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Whither Europe? Postcolonial versus Neocolonial Cosmopolitanism

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Abstract

The financial collapse of 2008, and its consequences of recession in the Eurozone and beyond, has exacerbated tensions at the heart of the post-war European project. The politics of austerity has provoked populist and far-right political responses, scapegoating migrants and minorities and increasingly calling the European project of integration into question. In this article, I focus on responses by social theorists – Habermas and Beck, for example – to the emerging crisis. In particular, I address the contrast between their re-affirmation of cosmopolitanism as a central feature of the European project and their associated criticisms of multiculturalism, which, instead, is posed as a threat. In this way, while they challenge those who wish the dissolution of the European project, they do so at the expense of those seen to be internal 'others', whose scapegoating is one aspect of the populist threat to that integration. It is their failure to address the colonial histories of Europe, I argue, that enables them to dismiss so easily the postcolonial and multicultural present of Europe. As such, they reproduce features of the populist political debates they otherwise seek to criticize and transcend. A properly cosmopolitan Europe, I suggest, would be one which understood that its historical constitution in colonialism cannot be rendered to the past by denial of that past.

Keywords

Postcolonialism, cosmopolitanism, multiculturalism, historiography, colonialism, European Union

In a recent discussion of European cosmopolitanism, Jürgen Habermas has stated that “the universalist project of the political Enlightenment in no way contradicts the particularist sensibilities of multiculturalism, provided that the latter is understood in the correct way” (2009, 68). Of course, the proviso is precisely what is at issue: who defines what is the correct way? And, if its correctness is challenged, are those who do so placed in contradiction to the universalism of a European Enlightenment? These questions have become particularly acute in the context of a renewed atavism in Europe.

The fiscal crisis, and the related continent-wide politics of austerity, has provided perhaps the greatest threat to the stability and continuance of the post-war European project since its inception as the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1957. One aspect of this, the decline of the welfare or social settlement across Europe, has been explicitly discussed in the context of the perceived rise of multiculturalism which is seen to undermine civic solidarity. This view is promoted by political elites who otherwise show very little commitment to the plight of the poor, wedded, as they are, to neoliberal agendas explicitly promoting economic liberalism in preference to the reduction of social and economic inequalities. Such a view is also promoted, at least implicitly, by Europe's most prominent public intellectuals. Habermas's association of multiculturalism with what

he calls “postcolonial immigrant societies” (2009, 65), for example, demonstrates a parochial understanding that limits the ‘postcolonial’ to those ‘others’ who migrate *to* Europe, and renders invisible the long-standing histories that connect those migrants *with* Europe. In this way, the issues that reference to the ‘postcolonial’ signifies are seen as beginning with immigration and carried by the non-European ‘other’. These multicultural others are not seen as constitutive of Europe’s own self-understanding – or as legitimate beneficiaries of the post-war social settlement – emerging from its history of colonialism; a history that is carried by individual nation-states and, as Peo Hansen and Stefan Jonsson (2014a, 2014b) have argued, by the common European project itself.

The failure to address their own colonial history is part of the explanation for why Europe and European politicians and intellectuals are seemingly unable to address their postcolonial present, or even recognize it as something other than an external intrusion disrupting an otherwise ordered European polity. The first section of this article addresses the normative response to the fiscal and political crises as presented by public intellectuals supportive of the European project, in particular Jürgen Habermas and Ulrich Beck. It addresses their reaffirmation of a cosmopolitan commitment to Europe and their attempts to rethink an elite project of integration under neoliberal conditions. It also addresses their critique of the turn to Euro-sceptic nationalism and their understanding of European integration as having been the successful overcoming of past divisions, but now facing new ones. These new divisions are associated with the rise of multiculturalism and, in their view, the threat posed by the latter must be tackled if Europe is to make good on its earlier commitments to social and economic justice. In the final section of the article, I take issue with the parochial historiography that underpins their accounts, namely, that the multicultural diversity of populations within European states is a recent phenomenon and is unconnected to Europe’s own history. In conclusion, I argue that insofar as the cosmopolitan project of Europe does not come to terms with its colonial past and postcolonial present, it establishes a form of neocolonial cosmopolitanism that legitimizes neocolonial policies both within and outwith Europe.

