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Risk and the cosmopolitanization of solidarities

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ABSTRACT

For classical sociologists, national solidarity was a response to the risks and uncertainties of modernity. National solidarity was said to provide the foundations for social order and justice (Durkheim), serve as the basis for political legitimacy (Weber), and address issues of (in)equality (Marx). Throughout the twentieth century, national solidarity seemed to perform these functions adequately, if often at the expense of those not belonging to the national community. However, with the demise of progress as a cultural prophylaxis to contain the future, it is often said that newly emergent world risks spell the end of solidarity. On this view, risk, individualization, and the cosmopolitanization of life worlds are contributing to the fragmentation of societies and pushing solidarity toward expiration. Yet, this jeremiad is based on an anachronistic notion of solidarity, which does not account for the recent adaptations of nationhood. In contrast, I argue that new global risks are not detrimental to the notion of solidarity but rather serve as a precondition for the emergence of cosmopolitanized solidarities. Global culture and political norms from human rights to environmentalism have catalyzed a reimagining of nationhood itself. In order to grasp new forms of solidarity which buttress this reimagined nationhood, I draw on Ulrich Beck's distinction between three historically specific iterations of the concept of risk, as something that: can be calculated; is malign and incalculable; has the potential to generate goods.

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For as the nature of foul weather lieth not in a shower or two of rain but in an inclination thereto of many days together, so the nature of war consisteth not in actual fighting but in the known disposition thereto during all the time there is no assurance to the contrary. (Hobbes and MacPherson 1982, 186)

Introduction: risk and solidarity

This article traces historical transformations of risk perceptions with a focus on how these changes correspond to varying forms of solidarity. The first section addresses some of the formative and lasting sociological conceptualizations of (national) solidarity, concentrating on the ways hazards of risk and conceptions of solidarity coincide with the nation state project and its postwar manifestations. The second part builds on Ulrich Beck's work and examines how solidarity finds its expression in the context of emerging 'Risk Societies,' paying particular attention to the mutually constitutive tensions of cosmopolitan and neo-national responses.

From the onset of modernity, uncertainty or rather its attempted containment has been a central organizing principle for political communities, theoretically and practically. Ever since Hobbes and the

malign features of his imaginary 'state of nature,' social contracts have been perceived as the antidote to risk. Written primarily to justify political authority by a Leviathan, nature served Hobbes as a rhetorical strategy to cast it as a latent threat to society. By deploying nature metaphorically as characterized by uncertainty and yielding to a kind of proto-individualism (war of all against all), Hobbes established a lasting dichotomy of the anarchic state of nature and the remedial properties of organized political communities. Here, risk and individualization are contributing to the fragmentation of societies and pushing solidarity toward expiration. Risk and solidarity have since represented opposite sides of an a-historical binarism. Discussions about the conditions for solidarity, then (*fin de siècle*) and now (beginning of the twenty-first century), have revolved around uncertainties and concomitant anxieties.

Rather than viewing risk as detrimental to solidarity, it is a key requisite for past and emerging forms of solidarity. Changing meanings of risk, I argue, inform distinctive forms of solidarity, cosmopolitan, and neo-national, respectively. New global risks serve as a precondition for the emergence of cosmopolitanized solidarities. Whereas cosmopolitanism refers to a philosophical-normative theory, cosmopolitanization addresses factual processes (Beck and Sznaider 2006). Methodological cosmopolitanism (MC), Beck's term for the social scientific program he has been continuously developing during the last decade, relates to an analytical tool kit, which explores processes of cosmopolitanization, including the transformation but not the transcendence of the nation. It was Beck's early rallying cry for a 'methodological cosmopolitanism' in the late 1990s rendering it amenable for social scientific inquiry around which the contours of a cosmopolitan sociology and the sociology of cosmopolitanisms have been crystallizing (Beck 2006). While Beck has not been the only proponent, he was the prime driver who sparked constructive controversies helping in the consolidation of the field of cosmopolitan studies (Delanty 2009).

Recognizing the affinity between global interdependencies and the legal-normatively validated occurrence of collective affiliations above and below the nation state level, sociologists started to pay attention to cosmopolitan indicators. Yet, in contrast to their philosophical peers, social scientists suggested that cosmopolitanism should be treated as a research agenda and not as an essential attribute to be achieved (Fine 2007). Cosmopolitanization is studied as a series of relational and situational processes (Skrbiš and Woodward 2013). Unlike older philosophical engagements approaching cosmopolitanism as a universalistic principle, the sociological dynamics of cosmopolitanization imply a 'non-linear, dialectical process in which the universal and particular, the similar and the dissimilar, the global and the local are to be conceived not as cultural polarities, but as interconnected and reciprocally interpenetrating principles' (Beck 2006, 72–73).

