinic was already in operation, and he brought back a sheaf of photos to show his New York *landsmen* the medical marvels that their hard-earned cash had brought to their home town:

Plate Three:

The Kletsk Health Clinic



Morris's activism did not end with transferring immigrant resources to his home town. In the 1930s, he became an officer of the Kletzker Association. From there he moved on to become active in his labor union, and in a number of Jewish organizations that worked to get Jews out of Eastern Europe during and after Hitler's' holocaust. By war's end he was corresponding with officials of international aid agencies to locate Kletzker refugees in family members in Europe's DP camps. It was through the British Jewish Committee for Relief Abroad in Bergen Belsen that he reunited my Bronx cousins with relatives they thought had perished in Hitler's camps.

Plate 4: The Letter from Belsen, 1946

Jewish Committee for Relief Abroad

JEWISH RELIEF UNIT 110.

London Office :-
7 ENSLEIGH PLACE,
TAVITON STREET,
LONDON, W.C.1.

Belsen, Nov. 10th '46

Morris Tarrow,
2036- 72nd St.
Brooklyn.

Dear Sir,

A woman has just been in to see me in my office called HAYER STRUGATCH. She is from Klesk and tells me that your committee is for the people of that town.

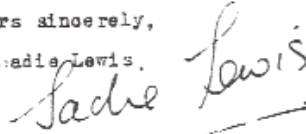
I wonder if you could help her to find her relations, also from Klesk. She has an aunt called Bassia Feder nee Blutstein and an Uncle Morris Blutstein.

This woman is here in Belsen Camp with a child and husband. I do hope you can help her to try and trace these relations. You have no idea what letters from the outside world mean to these people. To have relations in America or England is a great help to them morally.

I do hope I shall receive an answer from you that you have had success in finding these relations for her.

Yours sincerely,

Sadie Lewis.



Source: Feder Family Archive. My thanks to Leslie Feder for conserving it and allowing me access to it.

I use this example not only because Morris Tarrow was my father, but to indicate where many students of globalization go astray. Conceiving of transnational activism as the product of something they long for and consequently construct – a global civil society – they sometimes forget that most people live in a world of states; that since states facilitated globalization, they are also the framework for resistance to it; and that those best placed to respond to the pressures of globalization are, therefore, not deterritorialized activists but what I call *rooted* cosmopolitans.

I. Perspectives on Transnationalism

Let me put this distinction somewhat more formally. From the *International Herald Tribune* of 16 October 1985, anthropologist Ulf Hannerz excavates a story about market women from Nigeria. These intrepid travellers, he writes,

board London-bound planes with loose-fitting gowns, which enable them to travel with dried fish tied to their thighs and upper arms. The dried fish is presumably sold to their countrymen in London: on the return trip, the women carry similarly concealed bundles of frozen fish sticks, dried milk, and baby clothes, all of which are in great demand in Lagos (Hannerz1990:238).

“Is this cosmopolitanism,” Hannerz asks himself – and quickly answers: “no”. Why not? Because these women never cease to think of themselves as Nigerian market women. That is what makes them “locals”, in Merton’s sense of their “orientations to locality” (1957:393) – albeit locals who travel.

Anthropologists are not alone in reserving cosmopolitanism for people able to conceive, as well as living, cosmopolitan lives. Listen to a historian, James A. Field, who writes of “the new tribe” of cosmopolitans. As a consequence of “the shrinking and linking of the world,” he writes, “of increased wealth and increased mobility, of the spread of Western knowledge and the growth of transnational organization,”

...the cultural foundations of the traditional societies and the presumed cultural uniqueness so central to so many nationalisms were being undermined. This process involved the development of two cultures – one global and the other local, national or provincial (Field 1971:367).

