

Mere Connection: Do Communication Flows Compensate for the Lack of World Society?

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Introduction

In recent and usefully acerbic commentary on the prospects for political community beyond the nation-state, David Chandler takes both liberal cosmopolitans and post-structuralist critics of same to task for having quite developed political projects, but very little in the way of hard copy or convincing theory with which to back up their claims (2007, 2009). When discussing globalization, and especially when demarcating or prescribing a global civil society, his is not an unusual complaint. For at one remove it is true that a good deal of commentary on these themes traverses the boundary between normative and empirical-analytic positions with a little too much ease for scholarly comfort. At another, it is clear that what constitutes sound evidence for a vibrant global civil society is contested, leaving aside any definitional imprecision that attaches to the concept. However, it may be that Chandler is committing the self-same error that he discerns in other writing on the subject; namely, trying to analyse the empirical worth of a concept using analytical tools hardly suited to the task and normative positions that seem to rule out the idea of a “positive problem shift” in the social sciences, one that, *pace* Lakatos, makes new realities visible (Lakatos, 1970 and Beck and Sznaider, 2006). In what follows I want to examine some treatments of the concept of world or global society¹ and suggest that just that opportunity exists. To realise it, however requires taking a critical view of at least some of the scholarship on world society, even where the concept is seriously entertained, and stepping outside of rationalist-territorialist conceptions of association and order². I begin with a brief excursion through some uses of the concept of world society, identifying connection, or more broadly, connectivity as key to understanding both its dynamics and its (relative) coherence. Communication as a form of connectivity is privileged as the lens through which world society can be conceptualized, but the quite developed position in Niklas Luhmann’s communications theory of social systems is found wanting in key respects.

- 1 In this article I do not distinguish between world and global society, although in some literatures such a distinction is available. In large measure my decision is guided by a concern not to be led into exactly the kind of conceptual mire that has made it difficult for, say, some students of international relations to entertain the “reality” of the global and who wish to retain the concept of world society as a hedge against definitional contamination. On the other hand, as I will recount, the idea of global civil society has also been bracketed, unhelpfully, by some believers and does service as a particular type of normative goal as much as an empirically valid description of a complex modality. Having said that, it might be argued that the concept of world society carries with it less of a normative burden than that of global society, let alone global civil society.
- 2 In this endeavour I build on previously published work, found in Axford and Huggins, 1999, Axford, 2001, 2002, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007a and b and 2009.

Other arguments that entertain the possibility of “cosmopolitan communication”,³ though without any socially holistic remit, are canvassed, but deemed either too normatively inflected or, where they are criticized, too constrained by territorialist assumptions about the natural spaces of civic association to provide a purchase on emergent globalities. Finally, I propose that a fruitful engagement with burgeoning findings from areas such as network theory, complexity analysis and those areas of communications research that address eminently middle-range issues such as the formation of public spheres across borders, all meet the injunction to treat the idea of world/global society as an opportunity for a positive problem shift. As will be seen, I do not see the more culturally inflected views of world polity theorists as detrimental to the idea that a society effect or trope is possible through connectivity, but this remains a source of tension in the account.

World Society Theories

It is already a considerable leap of conceptualization to imagine a global or world society rather than, or in place of, the national variant (Buzan, 2004, 2010). In Barry Buzan’s writing, typical of the English School of international relations theory, we can discern two, possibly opposed, depictions of world society, notably as it relates to notions of territory and borders: a “pluralist” vision, in which states remain dominant and state sovereignty retains political and legal primacy, and a “solidarist” prescription, which sees cosmopolitan values and universal norms predicating a new global order. Buzan (2004) says that these two logics coexist in the contemporary world: the system of states, sovereignty, territory, nationalism and great-power politics alongside a much less stable and ill-defined system of transnationalism, global markets, and universalistic values.

Bifurcated views of world society are not uncommon.⁴ But once the analyst has ventured beyond the conceptual implausibility of the idea that (the notion of) society is retrievable even in the absence of boundaries, the most difficult question is what exactly is meant by world society? There are a number of possible responses to this question. They comprise definitions whereby first, pretty much all the attributes of a national society – that is, a functionally integrated social whole supported by a sense of community – are transposed to the global level, and the problems of making this leap are made clear in various critiques of the idea of global civil society (Axford, 2004, 2012; Chandler, 2009; Chandler and Baker, 2005; Keane, 2003). Second is a much looser conception reliant upon various and intensifying forms of connectivity and communication between sub-global actors to produce a society effect. For critics the latter is often deemed less “whole” and therefore less authentic or “thick” than the national version, but this, as I will argue, is a blinkered *a-priori* and normative position.