I

The onset of austerity has been marked by a growing mobilization of authoritarian and far-right political activity across Europe. This has been both on the streets – for example, the activities of the fascist Golden Dawn in Greece - and at the ballot box, with significant national electoral victories in 2013 for right-wing parties in Norway and Austria and an increasing presence on the European political stage by parties such as the UK Independence Party, the Danish People’s Party and the French National Front in the 2014 European elections. The growing political presence of the far-right across Europe has been accompanied by increasingly high-profile public pronouncements by mainstream politicians anxious to address what they see as the potential alienation of voters in both the national and European context. Speeches by the German Chancellor Angela Merkel (*Guardian*, October 17, 2010), the British Prime Minister David Cameron (2011, 2013), and the French President Nicolas Sarkozy (*Financial Times*, February 10, 2011) have publically disavowed the project of multiculturalism in their own countries and, by implication, in Europe more generally. Their framing of multiculturalism as a problem associated with poorer migrants seeking access to hard won benefits within the countries to which they migrate, enables them to continue to welcome (cosmopolitan) ‘high-value migrants’ while enacting ever more restrictive policies against (multicultural) poorer ones.¹ This distinction between cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism will be picked up subsequently in the article.

These national debates on multiculturalism and immigration have been occurring at the same time as European-level debates on, as Habermas identifies, “the imbalance between the imperatives of the market and the regulatory power of politics” (2012a, 337). These expressly political debates about ‘more’ or ‘less’ (political integration in) Europe have been discussed at length by a number of academics and scholars. Habermas is probably the most prominent and respected commentator on this debate and, as Europe’s leading public intellectual, someone who has sought to define the normative and political projects of Europe. His particular perspective is determined, in part at least, by the fact that, in his own words, his “adult political life coincides with the history of this republic” (Habermas 2009, 78) and, it would probably be fair to add, the specificity of Germany’s centrality to it. This continues to shape his responses and interventions around the current financial crisis which, for him, highlights “the fundamental construction flaw of a monetary union without a corresponding political union” (Habermas 2012a, 336). It is a flaw that he has long argued against, while being in favour of electoral reforms that would enhance participation and deliberation across the continent. Some form of political union based on the will of the European people, he argues, is necessary in order to tackle effectively the economic and political problems arising from the crisis.

One of the key questions in this context, for Habermas (2003, 2012a, 2012b), has been how citizens *within* the European Union could be made to understand themselves as citizens *of* the European Union. This transformation is presented as necessary for the establishment of a political culture that will subsequently enable political action *by* the European Union; for example, to implement policies of redistribution and to ensure acceptable levels of social security across constituent member states. Here, Habermas is arguing for “political integration backed by social welfare” to create a degree of uniformity in the range of social and economic inequalities, but without “the *levelling* of cultural differences” (2012a, 348). As he writes, a similar process occurred in the nineteenth century whereby European states gradually created a sense of national consciousness and established modes of civic solidarity (Habermas 2003, 98). If it is possible to transform earlier local and dynastic solidarities into national and democratic forms of consciousness, he asks, then “why should this learning process not continue on, beyond national borders?” (98).

Habermas’s concerns about the growing inequality within and across European states and the difficulties of implementing, domestically, economic adjustment policies initiated in distant EU institutions, are also accompanied by fears about the threats to social peace posed by the turn to right-wing populism. In particular, he is concerned about the proposed alliance by far-right groups whose aim is to dismantle the European project in favour of a return to national autonomy. In this context, he has been involved in the collective statement *Wählt Europa!*, organized by Ulrich Beck with a number of key Europeans, putting forward the case for the continuation of the European project through a stronger European Union.² This statement was put together in advance of the May 2014 European elections which were seen to be central in determining the future shape of Europe. This is because, as the introduction to the statement puts forward, in electing a President of the Commission, people will, for the first time, be able to choose between different models of Europe; whether that is the ‘less Europe’ determined by market imperatives, as advocated by UK Prime Minister David Cameron, or the ‘other Europe’ in which markets are subject to democracy, that is, political regulation. As Habermas writes in his particular contribution to the collective statement, the German government must not renounce the political responsibility that comes from the leading role it has taken in the management of the financial crisis, but rather, should make this sort of leadership role superfluous in a political union that is worthy of such a name.