I am not sure we should we be satisfied with a definition of “local” and “cosmopolitan” that rests so centrally on cognition, feelings, and identities. For this involves both an artificial distinction between “local” and “global” and a reduction of a complex process of interaction to cultural differentiation. Rather than specifying the change through cultural metaphors that smudge the specificity of cultures, I propose instead to specify the links among societies through the *interactions* among them and through the agents of such interactions. This is actually what Merton meant by cosmopolitans. In his classical essay on types of influentials, he wrote that

The difference in basic orientation is bound up with a variety of other differences: (1) in the structures of social relations in which each type is implicated; (2) in the roads they have traveled to their present positions in the influence-structure; (3) in the utilization of their present status for the exercise of interpersonal influence; and (4) in their communications behavior (ibid.:394-5).

Let me be clear: I don't think everyone in the world is cosmopolitan just because capitalism is a global system; but I do want to argue that between the free-floating transnationals who Hannerz and Field allow into the magic circle of cosmopolitanism and those who never leave their cognitive homes, a major characteristic of our times has been the emergence of a stratum of *rooted cosmopolitans*, who I define as *people rooted in specific national contexts, but who engage in regular activities that require their involvement in transnational networks of contacts and conflicts?*¹ These are the people who link global capitalism and international institutions to their home countries and can serve as two-way transmission belts for the international NGOs that take up the claims of the voiceless peoples of the planet.

This is a fairly broad concept of transnationalism, but it doesn't include everyone; it excludes some categories of actors who are often included under the umbrella of globalization and includes some others:

- ✠ it includes immigrants who are involved regularly in networks of production and distribution in both their home and their host countries, but it *does not* include all immigrants (Portes 2000:265)
- ✠ it includes firms that segment parts of their production process to subcontractors in cheap-labor countries but it *does not* include these national subcontractors (Anner 2001)
- ✠ it includes labor activists who forge ties with northern labor unions and NGOs but it *does not* include all workers in the South (Waterman 1998)
- ✠ it includes the activists within transnational advocacy networks who link domestic activists to international institutions, but it *does not* include all domestic activists (Keck and Sikkink 1998)
- ✠ and it includes scholars who utilize their contacts in field situations to link local activists to external sites of conflict, but it *does not* include all scholars who go abroad – however much they may identify passionately with the struggles of their research subjects (Seidman 2000).

In this talk I will ignore the variations among different types of cosmopolitans and look for the relational mechanisms that link locally-rooted cosmopolitans to non-local allies, opponents, and third parties. I will argue that both their transnational capacities and the constraints on their capacity to bring about change through transnational interaction turn on their rootedness in domestic networks. Three

such mechanisms are *brokerage, certification, and social appropriation*.² I will argue that rooted cosmopolitans are

- *brokers* between local networks and their non- local interlocutors;
- that part of their strength is their ability to be *certified* as legitimate by either social actors or public authorities;
- and finally, that they *appropriate social structures* intended for other purposes for the their claims and the claims of those they represent.

I will use three sectors of transnational activity – immigrant “transnational communities,” the multilateral development bank campaign, and the transnational justice campaign to illustrate these mechanisms. But first I feel it necessary to point out that none of this is particularly new: rooted cosmopolitans have been around for centuries, as Michael Hanagan shows in his perceptive analysis of Irish nationalists (1998). Long before scholars and publicists discovered globalization at the end of the last century, there were merchants, writers and publicists bridging economies and cultures.

II. Capitalism and its Cosmopolitans

Even before the Renaissance, exchanges generated by global markets produced niches within which cosmopolitans were formed as a nascent capitalism joined a tentacular Church and innovations in publishing and scholarship to link East and West, North and South of the European/Mediterranean world. When we turn to this phase of expanding capitalism, we find a blossoming merchant and financial capitalist class converging with changes in the international system and with technical improvements in printing to produce something like a transnational European class.

A. Renaissance Cosmopolitans

Take the archtypical case of the pre-renaissance merchant of Prato, Francesco di Marco Datini. When he returned to his native town from his apprenticeship in Avignon, Datini left behind a branch entrusted to two partners. Soon after opening a central house in Prato, he established branches “in Florence, Pisa, and Genoa, in Barcelona and Valencia, and finally in Majorca and Ibiza”, writes his biographer, Iris Origo (1963:8), each one in the hands of a friend or kinsman. This gave a patriarchal character to his companies, in an age of great distances and slow and uncertain communications. ““We give you Manno as your son,” wrote Agono degli Agli about the young kinsman he wanted to place in Francesco’s Company in Pisa. `You know that he is your plant, and a farmer has great joy when his plant bears fruit”” (Ibid., p. 118).