3 I take the phrase from Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris’ critique of global cultural convergence, *Cosmopolitan Communications: Cultural Diversity in a Globalized World*, New York. Cambridge University Press

4 See Arjun Appadurai’s 2006 discussion of the intersection of and tensions between vertebrate and cellular political and economic geographies, as a case in point.

In a third version the ontology of global society departs from the first two iterations and is skeptical both of the claim that “society” presupposes functional integration and cultural community and of the notion that a “society” can be realized through mere interconnection and flows of information, commodities and people across boundaries, even where it may be acknowledged that communication is a functional requisite of systemic order (Thomas, 2009; Albert, 2009; Wellman, 2008). In this third version the idea of a global social whole is retained but has to be seen as the emergence of a social and cultural context in which consciousness of and willingness to engage collectively with world problems are the norms. Functional integration between parts of a (bounded) society is replaced by cultural enactment of communicated rules by various actors. This rather looser conception of society has strong echoes of world polity theory about it, largely through its emphasis on growing consciousness of world cultural constraints on the behavior of actors who imagine and, often through communication, enact an increasingly “stateless society” as George Thomas has it (2009, 118), or a global cultural field (Robertson, 1992).

Although quite different from each other the preceding accounts all work with the idea that there is an entity which can be understood as a world society. But in doing so they may endorse a model of society which has not been met and, arguably, cannot be met outside an ideal-typical version of the territorial state and the bounded society, or cleave to definitions that depart from the conventional wisdom about society formation found in classical sociological theory. While the latter is defensible, even necessary, it raises the question of whether global processes and forms – the social ontology of the global – can be understood through use of a concept so patently tied to national phenomena. This is hardly a trivial question since it directly challenges the ability of much social theory to comprehend the global. In particular its importance lies in once more highlighting an acute issue for globalization theory namely; how is a global social system or (world) society possible; what would hold it together? Before addressing that question, let me enlarge somewhat on what I understand by connection, since it has a bearing on the ways in which communication is privileged as a means of society-enactment later in the piece.

Mere Connection?

Connection can be taken as a purely descriptive term. In this guise the various flows of capital, people, texts, images, knowledge, crime, disease, fashions and beliefs which traverse local and national boundaries have no serious implications for the constitution of social life. Thus, transnationalism, a concept often used in conjunction with connectivity, could be taken as no more than processes that interconnect individuals and social groups across geo-political borders. An alternative interpretation has it as the “rise of new communities and formation of new social identities and relations that cannot be defined through the traditional reference point of nation-states” (Robinson, 2007, 1199–201). The difference between these two definitions turns on the notion that while some forms of connectivity, of transnational practice, are no

more than movements or exchanges between the container space of one territory and another, other practices intimate, at the least, a transformation to post-national scales of political and economic governance and sociality. And, of course, the differences are ever more critical once one introduces received notions of what constitutes society to the discussion.

So, applied to the social world connectivity means links between actors and between actors and various media. The medium of connection could be trade or movements of capital, human media in the shape of travellers, or digital technologies that enable instantaneous connection and interaction, begging the constraints of place and time. But any form of exchange or communication between actors is also a form of connectivity. That said, much of the academic literature on connectivity from cultural and communication studies, as well as a good deal of research on globalization focuses on communicative connectivity, and such is the burden of this article. This focus embraces communication between agents who are co-present in the same physical space and various types of mediated communication that permit interaction not reliant on co-presence (Giddens, 1990).

A useful way of categorizing forms of mediated communication further distinguishes between dialogical and monological forms of communication and this distinction bears on the kind of systemic and technological qualities of media as they contribute to new forms of sociality and identity (Thomson, 1995). In its pristine form dialogical communication requires co-presence and is unmediated, save for the ideational and emotional baggage each participant brings to the encounter. Mediated dialogical communication involves the use of a mode of communication – by letter, fax, speech and, increasingly, visual telephony, e-mail, the internet – and an associated technical medium – for example, paper, electrical cables, satellite technology, fibre optics – to enable links between actors separated in time and across space. Monological communication, which John Thompson calls “quasi-mediated interaction”, refers to the media of mass communication, such as hard copy and electronic newspapers, radio and television. Of course, these days all such platforms and formats are capable of supporting dialogical communication, but even in the recent past this was rarely the case.