During the late twentieth century, global culture and political norms, most notably the human rights regime and environmentalism, have catalyzed a reimagining of nationhood itself (Beck and Levy 2013). While states may retain most of their sovereign functions in terms of international politics, their legitimacy is no longer exclusively conditioned by a contract with the nation, but also by their adherence to a set of nation-transcending human rights ideals (Levy and Sznaider 2006). However, it is not only the partial de-coupling of nation and state that has propelled the question of solidarity to the forefront. In light of worldwide interdependencies, a growing understanding of the anthropocene, and the global and visual transmission of disasters, perceptions and apprehensions of risk are frequently framed in planetary terms.

At the same time, this cosmopolitanization of solidarities, perceived risks, and their attendant threats has prodded neo-national reactions. Neo-nationalism is best understood as an attempt to redefine nationalism in response to these trends. Globalization and the normative celebration of cosmopolitanism are associated with diminished sovereignty, increased migration, neo-liberalism, and terrorism. For the most part, neo-nationalism expresses an oppositional stance usually associated with the far right in Europe (Gingrich and Banks 2006). Neo-national rhetoric is primarily directed against the cosmopolitanized state and the public commitment of most European elites to cosmopolitan values. Contrary to conventional nationalism – roughly spanning the first three quarters of the twentieth century – advancing a forward-looking set of values, the rhetoric of neo-nationalists is mostly looking to an idealized past. It is directed against outsiders (migrants, cosmopolitans, the EU, etc.) leaving

the affirmative content of national values, which are said to be in need of defense, vague. If nationalism was long a state-sponsored affair, neo-nationalism targets the state as part of the (cosmopolitan) problem. In countries where neo-nationalists (most commonly right-wing populists) are governing, solidarity is usually presented in exclusive ethno-national terms and a shift toward authoritarianism, either attempted or successful, follows (Müller 2016). The point of this brief sketch is neither to vindicate old nationalism – responsible for unparalleled mass atrocities – nor to compare it to neo-nationalism.

Rather, neo-nationalist manifestations need to be understood from a cosmopolitan perspective. Cosmopolitanism and neo-nationalism are constellations themselves now perceived as risks. Looking at populist appeals to a glorified past, cosmopolitanism and attendant risks are the main foils for nationalist anti-global rhetoric (Goodman and James 2011). Conversely, many global political elites view the return to nationalism as dangerous – the nature of the perceived risks ranges from neglect for human rights, dangers of warfare, ethnic cleansing, nuclear annihilation, and other calamities. Electoral rhetoric in Europe is rife with mutual recriminations about the alleged risks of cosmopolitanism and nationalism, respectively.

In order to grasp these new forms of solidarity buttressing this reimagined nationhood, I draw on Ulrich Beck's three historically specific iterations of the concept of risk, as something that: can be calculated; is incalculable and creates bads; and has the potential to generate goods (Beck 2016). The transformation of solidarities is best understood by shifting our attention from risks in society to Risk Societies with the onset of global interdependencies during the last quarter of the twentieth century and the consolidation (despite recurrent contestations) of these global ties since the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Solidarity in the national container

For classical sociologists, national solidarity was seen as a primary response to the risks and uncertainties of modernity. On this view, national solidarity provides the foundations for social order and justice (Durkheim), serves as the basis for political legitimacy (Weber), and addresses issues of (in)equality (Marx). Solidarity is conceived as the key social, cultural, and political response to risk. Whatever the differences among those positions and their later manifestations, solidarity in its national instantiation serves as a counterweight to uncertainty, and progress as the remedial for uncertainty. Émile Durkheim's *Division of Labor* (first published in 1893, with an English translation in 1933) remains the foundational sociological statement on solidarity. In this seminal work, Durkheim grapples with the question of how solidarity is maintained in the transition from communal life toward broad-scale societies, marked by individualization and the concomitant cultural validation of individualism. Starting point is the assumption that solidarity in traditional communal settings (*Gemeinschaften*) is unproblematic as the members of a community are tied to each other by geographic and religious connections. Risk and uncertainty were externalized to natural forces beyond human control. Fatalism and a teleology of redemption were supposed to assuage existential anxieties during pre-modern times. Modern societies (*Gesellschaften*), in contrast, because of sheer size, diversity, and secular politics, do not afford these kinds of communal bonds and lack the redemptive prospects religious narratives offer. Progress would become the cypher through which doubts, fears, and related remedial concerns were absorbed. In order to reverse the *Gemeinschafts*–*Gesellschafts* dichotomy popularized by Ferdinand Tönnies (1957), Durkheim, in a rhetorical twist, suggested that *organic* solidarity was a hallmark of modern societies. Traditional community was characterized by *mechanical* solidarity based on face-to-face relations. Modern organic solidarity, in contrast, is the result of individualization and the interdependencies generated by an evolving division of labor. 'Great political societies [which] cannot sustain their equilibrium save by the specialization of tasks, the division of labor is the source ... of social solidarity' (Durkheim and Coser 1997, 23).