The goods that Francesco traded came from all over the world that was known to Europeans at the time:

...lead and alum and pilgrims’ robes from Roumania, slaves and spices from the Black Sea, English wool from London and Southhampton and African or Spanish wool from Majorca and Spain, salt from Ibiza, silk from Venice, leather from Cordova and Tunis, wheat from Sardinia and Sicily, oranges and dates and bark and wine from Catalonia...” (Ibid.).

Yet he remained such a Pratese that the priors of Florence felt justified in dunning him with double taxation on his businesses in that city when it was threatened by invasion by Gian Galeazzo Visconti (ibid., p. 140).

B. The Church, the New Learning, and Publishing

As is the case today, capitalism was not the only source of cosmopolitanism in the early Renaissance; international institutions, learning, and publishing played a role too. In 1438, the Byzantine emperor, John VIII, and the Patriarch Joseph II headed a delegation to a church council in Florence that the Pope had called to work towards the ever-elusive goal of ecumenical unity between the eastern and western branches of Christianity (Jardine 1996:50-51). A young Greek scholar, Bessarion, accompanied the easterners as an adviser on doctrine, bringing with him a load of both doctrinal and mathematical works. The Florentines, more interested in classical texts than in doctrinal matters, greeted him warmly. The conclave of Florence produced little ecumenical progress, but when the Ottoman Turks succeeded in conquering Constantinople, Bessarion returned to Italy, found employment with the Pope, and devoted the rest of his life to the task of reviving classical learning “built from a fusion of the Byzantine Greek and Italian Latin surviving traditions” (Ibid: 62).

Bessarion became both a linchpin of Renaissance scholarship and an envoy of the Papacy, the most powerful international institution of the time. He was soon travelling as papal legate to the Diets of Nuremberg and Vienna, returning to Italy not only with notable additions to his library but with a young German mathematician and astronomer, Regiomontanus (Johann Müller), who began to develop a modern mathematics on the basis of the Greek texts that Bessarion had brought from Byzantium. In turn, the German scholar was invited to Buda, where he set to work for the King of Hungary, Matthias Corvinus, who had a number of arabic texts and wished to establish his court as a cultural center like the Italian ones.

Between merchant capitalism and the new learning the key link was the new business of print. Businessmen were quick to recognize the profits to be made from printing. In 1471, Regiomontanus moved back to Nuremberg, where he set up a printing press “dedicated to mass-producing the original ancient texts which he had so closely studied, as well as the new works, mathematical tables and tables of astronomical observations which he had drawn up” (ibid., p. 202). As a thriving commercial center, Nuremberg offered the financial backing, a literate merchant class as a clientele, and a strategic geographic location in the heartland of Europe’s swath of city-states from which to diffuse learning and make profits.

Not only was the printed book reproducible, small, unobtrusive and portable; the printers, publishers, commercial capitalists, and writers who produced them were from the first involved in transnational networks. The first successful Venetian printer, who bore the distinctly unvenetian name of Jenson, was allied commercially with a group of Italian businessmen, and produced a Pliny’s *Natural History*. This book soon appeared in London, where it was brought by the English agents of the Florentine Strozzi banking family (ibid., 143). The same Jenson formed an alliance with the banker Peter Ugelheimer in Frankfurt (p. 148) for the sale of his books in the German states. Iberia was not far behind in the transnational business of print: the first printers in Valencia arrived in the 1470s, summoned by Jakob Vizlandt, the commercial agent of the Great Trading Company of Ravensburg (p. 150). The most prominent printer of early books in Portugal, Valentin Fernandes of Moravia, worked for the German merchant community in Lisbon (p. 151).