A number of the other contributors also advocate the extension of the European project and cite its achievement of peace as a key indicator of its success and continued necessity. Alain Touraine, for example, writes, “The European Union was created to make internal European wars impossible; it was a success,” and Michel Wievorka adds, “Europe was built in order to avoid war, it was from its very beginning a moral and ethical project, and this remains true.” The wider importance of these elections is highlighted by Pascal Lamy, Director-General of the World Trade Organization, who writes that the European Union “is a precursor of tomorrow’s world. It will allow globalization to be civilized;” Bruno Latour concurs by suggesting that the importance of these elections rests in the subsequent ability of Europeans “to negotiate the future state of our way to inhabit a common Earth.” While they may not go as far as Habermas in seeing the European Union “as an important step on the path towards a politically constituted world society” (2012a: 336), they nonetheless present the necessity of a strong Europe in geopolitical and global leadership terms. As Beck writes in the opening general statement, a strong Europe is necessary in order for the ‘old continent’ to occupy a powerful position and be a pioneering voice in our now globalized world.³

The arguments for ‘more Europe’ are presented in the following terms: to address the rise in youth unemployment and social and economic inequalities across Europe; to constrain the possibilities of a ‘German Europe;’ to continue the success of peaceful coexistence across the continent; to civilize globalization processes; to be a pioneering voice for the world. They are explicitly articulated against the arguments of the alliance of far-right groups, who are in favour of dismantling the Union, but also against those who would prefer ‘less Europe.’ Interestingly, however, while the collective statement presents a strong case against one of the key elements of the far-right alliance, it has very little to say on the other: reduction in immigration and hostility to multiculturalism. Immigration, immigrants, multiculturalism are not terms that emerge in either the introduction to the collective statement or in the individual contributions. Indeed, the only mention of migrants comes in Beck’s rhetorical question about whether the European dream is only to be carried by those in crowded refugee boats in the Mediterranean or those protesting on the streets of Kyiv. Their message to us, he exhorts, is that Europe is more than a fiscal union, it is the hope of freedom, democracy and openness to the world (see also Beck [2013]). That openness, perhaps, is in question if instead of starting with the dreams of those in crowded refugee boats, we started from the corpses of many of those very refugees piling up in places like Lampedusa, on which Beck has otherwise made no comment.⁴

In the next section of the article, I address the particular understandings of Europe, and of multiculturalism, that enable scholars to highlight the desperate plight of others only to make a political point about themselves. It is this lack of self-reflexivity, I will go on to argue, that is characteristic of the dominant form of neocolonial cosmopolitanism prevalent in Europe today, albeit with a much longer history.

II

The European project, given institutional form as the EEC and then EU, came about, in its own understanding, as a consequence of European states wishing to make amends for the recent past that had seen two world wars and the genocide perpetrated by the fascist regime in Austro-Germany occur on European soil. The European project was not to create a single state, but a common framework within which national differences could co-exist without murderous intent. The associated intellectual project was organized around the idea of ‘cosmopolitan Europe’ – a Europe

that would distance itself from its recent past by uniting in recognition of its deeper, long-standing institutional commonalities and celebrating its cultural diversity within those commonalities. Indeed, in 2000, the EU adopted as its motto the phrase 'unity in diversity', becoming 'united in diversity' in 2004.⁵ Diversity in this context, however, refers only to the linguistic and cultural diversity seen to exist between states within the European Union. There is very little discussion of the diversity constituted by multicultural others *within* states as part of this same conceptualization of cosmopolitan Europe.

Indeed, many contributors to the collective statement for Europe mentioned earlier discuss the importance of cultural and historical diversities within Europe, but none, apart from the former football player Lilian Thuram, discuss the significance of (non-European) others for Europe. This is, in part, because most theorists of cosmopolitan Europe set up cosmopolitanism as antithetical to multiculturalism. According to Beck (2002), for example, multiculturalism presents humanity as a collectivity divided on cultural grounds and individuals within this conception are seen as the product of their own languages, traditions, customs, and landscapes. This, he suggests, means that "multiculturalism is at loggerheads with individualization" and that, within multiculturalism, "the individual does not exist;" cosmopolitanism, however, "argues the reverse and *presupposes* individualization" (37). However, as I will go on to argue, Beck does not elaborate on how a cosmopolitanism of individuals is accommodated within a vision of the world as otherwise structured by different cultures.