In the scholarship of globalization, connectivity refers to the expansion of social ties across the planet and, once again, the range of possible connections is not limited to symbolic exchanges through communication media. Connectivist accounts of globalization as a process are legion and theories of globalization as a web of increasingly extensive and intensive connectivity still dominate much of the theoretical literature, although they are by no means unchallenged. John Tomlinson’s definition is typical of the strain of scholarship where “(g)lobalization refers to the ever-densening (*sic*) network of interconnections and interdependencies that characterize modern social life” (2006, 1). The sense of globalization as intensive and extensive connectivity can be found too in work with quite different theoretical and normative pretensions. Jan Aart Scholte’s account of globalization as supra-territoriality is a prominent example (2005), while Hardt and Negri’s allegedly “post-Marxist” treatise on “Empire” (2000) and Manuel Castells’ monumental work on “The Information Age” (1996) both convey the image of a networked, de-centred and de-territorialized world of capitalism as a rejection of orthodox Marxism and state-centric models of international political economy. In the sophisticated transformationalist argument deployed by David Held and his colleagues

(1999) globalization is revealed as a set of processes which extend, intensify and speed-up flows and connections. But to avoid any sense that connection as process somehow floats free of institutions and of context, they also describe connectivity as grounded in organisational and institutional arrangements – global norms, epistemic communities and governance regimes – which monitor, regulate and otherwise manage the connections, movements and flows.

When studying the dynamics of social change, obviously connectivist accounts privilege spatio-temporal factors. Concerns expressed about this approach are either that spatial and temporal factors are no more than contexts for action or, and / or, that globalization theory has not offered a plausible, let alone convincing, explanation of how these factors might play a constitutive part in processes of social change and thus of globality formation, or act as contexts for identity formation. A ‘strong’ thesis on the explanatory value of globalization as a theory of connections lies in the pioneering scholarship of Anthony Giddens, where two key dimensions of modernity appear as synonyms for globalization. The first is the idea of “space-time distanciation”, which refers to the complex relations between embodied co-presence and interactions across distance (the connection of presence and absence) in which conventional notions about immediacy and communication are transformed. In the modern /global era, the degree of time-space distanciation is much greater than in any previous period to the point of extreme disjunction. Second and accordingly, the relations between local and distant social forms, actors and events become stretched, producing social relationships which are “disembedded” from particular contexts (Giddens, 1980). The “stepping out” of time characteristic of space-time distanciation uncouples social relations from local contexts of interaction and “stretches” them across much larger spans of time and space. I will take up some of these insights later, but after this brief excursus, let’s return to the main question of determining how global society is possible.

Lessons from Social Systems Theory

This pertinent issue is discussed in a considered, but controversial article by Mathias Albert and I will use his paper to structure my critique in this section of the article (2007). His argument is that certain received brands of social theory – or theories of society – are indeed applicable to the global condition and his preference in this regard draws on the variety of social systems theory found in the work of Niklas Luhmann (1981, 1983, 1997). In so doing Albert distances himself from much research out of both the world polity and world culture traditions, although he claims to discern the possibility of fruitful engagement with both. The basis of his argument as derived from Luhmann is that while it is possible to conceive of a world society, its existence and survival cannot be predicated on the same attributes of stability, consensus and unproblematic cultural wholeness found in functionalist treatments of social order and seen in many histories of state and nation-building (Fuchs, 1991). Instead the global system is characterized as “differentiated and polycentric” (Jessop, 1990, 320). While all this seems eminently sensible and appears to hold clues as to the constitution of world society,

as will be revealed, the devil lies in being able to move from a critique of existing theory to a viable – as opposed to just plausible – alternative.