Eventually, the new technology came together with intellectual curiosity and commercial acumen to produce that fertile phenomenon that my colleague, Benedict

Anderson, has famously dubbed “print capitalism” (1991). Anderson traced the emergence of modern printing as a source of the imagined territorial communities that eventually produced real ones through the vehicle of vernacular nationalism. But much earlier, the new technology fueled the non-national movement for reform in the Church that led to the Reformation. Reform could diffuse both within and across borders in part because it was difficult for rulers to control the circulation and reproduction of printed books. This was from the beginning a *transnational* process. “Printed books,” writes Lisa Jardine,

Permanently altered the way information was distributed around Europe. Men of dangerous or dissident ideas could be kept out of areas whose authorities did not approve of them – their books, it quickly became clear, could not (ibid., p. 171).

Publishing, learning, and incipient reform came together in the figure of that archtypical cosmopolitan, Erasmus, who “was associated throughout his career with the most prominent and successful printing houses in Italy, France, the Low Countries and Germany” (Ibid., p. 155).³ His *Colloquies* combined teaching, print, and the roots of religious dissent. Based on a teaching manual he had developed in Paris from 1495-99, they “provided Erasmus with an admirable medium for commenting freely but informally on any events, customs or institutions that interested him.” But they were also larded with crude, offensive, and – to some, like the doctors of the Sorbonne – heterodox opinions (Thompson 1965:xxvi, xxix-ff.). In the guise of an instrument to teach young men Latin, the *Colloquies* diffused across Europe’s educated classes a new literary form, turning the commentary of manners into a form of social criticism.

C. Mechanisms of Intermediation

Why have I taxed my listeners with these ruminations on capitalism, printing, and the fusion of learning and dissent in early Europe? It is to lay the groundwork for what may be somewhat more controversial. Every one of these Renaissance merchants/scholars/ printers/ publishers/reformers was not only a cosmopolitan: he was a *rooted* cosmopolitan, building a transnational career on the basis of local goods or local knowledge that were marketable elsewhere, on ties to local business groups, on royal or church patronage, and on networks of clients, students, and correspondents who staffed his businesses, helped him start a career, diffused his products, and led to the formation of a transnational “republic of letters.”

Capitalism was one source of this development; another were the activities of the most powerful transnational institution of the time, the Catholic church. It was the pope’s conclaves and diplomatic missions that brought the wisdom of the East to Rome and from Rome, Florence and Venice north into Germany. The first modern social movement – that of the Calvinist “saints” – began as a movement of insurgency *within* the church, powered by networks of dissident priests and laymen using the new technology of print. They spread the new faith by sending secretly-printed pamphlets across borders to advance their religious views (Walzer 1971). Luther himself had his sermons printed in the vernacular, to make them available to (relatively) ordinary people. Out of the matrix of print, profit, scholarship, and transnational institutions grew the first modern transnational movement -- the Reformation. Like modern social movements, it was powered by rooted cosmopolitans.

III. Transnational Activists

What do we find when we fast-forward five centuries to the intensely transnational world of today? Clearly, we find much more international travel, communications, and cognition than in the Renaissance or the Reformation. In the place of travelling scholars laboring over the translation of Greek texts, we find tightly-knit “epistemic communities” whose transnational knowledge communities know no borders. Instead of merchants like Datini depending on trusted kinsmen to run their businesses abroad, we see an apparel business in which a new design can be sent electronically from New York to Hong Kong one week and a finished garment sent back to America the next. In place of Calvinist saints secreting protestant pamphlets in their knapsacks as they cross the Alps, we find Islamic fundamentalists sending videotapes of guerilla training in Afghanistan across the globe.

But has all of this wiped away the “local” in Merton’s local/cosmopolitan typology? Is there already something resembling the “global civil society” that some activists hope for and some scholars deduce? Is there a “rationalized” world polity that some sociologists posit as a reality? A stateless capitalism that some praise while others attack? Focussing our attention at the cognitive level, there is much evidence of the formation of a cosmopolitan “new tribe” (Field 1965: 367 ff.) But if we turn to the interactions that fuel the engine of transnational exchange, I think we will find that the key links that connect the global to the local are *rooted cosmopolitans* in the mold of Datini, Bessarion and Erasmus.