What started out as a historical perspective on changing forms of solidarity was eventually reduced to a naturalized notion of solidaristic bonds within the nation state. The problem was not Durkheim's broad conceptual stroke, especially since, as I will show in the second part, the conceptual primacy of inter-dependencies remains a valuable analytic prism for comprehending contemporary forms of

solidarity. Rather, it is the sociological reception and the pervasive essentialization of (national) solidarity that ensued. The taken-for-granted status of national solidarity took shape during a time when nationhood was at its prime and sociological purveyors of solidarity were turning the historical analysis of the founding fathers into snapshots of the moment and enduring variables (Chernilo 2011). It is the influence of Talcott Parsons and other structural-functionalists that have shaped the sociological understanding of solidarity. Ever since, solidarity has been equated with social integration and societal consensus. If Durkheim was trying to find a theoretical response to the diversity and the individualism of complex societies, Parsons was primarily focused on mechanisms (and patterns) generating consensus, thus further confining the study of solidarity to the national container (Parsons 1964). National differences and the malleability of solidarity were lost due to the reification of solidarity.

Looking at solidarity through the prism of Risk Society helps to re-historicize the term and its different iterations. Solidarity has a long and venerable history (Stjernø 2005). What matters for our immediate purposes is the malleability of its meanings, ranging from contractual obligations in ancient Rome, expressions of fraternity since the French Revolution, to the voluntary sacrifice of one's life in drafted national armies, to name but a few of its historical articulations. From a historical perspective, national solidarity, as the predominant set of values uniting people, is a recent and relatively short-lived phenomenon, roughly from the middle of the nineteenth to the end of the twentieth centuries. That is not to deny the truism that solidarity means various things to different people. One characteristic distinction is that national traditions inform what aspect of solidarity is emphasized. So, for instance, Marx's notion of class solidarity has been influential in Germany and other European states with strong welfare state traditions, either as a tool to maintain class cohesion or by viewing the welfare state as an institution that absorbs and softens the inequality capitalism generates, thus facilitating national solidarity (van der Veen, Yerkes, and Achterberg 2012). Whereas in the U.S., communitarianism, increasingly channeled through the concept of social capital, tends to focus on subnational environments such as ethnic groups and neighborhoods, reflecting a political culture marked by small groups, voluntary associations, and congregationalism (Silver 1990). Nothing to say about the numerous places colonized by the West who, based mostly on political expediencies to establish stable regimes, either left small groups (e.g. clans or tribes) intact, created ethnic divisions, or superimposed the idea of nationhood on them (Bowen 1996). National distinctions based on group belonging can also be identified with regard to cosmopolitan outlooks. The survey literature here is extensive. Suffice to say that the reception of cosmopolitan values is highly contextual, with a particular emphasis on the situational and relational qualities of cosmopolitan dispositions (Skrbiš and Woodward 2013). These are just a few examples illustrating how solidarity is conceived in conjunction with respective political cultures. The same diversity also holds for distinctive apprehensions of risk, which I briefly discuss below. Notwithstanding these differences, most approaches to solidarity leave it caged in the national container.