Classical theories of society stress the importance of normative integration to explain why such entities hold together despite their heterogeneity, but (despite what world polity theorists argue) this dynamic is not readily available beyond the nation-state, because the modal social form is either network based or comprises only sporadic and probably unpredictable outbursts of solidarity expressed through world public opinion on issues of pressing concern such as global warming, famine and human rights. Arguably, the mobilizing dynamic of interactive social media as evidenced in the spate of insurrections across North Africa and, before that, in Iran and Moldova, are typical of this kind of phenomenon⁵. In passing we should also note that some research on the ethnography of social networks in general and transnational networks in particular suggests that they may well be contexts in which strong and enduring identities can be formed (Axford, 2006, 2007) although such claims are vehemently contested (Tarrow, 2004; Chandler, 2009). Moreover, the idea of attentive, if not enduring, global publics is increasingly canvassed in literature on global civil society and the “new” cosmopolitanism or, more narrowly, in relation to notions such as European-ness, European identity and the possibility of transnational public spheres (Risse, 2010). Such modalities challenge our understanding of society as conventionally “thick” and it may require us to rethink what we mean by and require from notions such as intimacy too. I will return to these matters below.

Albert's position is that if it is possible to conceive of society at a world scale and using the lens of existing social theory then it must be through an analytical framework which does not rely heavily on the notion of normative integration, of thickness, and in this task he draws upon Luhmann's conceptualization of world society. In his own work Luhmann builds on the ideas of previous theorists of society, notably Comte, Durkheim, Spencer and Talcott Parsons, developing the core sociological notion of social differentiation, but departing from conventional wisdom about the need for normative integration to ensure social cohesion. Most theorists of (national) society assume that functional differentiation is the form of social differentiation that dominates modern society. All functions within a system become assigned to a particular sub-sector or sub-system of society and these “sites” fulfil specific and necessary tasks for society as a whole (Albert, 2009, 175). The idea of functional differentiation can apply to broad functional categories such as the political system or the economy as well as to the complex division of labour found in many formal organisations, which might include human resource management, finance, marketing and a host of other functions. The point is that while these sub-systems are in many ways autonomous, from a systemic (societal) standpoint they display a good deal of functional interdependence and this is necessary for the continued survival of the system.

Used to analyse national societies as social systems none of this is radical, although, of course, many forms of systems theory and functionalist analysis are now less than fashionable, espe-

5 Many other examples come to mind, notably the mobilizations that took place around various G7, G8 and G20 meetings from 2000 onwards. Clearly the politics evoked in these cases is not always the same, nor the scale of activity and organisation. Nonetheless, as I will argue, it is the affordances delivered through forms of “new” media that is of significance to the theme of this article.

cially in Anglo-American sociology. Bearing in mind my concern with world society, what is significant is that functional differentiation is usually seen as in need of some kind of socially integrative mechanism to bind diverse functions together, not least in times of crisis. Parsons referred to this as the sense of societal community, a concept not light years away from the idea of normative integration. But, at least in terms of identifying the building blocks of world society, and rather unhelpfully, this brings us almost full circle.

Luhmann tries to break out of this dilemma by insisting that the structuration of world society depends on two related processes. The first is, of course, functional differentiation both within and between social systems, and this involves interactions and exchanges between systems, sub-systems and their complex environments. Thus nation-states have other nation-states, international organisations and civil society groups in their environment with whom they must interact, while producers and consumers in any market negotiate the terms of and then enact the transactions between them. Secondly there is intensive and extensive communication between social systems and the sub-units of social systems which all “use communication to constitute and interconnect the events (actions) which build up the systems” (Luhmann 1990, 176). However, in Luhmann’s systems theory communication does not correspond to the received meaning of that term (Maurer, 2010). Whereas the received definition of communication, of connection, implies the inter-subjective transmission of messages between members of a community, Luhmann does not like the “metaphor of transmission” because it suggests that communication is the bridge between subjects and thus underwrites a model of consciousness – possibly of agency – that is alien to most systems-theoretic accounts (Luhmann, 1995, 139). Almost from the outset then, his treatment of communication is at odds with those positions on global connectedness that see communicative dialogue, perhaps even some forms of monological transmission as key to the growth of an increasingly modal cultural consciousness of global interdependence and of personal and collective embeddedness in world society. While I do not think that because of this neglect of inter-subjectivity and consciousness, Luhmann can be judged as entirely neglectful agency, he sends mixed signals about the nature of communication and particularly communication as a process of selection that comprises information, utterance and understanding (1995); which brings us to the matter of language.

