

COSMOPOLITANISM AND GLOBALIZATION: A PROJECT OF COLLECTIVITY

KEELY BADGER

“However uncertain I may be and may remain as to whether we can hope for anything better for mankind, this uncertainty cannot detract from the maxim I have adopted, or from the necessity of assuming for practical purposes that human progress is possible. This hope for better times to come, without which an earnest desire to do something useful for the common good would never have inspired the human heart, has always influenced the activities of right-thinking people.”
-Immanuel Kant, *Theory and Practice*, p. 89

The moral imagination of global civil society extends beyond the parochialism of the bordered nation-state. It manifests itself as the face of a new cosmopolitanism. *Does it have the potential to transform the third millennium?* Indeed, the acceleration of globalization’s revolutionizing of space and time, and the “intensification of worldwide social relations, which link distant localities”(Giddens, 64) has established a global network of information and exchange unlike that of any other era. “We have come to a point where each of us can realistically imagine contacting any other of our six billion conspecifics and sending that person something worth having; a radio, an antibiotic, a good idea”(Appiah, xii). Conversations across boundaries of identity—whether national, religious, or other, allows for an evolving *cosmopolitan worldview*, where human plurality is valued. Through a multiplicity of differences we find a shared language of principle and hope, or at the least, toleration for the beliefs of others that we may fail to understand. Thus, in cosmopolitanism we find seeds of equality and peace, as well as an ethical paradigm of global distributive justice that contests the prevailing realities of this twenty-first century’s poverty, war, oppression, and radical religious fundamentalism.

The most distinctive cosmopolitan commitment is that *everybody matters*, and therefore, that “every human being has obligations to every other”(Appiah, 144). But despite this promising expansion of both individual compassion and collective consciousness, there also persists a pervasive skepticism around globalization’s unfulfilled promise of a more free world. There has been, in fact, a contraction of cosmopolitan ideals in recent decades through “the belligerent reassertion of ethnic nationalism and religious tribalism”(Kurasawa, 233), as well as the perceived tyranny of Americanization, corporatization, and homogenization, as it extends today across the empires of the world.

These competing derivatives of globalization have become interdependent, as modern cosmopolitanism, though cultivated around the ideal of a world ethos of universal morality, requires the exposure to ideas and people from distant places that globalization’s nexuses of media information, trade and transportation provide. Globalization, likewise, as economic liberalism, “threatens the identities and livelihoods of women, indigenous people, workers, migrants, people of color, environmentalists, farmers, and so on”(Kurasawa, 240-241), and will forever require the counterbalance of cosmopolitan individuals, communities, social movements, and global political structures to hold the ethical standards of mutual respect and the honoring of human life at the core of their worldview. Thus, it can be said “globalizing tendencies both promote and undermine cosmopolitan possibilities” (Barbelet, 1), and perhaps most critically, that just as “cosmopolitical thinking needs a globalized world, globalization needs cosmopolitan ideas” (Trawny, 3).

This paper will briefly trace the origins of *cosmopolitan philosophy* from its roots in Ancient Greece, from the Cynics to the Stoics. Inclusive in this is the Greek worldview of the cosmos in relation to man, which birthed the concept of a cosmopolitan consciousness *from within*—a transformation of the self, and development of a personal identity capable of relating to both a community and stranger, alike. The paper will also explore the recent cosmopolitan developments in global governance promoting a form of cosmopolitanism *from above*, evidenced by the expanding role of global institutions like the United Nations, European Union, World Bank, and World Trade Organization. For some cosmopolitans, such a vision of a supranational “*Cosmopolis*” is regarded as the necessary step to usher in

an enforceable moral code, while for others, the vessel of the nation-state remains the most realistic and reliable means of delivering a cosmopolitan vision through international diplomacy, and harmony. Finally, it will conclude with the corresponding rise of cosmopolitanism *from below*, where anti-globalization and alternative globalization movements have cultivated worldwide counter-collectives, in solidarity together and in resistance against the negative derivatives of the recent globalization phenomenon. Representing a true cosmopolitan mosaic of people from all walks of life, these “horizontal and transversal struggles are simultaneously waged at different scales and in numerous settings around the world” (Kurasawa, 243), ranging from neighborhood councils and communal land ownership initiatives to transnational campaigns for women’s rights and environmental protection. A critique of global neoliberalism and its excessive concentration of wealth and power, the cosmopolitanism being cultivated *from below* seems the most profound global development in the last two decades, marking the growing quest for ethical egalitarianism and the cosmopolitan recognition of all our cultural difference and similarities, and the beauty that is our human collective; Humanity.