Solidarity and risk in the global age

If risk is externalized and no longer confined to the nation state (if it ever was), the question arises what happens to national solidarity in the context of globalization. More specifically, what happens to solidarity (and our understanding of the term) when societies are becoming more diverse and changing modes of communication and transportation are transforming the spatial and temporal coordinates of the nation state? Responses vary but essentially can be summarized as follows. There are those who argue that there is a resurgence of national solidarity in response to globalization. The most prominent examples can be found in the populist rhetoric, primarily of the far right (Zaslave 2008), but also in parts of the left who see globalization undermining the national solidarity that the European welfare state provided for much of the twentieth century (van der Veen, Yerkes, and Achterberg 2012). Lastly, those who see the end of solidarity under the auspices of a neoliberal discourse that celebrates a hyper-individualism that is considered antithetical to solidarity (Juul 2013). Most of these debates assessing the impact of globalization on solidarity are operating with a binary of national solidarity versus other forms of solidarity, above or below the nation state.¹

Much of the urgency with which different theorists have addressed solidarity and risk as its Janus-faced twin in modern societies has been related to the decline of religious authority over conceptions of the future. Benedict Anderson conceives of nationalism as the functional equivalent to religious linear narratives of deliverance (Anderson 1983). In the absence of this redemptive outlook and a secular vocabulary to alleviate fears of future calamities, nation states instead supplied technical, scientific, and other modalities of progress as antidotes to risk. The belief in progress was not only a safeguard against risks but also a powerful ideological source of solidarity and optimism for the future, a confidence that was sustained by various forms of insurance and political-technical modalities perceived as assuaging uncertainty and providing a general sense of control. Modernization theory with its paradigmatic dominance until the mid-1960s is the most successful insofar as it consecrated national solidarity and bracketed risk as a residual category.

However, increasing skepticism about the compensatory (and for some even redemptive) power of progress became widespread in the decades following the Holocaust and Hiroshima.

Beginning in the late 1970s, largely because of growing ecological awareness and its planetary implications, the actuarial approach to risk seemed increasingly untenable. The convictions of modern nation states and their scientific apparatuses to control nature were shattered, at least in the so-called developed world. Beck captured this moment around the time of the Chernobyl catastrophe in 1986, which is when *Risikogesellschaft: Auf dem Weg in eine andere Moderne* was first published (Beck 1986). Chernobyl symbolized a turning point signaling an epochal transition to 'Risk Society.'² Contrary to the conventional conceptions of risk (weighing probabilities of adverse effects), Beck suggested that many of the national institutions that had previously controlled social and collective security (i.e. the welfare state and other regulatory bodies) were no longer capable to do so in light of increasingly global insecurities that could not be contained (let alone solved) within the national container. Moreover, risk in Risk Society assumes subjective, intersubjective, and experiential dimensions posing threats of dislocation, disintegration, and disorientation (Ekberg 2007). Risk was now synonymous with negative unintended side effects that were not due to the failure but the very success of technological advancements. For Beck, Risk Society constituted a radically 'new mode of societalization' (Beck 1992, 127) yielding to the emergence of 'risk communities' (Beck, Giddens, and Lash 1994).

Here too, apprehensions and responses to risks are not uniform but contingent on a host of factors. For instance, they include cultural predilections. Thus, in German, the word *Risiko* has negative connotations, whereas in English, at least in the American context, it frequently connotes opportunities. Then, there are the actual exposures to risks, that is, the geographical stratification of risk (e.g. exposure to rising sea levels). Moreover, there is a hierarchy of dangers, that is, if one's bodily integrity is endangered, say by hunger or disease, the latent threat of climate change is probably of lesser or no concern. Beck, of course, was fully aware of these contingencies and yet in the early articulations of Risk Society, there was a certain objectivism bordering on the universalization of risk. Not only does this not hold up to empirical scrutiny but it also rubs against the tenet of the (inter)-subjective apprehension of risk.³ Nevertheless, the impact of globalization, the multiplication, extensity and volatility of risks in the form of climate change, global financial crisis, and terrorism have propelled us into what Beck calls 'World Risk Society' (Beck 1999).

In his latest work, Beck offers a more nuanced approach to the somewhat dystopian vision that underwrites earlier iterations of Risk Society. At the center of his attention is the notion of 'Emancipatory Catastrophism,' which he describes thus: 'The metamorphosis of the world is about the hidden emancipatory side effect of global risk. Talk about bads produces 'common goods.' As such, the argument goes beyond what has been at the heart of the world risk society theory so far: it is not about the negative side effects of goods but the positive side effects of bads. They are producing normative horizons of common goods' (Beck 2015, 75). Catastrophism, the modes, and means through which risk is constituted

can be seen, and analysed, by using three conceptual lenses: first, the anticipation of global catastrophe violates sacred (unwritten) norms of human existence and civilization; second, thereby it causes an anthropological shock, and, third, a social catharsis. This is, how new normative horizons as frames of perception and action, emerge. (Beck 2015, 79)