Luhmann argues that each system has its own language and signals and that these are unique to each system’s environment. Thus an educational system has its own environment and language, a political system has its equivalents, and so on. All systems and some sub-systems have their own language, and that language is, in its fullest sense, recognizable only to those who are members of the system. Yet every environment must interact with others to ensure its survival and because of this exchanges with other systems in other environments must be intelligible. How do systems communicate intelligibly and pacifically with others with whom they share some kind of interface? Luhmann’s answer to that question is the idea of structural coupling, of communication as a process of selection and observation. In other words, he privileges a rather anodyne process of communicative connection. It will be useful to unpack this notion somewhat.

As is well known, Luhmann's argument here owes an intellectual debt to that branch of systems theory called *autopoiesis*, which is the product of pioneering work in physics and biology (for a summary see Urry, 2003). Autopoietic systems too are characterized by internal functional differentiation but the key thing about them is that their autonomy and ability to survive are dependent on the ways in which they interact with the increasingly complex environments in which they are located. These environments act as sources of disturbance, even chaos, and thus of potential change. A system's ability to survive and retain its own identity is thus premised on the capacity to organize and manage its environments through a variety of means.

In Luhmann's sociology the primary means is the communicative capacity of world society, whose sub-systems, whether states or other formal and informal organisations, engage in "structural coupling" with other such systems and sub-systems. Communication is the vital ingredient of structural coupling, linking actors across multiple social systems regardless of space and time. When discussing the role of mass media in constructing a world⁶, as opposed to a set of discrete worlds, Luhmann emphasises that a singular world is dependent on the emergence of certain technologies (printing press, radio, television, satellite, internet, etc) and the communications that are embedded in the exchanges made possible by these technologies. So, technological innovation allows a new form of *Common* to emerge. The *Common*, however, is not just shared content in the sense of shared information, perhaps in the shape of news, it also constitutes a spatio-temporal modality and thus facilitates, even demands, enmeshing the everyday lives of people separated in space and time with each other and with the various "hyperobjects" – for example, terrorism, oil and financial crises – that invest their worlds in different ways. For Luhmann it is not important that mass media produce the *same* content by trafficking shared assumptions or beliefs, or even coverage. Indeed, differences in all these things may actually enhance the possibility of further communication, thereby allowing the media system to reproduce itself autopoietically. Undoubtedly this is a unity of sorts. Society, or what musters as society in classical sociological theory, now floats free of any such determination. As Bechmann and Stehr opine, "it is not a moral unity, not based on consensus or any rational integration (of whatever kind); it is formed solely by ongoing communication" (2002, 72).

Moreover it is a unity now configured without hindrance, or necessary hindrance, by borders or any ontological givens. Society is constituted through the key reference points of functional differentiation and communication and is now resolutely global. Thus, says Luhmann:

Modern society has become a completely new type of system, building up an unprecedented degree of complexity. The boundaries of its subsystems can no longer be integrated by common territorial frontiers. Only the political subsystem continues to use such frontiers because segmentation into "states" appears to be the best way to optimize its own function. But other systems like science or economy spread over the globe. It therefore has become impossible to

6 As far as I am aware, Luhmann does not make extensive reference to what we now call "new" media, which is where most of the literature and research on the constitution of global civil society makes its pitch. In communication studies, mass media would be understood as "old" media and their mode of communication, largely monological, at least in the past.

limit society as a whole by territorial boundaries. The only meaningful boundary is the boundary of communicative behaviour, i.e. the differences between meaningful communication and other processes. (1981, 42).

Well and good; for Luhmann the world is a closed, communicative complex and in this his disposition even looks a little hyperglobalist. Interconnection and technical capacity in principle make any point on the globe accessible to communication, though Luhmann does not intend to convey such communicative unity simply as achieved smooth space. Rather his trope for world society is the expression, maybe just the expected denouement, of the world in communication. As Bechmann and Stehr say, “world” is the sum of “the communication structure of the fully differentiated functional systems”, and moreover, ‘world’ as the total horizon of sensory experience is not an aggregate, but rather a correlate, of the communicative operations occurring in it” (2002, 72).