The cosmopolitanism of 'cosmopolitan Europe', for Habermas (2003, 2012a) and Beck (2002), is one that is largely derived from Kant and the Western European philosophical tradition more generally. Within their work, 'being cosmopolitan' (as a practice) is associated with being *in* Europe and cosmopolitanism (as an idea) is seen as being *of* Europe. As Anthony Pagden writes in more general terms, cosmopolitanism begins "where Kant [and the Stoics]...began, that is with some vision of a community of 'the wise' whose views must in the end triumph" and, in the modern world, he continues, it is difficult to see how "those views can be anything other than the reflection of the values of western liberal democracies" (2000, 19). While Habermas and Beck would seek to differentiate a specifically European cosmopolitanism from a broader Western understanding, they would nonetheless concur with the intellectual genealogy outlined. The articulation of cosmopolitanism as a specifically European phenomenon rests on a particular understanding of European history that evades acknowledging European domination over much of the world as significant to that history. It also disavows examining the consequences of that domination for the contemporary multicultural constitution of European societies (for further discussion, see Bhambra [2009, 2011]).

The specificity of cosmopolitan Europe, according to Habermas, rests in the possibility of unity in diversity that is forged historically through negotiating the plural religious forms resulting from the sixteenth-century "*confessional* schisms within its own culture and society" (2009, 64-5). With this, Habermas is positing an endogenous European cultural tradition that is marked by internecine warfare between different religious groups which eventually resolves its conflicts through the establishment of a mode of supranational cooperation in the latter half of the twentieth century. While the pluralism of religious schisms is seen to provide the basis of subsequent unity within Europe, the pluralism of religions and ways of life, which he associates with late-twentieth-century immigration, creates "more strident dissonances" that are seen to be more difficult to resolve (65).⁶ This is especially so given that, in his terms, "the painful transition to post-colonial

immigrant societies” is seen to occur alongside “the humiliating conditions of growing social inequality” associated with the pressures of globalized labour markets (65).

The issue of the postcolonial, then, as discussed earlier, refers only to those migrants who come from formerly colonized countries and seemingly has no purchase for those of formerly colonizer countries (for example, through an appropriate recognition of Europe’s continuing modes of colonization). To the extent that Habermas has reflected on understandings of the postcolonial as they may pertain to Europe, his comments are related to “the loss of...empire,” “the loss of colonial territories,” and the opportunity that this provides for Europeans “to *assume a reflexive distance from themselves*” (Habermas and Derrida 2003, 297). This, he suggests together with Derrida, “could support the rejection of Eurocentrism, and inspire the Kantian hope for a global domestic policy” (297). However, it does not seem to be sufficient to enable reflection upon multiculturalism within Europe as a consequence of these very processes. The postcolonial, here, refers only to the loss of territory and not to the consequences for the people associated with it. For Habermas, then, religious differences among Europeans are not (or, at least, not any longer) at issue, but differences in religion are significant and are the cause of contemporary social difficulties within European societies. Further, the “humiliating” conditions of growing social inequality within Europe are implicitly linked to the global processes that bring immigrants to Europe as a consequence of humiliating conditions of inequality elsewhere (historically created, for the most part, by European colonial powers), but on this latter, there is little comment (Habermas 2009, 65).

The discussion around how those who are perceived as other could be included within the political community is structured around an understanding of the political community as existing prior to these others, as already containing the necessary processes and procedures to enable inclusion, and presents the obligation to be included on changes to be made by these others. As Habermas (2009) writes, it is necessary for social and cultural groups to take their orientation from their host country rather than their home country in order for them to be understood in terms of belonging to the same political community. However, there is no discussion of the political processes that excluded these others in the process of establishing the political community in which they now have to seek inclusion and, further, there is no discussion of how understandings of the political community itself may be changed through engagement with others. Rather, there is a simple presentation that what has been understood to be the European political community – and its ‘diverse’ traditions – contains within it all the necessary processes to facilitate inclusion despite having been based on modes of exclusion.