Arguably, this catastrophism is necessarily cathartic and emancipatory. Drawing on his rhetorical arsenal, Beck's primary objective was to dissociate catastrophism from its negative and frequently essentialized connotations. He was eager to replace the dystopian attributes of catastrophism and foreground the constructive, sociological, and normative potential of catastrophism. However, by drawing on the emancipatory, he unintentionally reproduced a uniformitarianism marked with a linear trajectory. The problem is not (merely) that the notion of emancipation connotes a positive outcome but also that it is inferring a temporal index with developmental markers.

What matters for our purposes is that catastrophism can neither be reduced to either utopian or dystopian projections nor does it merely reflect an interruption. I, therefore, suggest to replace the term emancipatory with the notion of cosmopolitan catastrophism. Cosmopolitanism, and cosmopolitanization as its sociological pendant, is a historically contingent response to new webs of interdependencies marked by a growing awareness and alertness to World Risk Society. Looked at in a broad sweep following Norbert Elias, (2000)

the civilizing process emerged from the structural demands for new forms of attunement between people who had been forced together in longer webs of mutual dependence. Assumptions about civilized conduct emerged as people became more densely interconnected: they were evident in the emotional attitudes to violence and suffering that became part of the social habitus – the routines of ordinary life. (Linklater 2012, 61)

Like earlier modes of pacification, 'those processes demand new forms for global coordination and novel patterns of self-restraint so that people are attuned to the needs and interest of distant strangers, now bound together to an unprecedented extent' (Linklater 2012, 60). The liberal nation state has contributed to these civilizing impulses but nationalism has also been a cause for unprecedented levels of violence, which in turn set in place the seeds for a Global Human Rights Regime that enjoys political and cultural salience since the 1990s.⁴ Through their widespread institutional embeddedness, cosmopolitan values are not only reflected in a global horizon of aspirational claims, but also one of expanding rights (Pierik and Werner 2010) and diminishing tolerance for their violation (Nash 2012). It is precisely the widely reported failure to protect human rights that, in the context of the cosmopolitan imperative, renders them politically and culturally consequential (Levy and Sznajder 2010). Cosmopolitan catastrophism is driven by toxic (no pun intended) pasts that have lost their exemplary utility and by an apprehension of the future, which is replete with contingencies and unknowns, that is risk. Accordingly, people, tied together through their shared experience with risk, can and do establish new forms of solidarity.⁵ However, without mediatization, by which risks are framed and communicated through the media, imagined risk communities beyond the nation would not be possible.

Framing risks and the mediation of solidarities

In the remainder of the paper, I address the central role of the media in framing risk and the way it contributes to diverse webs of affiliations. The media is, of course, not the sole mechanism through which risk perceptions are formed, but it is an indispensable one circumscribing how risk is communicated and comprehended.

Risks are social constructions based upon corresponding relations of definition. Their 'reality' can be dramatized or minimized, transformed or simply denied according to the norms, which decide what is known and what is not. They are products of struggles and conflicts over definitions within the context of specific relations of definitional power, hence the (in varying degrees successful) results of stagings. (Beck 2009, 30)

Modern collectivities are increasingly occupied with debating, preventing, and managing risks that cannot be calculated or predicted anymore. Consequently, more influence accrues to the perception of risk, largely constructed by media representations of disasters. These frequently include threats to besieged solidarities. It is thus not a surprise that perceived risks attributed to outsiders are frequently formulated with naturalistic references, such as waves or floods of immigrants. Yet, despite this recourse to the natural, disasters conventionally signify interruptions. In contrast, in the context of an increasingly interconnected world, they have become limiting cases, challenging the taken-for-granted spatial

assumptions of nationhood and its attendant methodological nationalism. Underwriting this proposed reconceptualization is the apprehension of global risks as the anticipation of (localized) risks.