Cosmopolitanism from Within

Cosmopolitanism, defined as both a way of being in the world and the substantive utopian ideal of a *polis* or polity constructed on a world scale, has been a rediscovered field of social inquiry in philosophy, social theory, sociology, and cultural studies in the past few decades. “Cosmopolitanism dates at least to the Cynics of the Fourth Century BC, who first coined the expression cosmopolitan, ‘citizens of the cosmos’”(Appiah, xiv); referring to the notion that loyalty lay not solely with the state polis or relationships of kin and community, but with a universal shared identity.

Class, rank, status, national origin and location, and even gender [were] treated by the Cynics as secondary and morally irrelevant attributes. The first form of moral affiliation for the citizen should be her affiliation with rational humanity; and this, above all, should define the purposes of her conduct (Nussbaum, 5).

Heavily influencing later Greco-Roman cosmopolitan thought, the Stoics, who followed their lead, “developed the image of the *kosmopolitês*, or world citizen, more fully, arguing that each of us dwells, in effect, in two communities—the local community of our birth, and the community of human argument and aspiration...”(Nussbaum, 6). Indeed, *The Republic* of Zeno, a written work by Stoic founder, Zeno of Citium, at the beginning of the 3rd Century BCE, seemingly opposed the vision of *Plato’s Republic*, which posited the identity of a ‘just man’ as one who *belongs* to the city-state based on his male possession of knowledge alone, as well as the ordered balance of socio-economically classes. *Zeno’s Republic*, instead, envisioned the moral and social dynamics of an *ideal state* based not on ordered hierarchies, but on commonalities irrespective of local identities.

The much admired *Republic* of Zeno is aimed at this one main point, that we should not organize our daily lives around the city or the *deme*, divided from one another by local schemes of justice, but we should regard all human beings as our fellow *demesmen* and fellow citizens, and there should be one way of life and one order, just as a herd that feeds together shares a common nurturance and a common law (Plutarch, 429).

The binding agent for a holistic human community, according to the Stoics, was the divine virtue of *reason*, a faculty of rational and moral choice. “Male or female, slave or free, king or peasant, all are alike of boundless moral value, and the dignity of reason is worthy of respect, wherever it is found”(Nussbaum, 7). Further developed by Stoic philosopher-emperor, Marcus Aurelia’s’ tome, *Meditations*, “. . .if reason is common, so too is law; and if this is common, then we are fellow citizens. If this is so, we share in a kind of organized polity. And if that is so, the world is as it were a city-state (Marcus, IV.4). Therefore, it is our allegiances that stem from our commonality based on reason *within* that define our citizenship and obligations to one another, not to any form of external government or temporal power. The *moral core* of each individual is the foundational architecture of cosmopolitan aspiration.

Despite what could be deemed an invention of a utopian dream, Immanuel Kant, one of the most regarded thinkers of the Enlightenment

era, contributed a profound defense of Cynic and Stoic cosmopolitan values based on *reason*, while simultaneously linking them to new revelations of human rights and the prospects of peace through the cultivation of a widespread political philosophy. Although his own version of cosmopolitanism grows out of a distinctive Eighteenth-century tradition, Kant's *Perpetual Peace* stresses that the community of all human beings in reason entails a common "participation in virtual polity, a *cosmopolis* that has an implicit structure of claims and obligations regardless of whether or not there is an actual political organization in place to promote and vindicate these"(Nussbaum, 12). In his discussion of the idea of a cosmopolitan law, Kant evolves the moral philosophy enshrined in Stoic thought to a political philosophy complemented by "the unwritten code of political and international law"(Kant, 108), whereby, "the peoples of the earth have thus entered in varying degrees into a universal community, and it has developed to the point where a violation of laws in one part of the world is felt everywhere"(Kant, 107-108). In essence, the political imperative of cosmopolitanism rests again, not on the shoulders of governing bodies, but in the metaphysical awareness of obligation and responsibility to others through a kind of humanitarian law.

It is important to remember that neither the moral imperative of cosmopolitanism, nor its political one, as presented by Kant, provide an adequate contemporary means for realizing cosmopolitanism on either an individual or political level in the last two decades of the global age. "Kant's cosmopolitanism falls short of the Greek and even the Roman Stoics with regard to the equal personhood and dignity of women"(Nussbaum, 14), while at the same time "we would be especially shocked [today] by the Stoic's general tendency to accept the institution of slavery, if not all of the practices associated with it"(Griffin, 47). Over two hundred years after Kant's 1795 treatise we witness the ethnic, religious and racial conflicts that continue to degrade the aspirations of equality, human rights, and freedom. We witness explosive economic growth and dominating cultural reach of the West through capitalism, and at the same time we witness unabated poverty, despair, and the loss of authentic culture. Today, globalization isolates us as much as it connects us, and in its creative chaos there is equally an often invisible and unregulated destruction. Indeed, even Kant did not regard the nation-state and its republican governments as sufficient

to uphold the tenants of a perpetual peace, advocating well before his time for the establishment of a sort of League of Nations, in what would eventually evolve, far further than Kant would advocate, into the modern day United Nations we have today.