Beck concurs with this general analysis to the extent that he argues, along with Edgar Grande, that the active cosmopolitan tolerance of multicultural others has to be balanced by “a certain amount of commonly shared universal norms” (Beck and Grande 2007, 71). It is this, they suggest, that enables cosmopolitanism “to regulate its dealings with otherness so as not to *endanger the integrity of a community*” (71; emphasis added). As Beck and Grande go on to argue, “the legitimate interests of others” ought to be taken into consideration in the “calculation of one’s own interests” (71), but there is little discussion on what basis ‘legitimacy’ is to be established or how those others are constituted separately from oneself. In a world, otherwise recognized as structured by different cultures – the premise of multiple modernities to which both Habermas (2009) and Beck (2006) adhere – cosmopolitanism must also be a cultural issue, and one that, for them, is the expression of European culture against which the multiculturalism of others is posited (for further discussion of this point, see Bhambra [2011]). What is clear, then, is that the prescription for a

cosmopolitan Europe 'united in diversity' takes little account of the diversity within Europe as constituted by its minorities within states, except to see them as external intrusions and as threats.

III

In recent work, Beck has sought to counter critiques of his understanding of cosmopolitanism by arguing more specifically for 'cosmopolitanization'. The latter, he suggests, "is not about ethics but about facts" (Beck 2012a, 8; see also Beck [2012b]). As such, Beck frames cosmopolitanization by first setting out what it is not: it is not a reflection of the experiences of a privileged minority, "it is not intended to convey the shallow political message that 'we are all connected,' nor does it normalize imperialism and existing global power relations" (2012a, 8). To demonstrate the specifically cosmopolitan challenge posed by Europe, that is not all these things listed above, Beck (2012a) outlines three case studies: fresh kidneys, global families, and competition between national populations of workers. For the purposes of discussion, I will just focus on the first example.

The age of cosmopolitanization, Beck argues, is one in which the world is "divided and recombined into organ-selling nations versus organ-buying ones;" it is one "that for better or worse we all share" (2012a, 9). In this "radically unequal world," Beck presents cosmopolitanization as the process by way of which desperately poor individuals sell their organs to desperately ill and rich patients resulting in a situation in which "Muslim kidneys purify Christian blood. White racists breathe with the aid of one or more black lungs" (8). Beck provides other such examples of cosmopolitanization through medical transplantation and concludes triumphantly that fresh kidneys "symbolize the *condition humana*, the encounter with the excluded Other at the beginning of the third millennium" (9). There is limited discussion of the political economy of such processes, or of the structured historical inequalities that make the traffic so one-sided. Instead, Beck states that no matter "how brilliantly and trenchantly we critique" the failure of "northern narratives" to take into account "southern voices," "we are destined to live with these interwoven, contradictory framings and situations" (9). Beck's wish not to engage with ethics in his discussion of cosmopolitanism seems to mean that there is then no space for ethical consideration of actions associated with identified processes of cosmopolitanization. In fact, this could be considered a form of neocolonial cosmopolitanism as I will go on to argue subsequently.

As this brief discussion highlights, Beck's example of 'fresh kidneys' does not seem to do anything other than confirm all the things that he says cosmopolitanization does not do. Firstly, it does reflect the experiences of that privileged minority who are able to buy the organs of poorer people in order to survive. Indeed, Beck suggests that it is from such processes that "the bio-political 'citizen of the world' emerges – a white male body, fit or fat, with the addition of an Indian kidney or a Muslim eye" (2012a: 9). The Indian person now with only one kidney or the one-eyed Muslim person are not presented as world citizens for the 'gift' of their organs to the other, only that person who takes those organs is understood as worldly. Secondly, understanding cosmopolitanization in terms of the connections produced through the buying and selling of organs is, I would maintain, a shallow construction of connectedness. Finally, it is not clear whose experiences are being reflected here if not those of a privileged minority able to benefit, at the expense of others, of the inequalities of our contemporary world. Inequalities which result from historical processes that have produced a world in which some are able to buy the 'fresh' organs of others. It seems rather perverse to base an understanding of cosmopolitanism on such inequality and, indeed, make such inequality constitutive of cosmopolitanization. By not discussing why some persons in parts of the world may be so poor as

to be forced into such situations, Beck normalizes the histories of imperialism and contemporary global power relations that structure and maintain inequality.