As the current age of uncertainty is deprived of modular pasts and aspirational futures, risk perceptions are resituated in new forms of manufactured insecurities. Risk perceptions and mediated disaster representations are linked. The more obvious it becomes that global risks cannot be calculated or predicted, the more influence accrues to those who have the legitimacy to define what risks consists of. What is imagined as 'risky' is not only a function of cultural and social contexts. It is also circumscribed by how the career of risk agendas in media representations unfolds. In World Risk society, the central question of power is thus a question of definitional authority. Agenda-setting approaches and attendant research on habituation suggest that the ideological power of the media consists not in telling us what to think but rather what to think about. We shall see below that the influence of the media to address, thematize, and represent risk is contained in its agenda-setting function and the related fact that certain issues are largely ignored. As Barbara Adam has pointed out, media focus rests on spectacular environmental risks rather than chronic ones. It is event-centered rather than engaging with the issue at large. Long-term consequences are marginalized and issues of mitigation and prevention are routinely displaced from journalistic hierarchies of credibility (Adam, Allan, and Carter 2000). Much of the agenda-setting function is driven by a focus on disasters that carry the requisite features of global media events (Couldry, Hepp, and Krotz 2009). The main point here is that it is wrong to regard social and cultural judgments as things that only distort the perception of risk. Without them there are no risks. It is those judgments that constitute risk.

The nation state, at the turn of the twentieth century, depended for its coming into existence on a process by which existing societies used media representations to turn themselves into new wholes that would act on people's feelings, to make them into groups that individuals experience as bonds of solidarity. This nation-building process in many ways parallels what is happening with globalization at the turn of the twenty-first century. Risk collectivities are engendered through the anticipation of endangered futures, which are, for the most part, communicated through an increasingly global mediascape. We are facing a distinctive 'world news ecology' with interpenetrating communication flows, including traditional mainstream, alternative news media, and social media. Suffice to say here that these technological developments, and no less important their social and political deployment, contribute to the loss of the meaning-making supremacy of the nation state. National heydays of broadcasting have been complemented with a fragmented mediascape that amounts to narrowcasting, thus complicating the question of solidarity.⁶ Media portrayals of globally shared risk scenarios provide a prism to explore the emergence of new cosmopolitan affiliations and their neo-nationalist counterparts.⁷ While the particular meanings ascribed to these risks may differ, they vernacularize cosmopolitan and neo-national outlooks by habitual consumption, inevitability, institutionalization, and normative validation. Banal nationalism (Billig 1995) and banal cosmopolitanism (Beck 2002) not only coexist but also reinforce each other.

Media research shows that risks are registered, culturally defined, and assume their meanings through an ongoing communication flow (Cottle 2011). On this view, media not merely represent risk but help generate what a risk is in the first place. Risk representations are by now firmly embedded in a global mediascape threading on disaster images. We can speak of Global Media Events. 'GMEs are very much present in daily routines because they call our attention long before they occur, there are always people engaged in one or more of them, and, finally, when one event concludes another will begin' (Ribes 2010, 5). GMEs are thus critical in defining risks and producing cosmopolitan vocabularies of motives and their neo-nationalist rejection.⁸ Much of the reception thus hinges on how risks are mediat(iz)ed and locally appropriated in the context of World Risk society. Whether they are framed with reference to transnational or national sensibilities also depends on how they are absorbed into national media. The next section presents some findings that speak to the cosmopolitanization of risk communities, briefly followed by illustrative examples for the neo-national reactions this has prompted.

Then (national epoch) and now (global age), the media was a crucial factor in the production of 'imagined communities.' From the seminal role of the printed press during the late nineteenth century

(Anderson 1983) to the worldwide web connecting people across the globe (Silverstone 2006), the burgeoning literature on the cosmopolitanization of media images has focused on how meaningful the 'other' is and what degree of empathy and compassion such images produce (Robertson 2010). These projects have yielded a wide array of results, ranging from claims that a global iconography of 'distant suffering' (Boltanski 1999) has generated significant attention (Kyriakidou 2009), produced awareness of the misery of others (Tester 2001) as well as reverse claims about 'compassion fatigue' (Moeller 1999).

Reception studies remain somewhat inconclusive. Yet, what they do show is that media(ted) images provide an important socializing agent of cosmopolitanization and its neo-national counterpart. Even accounting for highly differentiated readings of risk images, there is evidence that media create an awareness for a global risk society and the potential to 'create a shared normative culture' (Delanty 2009, 86). The recognition that global media events may not have the same ideological power compared to clearly delineated national media events does not mean that they cannot be catalysts for 'transnational action and emotional commitment' (Skrbiš and Woodward 2013, 135).⁹ The same can be said of the so-called new media. This should not be misinterpreted as some kind of technological determinism. Clearly, the global reach of most media is a necessary but not a sufficient condition when it comes to assessing the cosmopolitan potential of risk coverage in the media (Kendall and Woodward 2009). Global media of shared risks then provide certain avenues of visibility, connectivity, potentially yielding to cosmopolitanized solidarities. At the least, global media produce shared imaginaries of risk.