I want to offer three sets of contemporary examples that will help us to understand the role of transnational activists rooted in national settings. I will draw first from the pathbreaking work on transnational immigrant communities by Alex

Portes and his collaborators. I then turn to evidence about transnational advocacy networks from the case of the multilateral development bank campaign of the 1980s. And I will conclude with the “justice cascade” described by Ellen Lutz and Kathryn Sikkink in their recent work. In each case, I will try to show that it is through relational mechanisms like brokerage, certification, and social appropriation that such figures link the global with the local.

A. Transnational Communities

Turn first to 1997, in Los Angeles, where Alex Portes and his collaborators found and interviewed a Mr. Gonzalez, president of the local civic committee of a small town in El Salvador. When asked why he intended to stay in Los Angeles in the face of discrimination and nativism, he replied:

I really live in El Salvador, not in LA. When we have the regular *fiestas* to collect funds for La Esperanza, I am the leader and I am treated with respect. When I go back home to inspect the works paid with our contributions I am as important as the mayor (Portes 1999:466).

Despite his modest origins and the fact that La Esperanza is only three hours from LA by plane, Mr. Gonzalez is part of a transnational community. “When migration is massive and motivated by political convulsions at home,” writes Portes, when the group brings cultural resources with it, and when it faces discrimination and hostility in its target society, “there is no recourse but to draw a protective boundary around the group, identifying it with traditions and interests rooted in the home country and separating it symbolically and, at times, physically from the host country” (ibid., p. 465).

Like my father's kletzker landsmen, thousands of immigrants like Mr. Gonzalez appropriate the social resources of their communities in America to pay for public works in their home villages. Often they are certified by their home country governments which recognize them "as a source of investments, entrepreneurial initiatives, markets for home country companies and even political representation abroad" (ibid., p. 467; also see Pérez-Godoy 1997 and Levitt 2000). They are also cultural brokers between their home and their adopted societies. Writing of the Otavlan indigenous community in the highlands of Ecuador, which specializes in the production of clothing and its sale in Europe and North America, David Kyle observes of these travellers:

After years of travelling abroad, they have also brought home a wealth of novelties from the advanced countries, including newcomers to their town. In the streets of Otavalo, it is not uncommon to meet European women attired in traditional indigenous dress—the wives of transnational traders who met them and brought them back from their long-distance journeys (cited in Portes 2000:260).

These forms of exchange also have political importance for the home country that go beyond the money and the public works projects that immigrants send home. Mara Pérez-Godoy sketches the influence that some Mexican immigrant voting groups have in local elections from their California homes (1997). Immigrants can also influence more contentious forms of politics; when Zacatecan Indian leaders were arrested by the Mexican government in Oaxaca, *Radio Bilingue* in Fresno, California, put pressure on the government. "If something happens in Oaxaca," declared a local organizer; "we can put protesters in front of the consulates in

Fresno, Los Angeles, Madera” (Portes 1999: 474). Sellers of local goods abroad, supporter of public works at home, brokers of information, cultural exchange, and political influence: transnational communities of immigrant activists are rooted cosmopolitans (see Hanagan 1998, for an earlier example).

B. Transnational Advocates

The examples I have just sketched show us actors in transnational communities transferring resources to their home communities in the South from their new homes in the North. But this is not the only, or even the most important axis of transnational activity. In the decade since Hannerz wrote, a vast new literature has emerged on the boundaries between international relations, comparative politics, and social movements that has highlighted the important role of northern advocates for both global and southern causes in the areas of environmental degradation, human and women’s rights, indigenous peoples’ movements, and much more (Keck and Sikkink 1998; O’Brien et al, 2000; Risse, Ropp and Sikkink 1999).

The analytical burden of much of this literature is to highlight the network nature of these ties and the interactions they produce between northern and southern activists. A polemical reaction has been to underscore the predominant role of “the North” in these networks and the weakness of the voices of the people they claim to represent. We have learned a lot from this analytical work on advocacy networks and there is much truth in southern complaints of northern domination. After all, since northern governments and international institutions have much of the responsibility for development policies in the South, it is inevitable that those who are closest – physically and culturally – to the centers of decision making in

Geneva, New York and Washington will have the most influence on the policies of powerful states and institutions.⁴

However, the geographic expressions “North” and “South,” while they accurately pinpoint the locations of grassroots (southern) and transnational (northern) organizations,⁵ turn out to be somewhat misleading when we examine the relational roles of advocates in transnational advocacy campaigns – for these can come from both North and South and gain their power to bring about change not from their geographic origins but from their capacity to act as brokers and certify domestic movements vis a vis international institutions and third party states.