This failure to reflect on how the current configuration of the world emerges from historical processes is a longstanding one. In earlier pieces, Beck (2002) has argued that he is not interested in the memory of the global past, but simply in how a vision of a cosmopolitan future could have an impact on the politics of the present. This, I would suggest, is disingenuous at best, as he appears to think that it is possible simply to discuss “the present implications of a globally shaped future” (27) without addressing the legacies of the past on the shaping of the present. In brushing away the historically inherited inequalities arising from the legacies of European imperialism and slavery, and moving on to imagine a world separate from the resolution of these inequalities, Beck’s evasion of ethics in favour of facts looks increasingly suspect. As I have argued previously, any theory that seeks to address the question of ‘how we live in the world’ cannot treat as irrelevant the historical configuration of that world (Bhambra 2011; see also Trouillot [1995]). The final sections of this article turn to a discussion of the histories of Europe and the importance of adequate histories for any understanding of European cosmopolitanism.

IV

Questions of diversity within Europe, as has been discussed with reference to the work of Habermas and Beck, are dealt with in two ways: multiculturalism is used to refer to the visible difference of populations within states, whereas cosmopolitanism is used to refer both to the differences between states as well as an overarching commonality of culture. Cosmopolitanism acknowledges (national) differences within a common (European) cultural framework and, at the same time, posits its (European) cultural difference from those (non-European) others that are associated with the diversity that constitutes multiculturalism. The cosmopolitan cultural diversity of Europe, then, is counter-posed to that constituted by and through multicultural others who are presumed to import their diversity into (and against) the cultural diversity already present in Europe. How, precisely, these differences are understood and recognized as cosmopolitan differences or multicultural differences is not clear, except insofar as they map onto some notion of visible, that is, racialized – or, then, more recently, religious – difference. Counter-posing cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism in this way, however, precisely demonstrates the Eurocentred particularism at the heart of the cosmopolitan European project.

The cosmopolitanism of ‘cosmopolitan Europe’ rarely has space for those it perceives as others, even as it uses the desperation of those others to highlight its own attractiveness. Their plight is not taken as an opportunity to reflect upon the structured inequalities that make ‘cosmopolitan Europe’ an attractive destination, even in its austerity-ravaged state, but simply to further demarcate its own boundaries. The question of these boundaries, however, is precisely what has been at issue within the postcolonial historiographical turn in understandings of the European Union. While this turn may be relatively recent, the arguments made within it are not. These arguments, in effect, have sought an acknowledgement of how Europe’s posited others have always been very much a part of Europe’s broader imperial histories and, as such, have argued for a reconsideration of how these others are treated within Europe’s societies and politics.

As Hansen and Jonsson (2012) suggest, scholarship on the historical evolution of European integration tends to focus on the activities of the states within the territorial bounds of what is commonly understood as the European continent. However, as they go on to argue, “if we do not

look beyond the European continent, we also do not understand anything of what happened *in Europe*" (1031). Most normative accounts of cosmopolitan Europe, and research in the area of EU studies generally, ignores the colonial and imperial histories that constitute the broader context of European integration. Taking this history seriously would, at the very least, highlight the parochial nature of the cosmopolitan commitment presently at the heart of the European project and, perhaps more radically, provide the opportunity to develop a more inclusive and just, postcolonial cosmopolitan project in Europe.

The work by scholars such as Hansen and Jonsson (2011, 2012, 2013, 2014a, 2014b) and Garavini (2012) has been central in establishing the importance of the connections between European colonialism and European integration; that is, in highlighting the common *European* project of colonialism central to its eventual integration. Indeed, Hansen and Jonsson (2014a) demonstrate how the methodological nationalism of social science and historical research mitigates against the telling of this story, disciplining us, as it does, to focus primarily on national histories and their contemporary national repercussions. In place of this, they have sought to shed light on the common European history of colonialism and its central role in the negotiations for European integration; this is the history of Eurafrika.