But when set against received models of society formation and reproduction, can this kind of world society produce anything like functional interdependence and functional integration – any ontological thickness – and if not, does it matter? If the aim is for global theory not to be parasitic on received versions of what constitutes a society and how that can be achieved, then the answer may be no, but even in its own radical terms the formulation requires some justification and invites criticism⁷. Perhaps the most telling is the complaint mounted by critics of the attempt to reboot systems analysis for use in study of globalization (Albrow, 1996) and it is this: definitions of any system have one enduring characteristic – namely that the term implies closure. Systems are contained and delimited; they interact with their environments in limited and manageable ways, enacting a social universe that is ordered and in which boundaries are kept. But globalization is not like that and is better understood as “boundary effacing”, to use Ulrich Beck’s phrase (Beck and Sznaider, 2006, 18) and thus the global condition – globality – demonstrates much more complex and unpredictable relationalities. Nonetheless, Luhmann and Albert want to argue that world society is possible on the basis of networks of communication and through interconnectedness understood more generally.

Certainly this syncs with some revisionist treatments of global civil society where ideas about the possibilities of “network society” are entertained, and I touch on these later in the article (Axford, 2004; Axford and Huggins, 2007; Castells, 1996, 2000) but it generates opposition from many quarters. Thus, one critic notes that “compared to the strong social embeddedness of formal organizations and markets and their institutional and legal ties, networks emerge as nearly devoid of institutional anchoring and social implications” (Kallinikos, 2004, 1). Critically, in terms of polity or state building, network structures and network identities are often cast as too fluid – always on the cusp between dynamism and decay – to support sound infrastructures of meaning and sustainable rules of resource allocation. In much the same vein, so-

7 Of course, there are many criticisms of Luhmann’s arguments. Here I concentrate on its purchase on the applicability of any form of systems analysis to the global condition, but other criticisms dwell on the extent to which Luhmann takes agency, as opposed to “personal systems” seriously. One reading of his work suggests that agents actively construct social reality, while others say that he has no developed analytical insight into the role of agency. Here Habermas’ well known critique of Luhmann’s work, is usually mentioned, which is a defence of the autonomy of personal life-worlds against colonization by the reified instrumental systems of the state and the economy.

cial complexity theorist Karin Knorr-Cetina opines that because of this weakness, “relational connectivity may not be enough to effectively organize complex systems” (2007, 68). In other words, connectivity may not be enough to get over the major problem for Luhmann’s thesis, which is how to explain the achievement and maintenance of social order (society) in situations where this seems possible only through the unlikely convergence of autonomous systems by way of structural coupling-communication (Jessop, 1990). So, do we still need a conceptual understanding of world society that looks beyond communication and interconnection, and if that is the case do we have to re-engage with the idea of functional integration?

George Thomas looks to solve this difficulty by stressing that communication and exchange obviously “carry content”, that is, provide for both inter-discursivity and shared meanings, but critically, they are also embedded in wider cultural contexts (2009, 116). He says that to comprehend the idea of world society we do have to move “beyond the interconnections of actors” and address “the consciousness, cultural context and social forms that encompass them” (2009, 116; see also Robertson, 1992). Contra Luhmann, the money term here is *consciousness* of the world as one place and the routine enactment of that consciousness, perhaps much in line with world polity tenets. In this guise the world still can be viewed as a relatively stateless society, although states obviously continue as components of that society. World society is not bounded and functionally integrated, but subsists and reproduces, as Thomas suggests, through “enactment of global models” (2009, 118).

Let’s summarize for a moment. The nationalization of social scientific concepts and principles, summarized as methodological nationalism, makes it difficult to entertain the concept of global or world society and thus – in most elaborated form – to imagine a universal and boundary-less society. Social-systemic approaches that privilege connection and communication have the signal advantage of being liberated from the trammels of territorial definitions of society but, as exemplified by Luhmann, are prey to their own flawed logic when applied to the global condition. Luhmann’s insistence on society-as-communication is no doubt helpful in itself, but not so on the role and significance of agency and consciousness in constituting a global society through communication. Where else to look? Obviously, the intellectual roots of world society imaginings can be found in the writings of mostly pre-disciplinary theorists of the human condition such as Dante, Kant and Herder, but I will not venture down such avenues here. They are also rehearsed in contemporary normative treatments of cosmopolitanism and the debates on the prospects for post-territorial political community often summarized as global civil society (Chandler, 2009; Axford, 2005). Such imaginings open up further possibilities when applied to the prospects for effecting world society through communicative practices, while still being open to stringent criticism.

Cosmopolitan Communication

As I have noted elsewhere, the idea of global civil society looms large in the iconography of progressive globalization (Axford, 2004). The concept has a slightly dangerous, anti-systemic

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