Consider the activists who managed the multilateral development bank campaign of the 1980s, a campaign that resulted in several policy successes and in one major institutional change – the creation of the World Bank Inspection Panel.⁶ True, the major non-state actors in the campaign, like the Environmental Defense Fund, were “northern;” also true, the key pressure point was the United States Congress, which responded to the environmentalists’ pressure by threatening to reduce the U.S. contribution to the Bank, thereby inducing Bank officials to adjust their environmental policies. But the campaign was powered by activists with long and intimate experience in the South who were able to skillfully frame convergences between the local claims of southern activists on the ground and the environmentally-sensitive policies of northern governments.

The role of “bridging individuals” -- “brokers”, in our terms -- in these campaigns has been noted by many observers. For example, Jonathan Fox and E. David Brown write of:

...a few local, national, and international activists who were able to contact and work with each other without losing credibility with their own constituents, even when those constituents were quite suspicious of the others. These “bridging individuals” or interlocutors were willing to engage in time-consuming and sometimes conflictive processes of learning the perspectives of the diverse actors and of spanning the social and political chasms among them.... Much of the effectiveness of these coalitions and their ability to remain organized in spite of tremendous centrifugal forces depended on the skills and commitment of a few key bridging individuals (Fox and Brown 1998: 454-5).

The key role of both anthropologist and EDF official Steven Schwarzman in the campaign to defend the interests of Amazonian rubber tappers and of tapper advocate Chico Mendes are both emphasized by Margaret Keck (1998:190-91). Schwarzman, attending a rubber tappers’ meeting in Acre, found that the organizers knew little about the projected World Bank-financed Planaflo plan to develop Rondonia. The Institute of Prehistory, Anthropology, and Ecology (IPHAE) surveyed a range of local groups, and gathered evidence that delayed the Bank’s decision and forced the Brazilian government to revise its plan. The brokerage role of Mendes dovetailed with that of Schwarzman, through both his ability to shape the claims of the rubber tappers on the ground and through his famous trip to testify before a Congressional committee in Washington.

This now-familiar story highlights not only the brokerage role of such transnational advocates as Schwarzman and Mendes between North and South ; it also shows how these advocates – because of their rooting in different settings – can

help to certify the claims of grassroots activists to international audiences. Mendes, after all, was not an environmentalist; he was a labor and party organizer who could link the essentially-local economic claims of the rubber tappers to the environmentalists' global agenda. It was through the interaction of the rubber tappers' organizations on the ground and the environmental organizations in Washington that the concept of "ecological reserves" was invented – a concept that provided for the economic needs of the tappers while protecting a portion of the Amazon from the depredations of large-scale development.⁷

Rooted cosmopolitans not only have the capacity to broker connections between North and South; they can certify the claims of resource-poor southerners in terms that will resonate with the priorities of international institutions. We find a similar phenomenon in the transnational activities of indigenous people's representatives in the UN. By convincing the international institution to certify their groups as "indigenous," they gain international legitimation and political leverage in the countries in which their groups are rooted (Dietz 2000). It is no accident that opponents of such leverage are at pains within the UN to deny them certification as indigenous and work to try to re-classify them as mere "minorities."

C. The Transnational Justice Crusade

If my first example of transnational communities illustrated the brokerage mechanism embodied in rooted cosmopolitans and my second one showed the workings of both brokerage and certification, my third example will demonstrate the role of the social appropriation of domestic institutions for transnational purposes. The concept of "social appropriation" calls attention to the use of existing institutions and organizations – rather than the attempt to create new ones for

purposes of mobilization (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2001: ch. 4). I use it here to point to the use of domestic institutions for transnational purposes. My evidence comes from a campaign, largely played out on a variety of national grounds, in which the most visible players were neither grassroots activists nor transnational advocates but legal activists using national courts, and I rely on the excellent work by Ellen Lutz and Kathryn Sikkink (2001).