The post-war period that saw the negotiations that ultimately led to the establishment of the EEC was one in which "parts of Africa and the common market were bound together in one imperial polity" (Hansen and Jonsson 2012, 1029). It was also a period that marked the rise of the superpowers of the United States and the USSR, the proliferation of anti-colonial movements and the establishment of Afro-Asian conferences, such as Bandung, and, at the same time, marked the waning influence of European states. The discussions around establishing a European union, then, were framed by a weakened geopolitical position and a 'racial arrogance' that allowed Europeans to regard their dominance over African countries as legitimate and as something that was likely to continue without question or change. Indeed, the negotiations for integration, as Hansen and Jonsson (2011) demonstrate, were predicated on the very idea of "bringing Africa as a 'dowry to Europe;'" that is, Africa's natural resources – namely, land, labour, and markets – were seen to be available for the European project with no consultation "within the territories to be subjected to incorporation or association" (455). Not only were Europe's African colonies unquestioningly put at the service of the incipient European project, but there was a stronger statement "that Europe's unification could succeed only if it also was fashioned as a joint colonization of Africa" (Hansen and Jonsson 2013, 11).

In light of the enduring mythology of an ethical European project established in service of peace – a mythology that was recently consolidated through the award of the 2012 Nobel Peace Prize to the EU – it is necessary, as Hansen and Jonsson argue, for "the organization itself to come clean about its early history" (2013, 18). The European project was not a singular noble endeavour for peace. To the extent that peaceful coexistence was an aim of the architects of Europe, it was one to be bought at the cost of African lives, labour, and land; a cost that the architects of the time did not see as a cost and the apologizers of Europe today fail even to acknowledge.

V

A truly cosmopolitan Europe would be one that took seriously its colonial histories and multicultural present; that is, one that understood its cosmopolitanism in postcolonial terms. Not to do so, is to perpetuate, at best, a parochial form of cosmopolitanism and, at worst, a form of neo-colonial

cosmopolitanism. Beck (2012b, 650) acknowledges that dominant perspectives on European cosmopolitanism, including his own, have failed to address the influence of decolonizing (although he terms it 'decolonializing') processes on the formation and development of the European Union. His response to this is to point to the near-collapse of the Western model and to suggest that in the future, "the world will no longer turn primarily on the relationship between postcolonialism and Europe" (651). Despite the problematic terminology – perhaps reflecting an unease with actually addressing these themes – the key issue is his separation of the postcolonial from Europe. It is as if only those who were colonized should be understood in terms of colonialism and then postcolonialism. Rather, I would argue, it is precisely the failure of Europe to understand itself in terms of colonialism that makes it impossible for it to understand itself as postcolonial. Said's (1986) long-standing analysis – that having 'lost', the colonized are required to take the European conquerors and the period of conquest into account, while, having 'won', Europe can choose to ignore the colonial enterprise as an episode of history to be acknowledged, or not, at will – continues to have purchase.

Colonialism was something that happened to them, the colonized, and is only relevant to them; it has nothing to do with us, the colonizers, either as material or historical fact or in conceptual terms. As such, Beck goes on to suggest that postcolonialism is over and that what we are now witnessing is "a kind of 'precolonialization' of Europe by its excolonies, in particular China and India" (2012b, 651). So after acknowledging that he has not dealt with the postcolonial, he identifies it just with the colonized, and then declares its moment as over without even recognizing that one of the countries he cites as an excolony of Europe – China – did not have that status. Further, to address the postcolonial only in terms of the fear of 'reverse' colonization of Europe is to present a myopic and self-centred analysis that is probably as far away from the ethos of cosmopolitanism as it is possible to be; albeit that Beck characterizes this understanding as the new reality of "the postcolonial cosmopolitanization of Europe" (651). In contrast, I would argue for the necessity of a postcolonial cosmopolitanism to be one that understood the import of colonial histories for any understanding of the European present. Not one that continually posed the other as a threat to Europe. Indeed, this latter trope of the multicultural threat is one that unites politicians across the political spectrum, particularly in the context of elections, as argued earlier.