Studies suggest that the extent to which risk mediation contributes to cosmopolitan orientations is refracted through a national prism (Christensen and Jansson 2015). While global media events produce shared exposure, risk conceptions retain distinctive political-cultural features as their respective meanings are conditioned by path-dependent pasts. Whether cosmopolitan collectivities are formed depends, among other things, on how risks are mediated and consumed as habituated practices in the national context. Cosmopolitan sense-making is contingent on the cultural resonance particular risk images carry. Apprehension of risk in response to the disaster in Fukushima, for instance, differed markedly in Germany and France. In the former, green awareness has moved to the mainstream and the immediate reaction, transcending party differences, was to shut down older nuclear reactors and the decision to opt out of nuclear energy altogether. France, in contrast, draws over 80% of its energy from nuclear power and environmental activism is still largely confined to the Greens and other like-minded groups. Global media images are recontextualized through national broadcasting frames (Clausen 2003) and their consumption is prefigured by national cultural inflections (Fairclough 2006). The construction and consumption of media(ted) risk is also informed by the political-economic constraints of media organizations, everyday journalistic practices, and other organizational features of media corporations (Mythen 2004). Moreover, most media images are polysemic, adding an important dimension to reception studies. Risk images are decoded differently, based on dominant, negotiated, and oppositional readings (Hall 1973).

Whatever the difference in the findings of media per and receptions of risk, it is apparent that we cannot study cosmopolitan and neo-national quests for solidarity as antithetical. They are co-extensive phenomena. Beck understands that, though he frequently returns to the emancipatory potential of the media thus underestimating how national media tend to respond to risk with social closure, most media coverage of immigration, for instance, employs images and metaphors fueling neo-nationalists whose exclusionary rhetoric thrives on the financial risks that supposedly arise from the integration of migrants and refugees, and the way this discourse has recently been focused on 'Islamicisation.' The latter is increasingly a code word that links the other to terrorism. The risk, or rather the threat that allegedly inheres in the risk, becomes the foil around which solidarity is claimed. Few would dispute, that the media has provided neo-nationalist politicians a powerful platform, lifting taboos on the discussion of ethnic and religious differences, nothing to say of outright racism (Van Dijk 2015).

The diminishing return of the Global Human Rights regime during the last decade is also apparent in current European politics. Here too, neo-nationalism and cosmopolitanism are clashing, the former emphasizing collective and the latter stressing individual rights. Some view the recent rise of right wing populism in Europe as evidence for the persistent or resurgent strength of nationalism. This

interpretation does not account for the fragmentation of solidarities and the need to rethink national identities as they are, recast by processes of de-secularization and other sub and supranational dynamics. As indicated above, neo-nationalism is primarily a response to the cosmopolitan discourse that emanates from political elites in Europe. Conversely, neo-nationalism is not merely unifying disenfranchised groups but also triggers cosmopolitan reactions to the exclusionary rhetoric right-wing populists propagate. Neo-nationalists can no longer unite the majority of people on the basis of ethno-national criteria or citizenship, to name two hitherto crucial organizing principles of national solidarity (Soysal 1994). Media representations of global risks that are experienced through local horizons thus frequently beget both cosmopolitan and neo-national webs of affiliation. Cosmopolitan identifications come into sight at the interstices of global orientations and particular attachments designating the emergence of new, de-, and re-nationalized social spaces and imaginaries. Cosmopolitan orientations then do not entail a denial of the persistent reality of the nation for social actors. They rather suggest that neo-nationalism is a reflex to the reality of cosmopolitan identifications. Cosmopolitanized affiliations are reimagined through the anticipation of endangered futures, that is, shared encounters with risk.