In 2000, the British government arrested Chilean General and former President Augusto Pinochet on a Spanish extradition warrant for torture and other human rights crimes. “The British courts assiduously considered the jurisdictional issues posed by the Spanish request and determined that the Spanish courts had jurisdiction to try Pinochet for crimes committed in Chile over a decade before” (Lutz and Sikkink:1). Although British authorities ultimately allowed Pinochet to return to Chile, the events in Europe had important political repercussions: first in Argentina, where an infamous torturer, Suarez Mason, who had escaped prosecution for years, was arrested for the theft of children of Argentina’s disappeared (pp. 20-21).

These events rippled across Latin America and the rest of the world. Lutz and Sikkink continue:

- The Argentine and Chilean cases before Judge Garzon...have swelled to include hundreds, and international arrest warrants have been issued for dozens of former junta members and military officers from those two countries (p. 22).
- In Italy, a criminal case against Suarez Mason, Omar Santiago Riveros, and five other Argentine military defendants for the murder of eight Argentines of Italian descent...went to trial after a sixteen year investigation (p. 22).

- Another Italian judicial proceeding occurred with respect to retired Argentine Army Major Jorge Olivera...arrested in August 2000 while in Rome with his wife celebrating their silver wedding anniversary. His arrest was based on a French warrant...(p. 22)
- In August 2000, Mexico arrested retired Argentine Navy Captain Miguel Cavallo as the plane on which he travelled from Mexico City to Buenos Aires stopped to refuel in Cancun. In November 1999, Spanish Judge Baltasar Garzon filed charges against Cavallo for torturing ... a Spanish woman living in Buenos Aires in the late 1970s. and the murder of ... two other Spaniards (p. 23).

Lutz and Sikkink conclude: “There also is plenty of evidence that in Latin America the justice cascade is far from complete” (p. 30).

I am no expert on Spanish or Latin American judicial proceedings. But I know enough about how the American judicial system works to suspect that Judge Garzon is no rootless cosmopolitan. Not far behind the justice cascade was a web of human rights groups providing evidence, identifying witnesses, and organizing demonstrations in Latin America and Europe. Like Portes’ transnational communities of immigrants and the transnational activists who managed the multilateral development bank campaign, the justice cascade was built on a coalition of rooted and international cosmopolitans, who struggle to bring about change through the mechanisms of transnational brokerage, certification (and in this case, de- certification) and social appropriation.

IV. Mechanisms of Transnational Construction

And Why They Matter

It is time to draw this talk to a close. What do merchants from Prato, printers from Nuremburg, immigrants from Belarus and Latin America, Washington environmentalists and Amazonian labor activists, and judges and human rights activists from Madrid, Rome, and Argentina have in common?

- First, I have tried to show that they all of them are both rooted in domestic social networks and cultural frames and able to engage in a wide variety of transactions elsewhere. It is this, and not membership in a “global tribe” that explains their resources in the international system.
- Second, I indicated that their activities are channeled either by expansive capitalism, international organizations and institutions or both. While the former creates the social roles that link center and periphery of the world economy, it is the latter institutions that offer them resources, opportunities, and channels for activism.
- Third, that the ties between the local and the global do not operate through cognitive membership in an undifferentiated “global civil society” or through the impersonal workings of a rationalized “world polity”, but through social mechanisms embodied in these rooted cosmopolitans.

Why should it matter to anyone but pettyfogging academics that the agents of transnational exchange are bridging individuals rather than some broader construct like global civil society or a world polity? I think it matters terribly, and for three main reasons having to do with resources, constraints and representation.