In contrast to Beck's sound-bite sociology – "resentment against the 'Other' in the affluent regions is on the increase. Hostility towards foreigners is spreading" (2012a, 11) – if we turn instead to the work of scholars such as Ludi Simpson (2013) or David Brady and Ryan Finnegan (2014) – who question, through empirical research, the relationship between immigration and multiculturalism on the one hand and understandings of social solidarity on the other – we get a different picture of what a Europe defined in terms of postcolonial cosmopolitanism might look like. Brady and Finnegan (2014) argue that, over the last few decades, all affluent democracies have seen an increase in the percentage of the population that is foreign-born and they are interested in what consequences this has had for public support for social welfare policies. While politicians campaign on platforms of reducing migration and pointing to the threats of multiculturalism, what Brady and Finnegan's research suggests is that there is no direct link between immigration and reduced public support for social welfare. In turn, in his analysis of the latest census data in the UK, Simpson (2013) has suggested that while UK cities are more ethnically diverse than previously, increasing numbers of people identify as British regardless of their ethnic identity. The spectre, often raised by politicians and media commentators, of multiculturalism producing 'segregated' cities with citizens who lack a cohesive national identity is demonstrated here to be empirically false. Even a cross-government

(UK) report – one that was initially blocked for public dissemination by the UK government – reveals little evidence of the negative impact that foreign migrants are said to have on the prospects of British workers (*The Guardian*, March 6, 2014).

Instead, what has emerged through this discussion is the extent to which those who promulgate the threats of multicultural diversity and the negative consequences of immigration are the ones who are most insulated from the threats identified and, in actual fact, are themselves contributing to the very threats they perceive through their own lifestyle choices. The political controversy in the UK in early 2014, for example, comes from remarks made by the UK Immigration Minister, James Brokenshire (2014), who suggests that the wealthy metropolitan elite benefit the most from immigration as it means that they pay less for nannies, tradesmen and other services provided by foreign migrants. In this ways, they exploit those foreign workers as well as undercut the wages and conditions of the local population more generally. They are also the ones who live the most segregated lives, usually within gated communities, cut off from the everyday concerns of the peoples in whose names they claim to speak. It is here that we might wish European social theorists to discover a more robust and, in fact, more cosmopolitan voice.

Arguments for a cosmopolitan Europe that fail to acknowledge the significance of its colonial pasts and postcolonial present are likely to be a poor protection against exploitative ventures, whether those be land grabs, the purchase of ‘fresh kidneys’ or cheap labour, or the ever-widening inequalities between the haves and have-nots. In the absence of a postcolonial sensibility, cosmopolitanism becomes entangled with neo-colonialism. A properly postcolonial cosmopolitanism, in contrast, would make a difference to the ways in which we approach contemporary forms of exploitation of those represented as ‘outside’ Europe. By acknowledging historical connections, we make the contemporary issues we face shared ones, providing the basis for more adequate and more inclusive ways of addressing them.

Postscript: Iván Fischer, a composer and conductor, writes, in the collective statement promoting the European project discussed earlier, “I am a European. You are also a European if you like a good espresso or cappuccino;” forgetting perhaps, as Habermas also did in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1991), that coffee is not native to Europe and the foundational status that is claimed for it in the establishment of European civil society rests on long-standing colonial entanglements.

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Notes

¹ Alongside selling residency rights and, ultimately, citizenship, for selected high-net-worth individuals from approved countries, there are also high-priority and fast-track routes to obtain short-term visas. In contrast, the UK government had planned to charge a £3000 'security-bond' for what it regarded as 'high risk' overseas visitors from six African and Asian countries, though this was subsequently scrapped (*The Hindu*, November 3, 2013).

² See: <http://waehlt-europa.de/> (accessed March 3, 2014)

³ All the cited personal contributions can be found at: <http://waehlt-europa.de/> (accessed March 3, 2014). I would like to thank Daniel Orrells and Maurice Stierl for help with translations.

⁴ On the situation in Lampedusa, see Hasselbach (2013) and De Genova (2014).

⁵ See: http://europa.eu/about-eu/eu-history/index_en.htm (accessed March 3, 2014).

⁶ Even in its own terms, Habermas's designation of the transcendence of religious divisions by the project of European union is parochial since the negotiations for entry by Ireland and the UK from 1961 to entry in 1973 was marked by the re-emergence of 'postcolonial' and religiously marked nationalisms and extremist violence in Northern Ireland and the British mainland.