The future of solidarity: an outlook

Employing global risks as a prism to study changing forms of solidarity is an important complementary to the above-mentioned nation-specific traditions of inquiry. Accordingly, much of the current literature on solidarity is focused on the impact globalization has on solidaristic ties, both inside and outside of the national container. If the history of solidarity largely points to different (time bound) meanings (Wildt 1999), the current period can be characterized as a fragmented contested terrain, where distinctive visions of solidarity compete (Oosterlynck et al. 2016), ranging from nativist and ethno-cultural demands for an (imagined) national past (Skey 2011) toward various loci of transnational solidarities (Kurasawa 2004). This brings us back to Beck's suggestion to perceive the future through the prism of risk perceptions. In *World Risk Society* (1999), he lays out the interdependencies that have the potential for nation-transforming solidarities. He subsequently focuses on three realms where risk has had political traction to engender the potential for cosmopolitanized solidarities: ecology, terrorism, and finance. This is not an exhaustive list, but one that directs our attention to domains from where nascent forms of solidarity can and are emerging. Be it in the form of transnational social movements fighting for environmental justice (Smith 1998; Doherty 2013) and against the financial risks of neo-liberal globalism (Konak and Dönmez 2015), to be sure, these findings should not be mistaken for some kind of inevitable transcendence of national solidarities. As indicated above, many of the current neo-nationalist responses in Europe (and the U.S.) are based on a rejection of global interdependencies and fora that undermine the nation, be it in the form of claims for energy independence, xenophobic reactions, or the revival of protectionist policies.

Beck's legacy consists, among many things, in foregrounding risk as a hallmark of our global age. Risks, or rather their representations, are challenging the ontological security once provided by the temporal narratives of nation states. For Beck, *World Risk Society* requires a paradigmatic shift. He cautions us that social scientists need to overcome the entrenched methodological nationalism and replace it with a cosmopolitan perspective. This methodological Gestalt shift derives its analytical force from elucidating the relationship between actual cosmopolitan identifications and the persistence or resurgence of political self-descriptions, labeled here as neo-nationalism. Whereas national heuristics have treated (global) risks as temporary, pathological, and residual, cosmopolitan heuristics approach risk as central and constitutive. Then and now, uncertainties about the future and risk containment continue to underwrite debates about solidarities.

Notes

1. There are notable exceptions conceptualizing solidarity in the global context. Most of them are written by political theorists, some escaping the normative proclivities of their field and tuned in to sociological processes (Bayertz

- 1999; Pensky 2008). Presenting the long history of solidarity and its malleability, Brunkhorst (2005) offers a synthesis of the works of Habermass and Luhman, where the idea of an integrated global legal community and a shared discursive universe are the pivots of world society.
2. The English translation followed in 1992 as *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity* (Beck 1992).
 3. Beck spent considerable intellectual energy in the last 10 years of pushing for a path-dependent approach (Beck and Sznaider 2006) yielding empirical efforts to examine the trajectories of risk societies in Asia and elsewhere (Beck and Grande 2010). In 2012, Beck was awarded a multi-year Advanced Investigator Grant from the European Research Commission. The project entitled 'Methodological Cosmopolitanism – In the Laboratory of Climate Change' was cut short by his untimely death. First results, spanning a wide array of case studies, were published in a special issue of the journal *Current Sociology* (Beck 2015).
 4. The term 'Regime' carries technical meaning here and refers to an international set of explicit or implicit 'principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actor expectations converge in a given issue-area' (Krasner 1983: 1).
 5. Beck himself sees World Cities as the privileged site and catalyst for cosmopolitan communities of risk. In World Cities, the clashes of global risks become matters of everyday experience and politics. When we speak of world cities as forming a cosmopolitan "community" of global risks, then, this term does not stand in opposition to, but instead includes, such clashes and conflicts. (Beck 2016, 180)
 6. This fragmentation should not be confused with any kind of pluralism as we are also witnessing the oligopolization of global media mergers and their dominance (Herrmann and McChesney 2001).
 7. Despite Beck's recognition that the social construction and symbolic representation of risks is crucial, the link of media, risk, and cosmopolitanism remains undertheorized in his earlier work. For a constructive critique of Beck's often contradictory approach to the media, producing lay-reflexivity, on the one, and reproducing a limited understanding of risk, on the other, see Mythen (2004).
 8. Unlike the original formulation of 'Media Events' by Dayan and Katz (1992), global media events do not imply consensual and integrative functions.
 9. The list of scholars who have addressed the cosmopolitanizing potential of media coverage, especially with regards to Beck's trinity of climate, financial and security related risks, is by now extensive, ranging from theoretical concerns (Hannerz 1990; Holton 2009), conceptual forays (Ong 2009), to media specific observations (Chouliaraki and Blaagaard 2014; Christensen and Jansson 2015) and numerous case studies (Christensen 2012; Mao 2014).

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