First, with respect to *resources*: the concept of rooted cosmopolitans is important because these individuals and the organizations they constitute operate in a world of states. This does not make states the only actors worthy of note, but it does mean that activists must know how to navigate the boundaries that surround states just as they deal with the international institutions they have created. That takes local legitimacy, information, and insertion in domestic networks. If the advocates of the Multinational Development Bank campaign had been alien to American politics and had regarded the World Bank as no more than the executive committee of global capitalism, they would not have been able to effectively exploit their leverage in the United States Congress over the Bank's environmental policies. It is by understanding and using the nexus among states and international institutions that rooted cosmopolitans can effect change in global capitalism.

A second reason for specifying the role of rooted cosmopolitans is to better understand the *constraints* on transnational activism. There has been a tendency in recent years, taking off from the wonderful book of Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, to stretch the concept of "networks" beyond its useful boundaries. Keck and Sikkink's book pinpoints what such networks can accomplish when they are aimed at a specific problem (usually the abuses of a specific national government). But many of the transnational organizations they studied were engaged in short-term campaigns which either ended or petered out as policy-makers' attention turned elsewhere. Unless local activists maintain their rooted links, they will be left high and dry (and subject to the vengeance of local authorities) when their transnational allies' attention turns elsewhere.

Finally, I think we need to better understand the imperfect *representative* role of rooted cosmopolitans as bridges between international institutions and domestic societies. This takes two forms – internally and internationally. Internally, the Salvadoran immigrant in Los Angeles represents the needs of his home community to the local government, and this can bring resources into the community, but this intervention creates inequalities between these “represented” communities and their neighbors. The same is true internationally. Transnational NGOs pick targets opportunistically and in response to the appeals of local groups; but other local groups in other countries may be equally desperate and gain little or no attention. The campaign against Shell and the government of Nigeria that publicized the plight of the Ogoni to the outside world did them a service, but the world’s attention was focused by the skills of an international celebrity (Bob 1997, 2000, 2001). Judge Garzon in Madrid was responsible for setting off a “justice cascade” that brought Argentine murderers and torturers to justice, but it did nothing for the victims of Ruandan genocide and it did not prevent the United States from blocking the creation of an international criminal court shortly afterwards.

Some activist/scholars argue that transnational activists are inherently representative because they represent the needs of the people of the South; in contrast, conservative internationalists hold that only states are representative because only governments are elected, and that the proper role of transnational activists should be to make more states more democratic. Still others hold that the best that transnational bridging organizations can hope to be is “responsible” – not representative (Jordan and Van Tuijl 2000). I take an intermediate position closest to this third one, but with a codicil; transnational NGOs cannot represent the peoples

of the planet; but they can become less technocratic, more sensitive to local activists' needs and variations, and more effective in influencing their governments by forging sustained ties with rooted cosmopolitans.

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Notes

¹ I unabashedly adopt this definition from Portes' concept of "transnational communities". As I do here, Portes reserves the term "transnational" for "activities of an economic, political, and cultural sort that require the involvement of participants on a regular basis as a major part of their occupation." (2000:264).

² For an extended elaboration of these concepts, see Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow and Charles Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention*. Cambridge, 2001.

³ The fact that the *Colloquies* were published without his permission in Basel in 1518 did not stop him from revising the book himself and seeing to the publication of a number of enlarged and revised editions (Thompson: 1965). At least 16 had appeared by 1533, in Louvain, numerous times in Basel, in Leipzig, Vienna, Cracow and Strasbourg – among other places (*ibid.*, xxiv-v).

⁴ But note that, even *within* the North, research on the European Union has shown that officials prefer dealing with the well-organized and visible trans-European representatives of NGOs in Brussels rather than the plethora of badly-coordinated (and often radical) social movements in the member-states (see Imig and Tarrow, eds., 2001, and especially the chapter by Guiraudon on migrants' organizations).

⁵ But note that the bias in the location of head offices of transnational NGOs in the North is changing; for statistical data, see Smith 2001. Northern foundations that fund such organizations also have branch offices in the South, to which they grant considerable operating autonomy.

⁶ My sources for what follows are Keck and Sikkink 1995, Fox and Brown, eds., 1996, Keck 1998, Udall 1998 and Wirth 1998.

⁷ I am grateful to Peter Evans for suggesting this point in his Inaugural Lecture for the Polson Institute at Cornell on September 21, 2001.