Cosmopolitanism from Above

As a truly cosmopolitical project, the establishment of the United Nations in 1945 brought together the nations of the world to facilitate cooperation in the quest for an international law, international security, economic development and social progress, and most profoundly, the cultivation of a universal doctrine of human rights in the hope of realizing world peace. Acting as a platform for cross-cultural dialogue, diplomacy and negotiation, the United Nations, with the exception of its Chapter VII mandate to the Security Council to “determine the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression” and to take military and nonmilitary action to “restore international peace and security”(United Nations Charter, Chapter VII, Article 42), is subordinate to the powers retained by it’s membership state constituency. However, with the onset of the Cold War and the threat of nuclear terror a few years after its conception, the United Nations has continuously walked a fine line between exercising its power as the only supranational institution of governance, and working within the confines of its often conflicting sovereign state’s interests. “It is not surprising that in the 1990s after the Cold War we saw a flourish of projects to reform the UN and other international organizations”(Archibugi, 154) and make them more representative, democratic, and, in effect, cosmopolitan.

The greatest change since the early 1990s has been the growth of multilayered governance and the diffusion of political authority, with the role of the nation-state transformed by the development of regional trade blocs like the European Union, NAFTA, and ASEAN; the growing role of international bodies like the World Trade Organization, UN, and NATO; the burgeoning network of transnational NGOs; and new norms and regulations of international and multilateral governance on issues ranging from

trade to human rights and environmental protection (Norris, 2).

Given these newfound developments in interdependent politics as a result of increasing globalization and linkages across nations, it is important to question whether the rise in global governance has transformed national identities so that more people have come to see themselves as part of a world community rather than say, Americans, Russians, or British? Furthermore, to what extent does the public have confidence in these *cosmopolitical projects* to bring harmony across political, economic, and social networks?

To empirically ascertain whether people are becoming increasingly *cosmopolitan* as members of a global civil society, the World Values Survey conducts “face-to-face interviews using a multi-stage random sample”(Norris, 7) and is “the only comparative study that aims at global coverage, including 70 out of 174 independent nation-states in the world, and a majority if the world’s population (Norris, 7). In the most recent composite of data, taken over collection waves from 1990-91 and 1995-97, the survey found that when people were asked about their primary social identification (ranging from one’s local town, to state, country, region, or world as a whole), “almost half of the public (47%) see themselves as belonging to their locality or region of the country”(Norris, 9), while only a mere “2% can be classified as pure cosmopolitans”(Norris, 9). Interesting, however, it was the post-baby boom generational cohort in post-Communist, developed, and developing countries who “were most likely to have a sense of global identification”(Norris, 11). Additionally, “the overall majority of the population (57%) expressed confidence in the United Nations in the early to mid-1990s, while 44% trusted regional associations like the EU and NAFTA”(Norris, 14). Moreover, “one of the most striking findings is that people trusted these global and regional institutions far more than their own domestic government, where overall only one-third of the public (34%) expressed any confidence”(Norris, 14). In conclusion from the survey, it seems the decade of the 1990s only saw a small percentage of cosmopolitan “world citizen” identification, but the confidence in the democratic legitimacy of what could be considered “cosmopolitical institutions”, like the United Nations and the European Union, was substantially high.

As Princeton University Professor and cultural theorist, Kwame Anthony Appiah, attests in his book *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*, “we can live in harmony without agreeing on underlying values, except perhaps, the cosmopolitan value of living together” (Appiah, 78). Indeed, our political coexistence, as subjects or citizens, “. . . depends on being able to agree about practices while disagreeing about their justifications” (Appiah, 70). While Appiah is not a proponent of the development of a central *cosmopolis* like a dominant United Nations, and no doubt the public opinion surrounding the Institutions many inefficiencies has only grown since the 90s, if such global governance’s *from above* could generate the sort of *perpetual peace* that Kant spoke of. This could only ensue if such supranational institutions like the United Nations could be free from asserting an international law in a manner that mandates a homogenized global polis, and free from the hegemonic influence of one or few dominant member-states. Such a project, if successful, would be a reflection of cosmopolitan values on a scale the world has never seen. Perhaps it is just this yearning that is reflected in the countless calls for the reform and democratization of the United Nations that perpetuated in the 1990s and 2000s by civil society and then UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan himself, and that persist to present day in hopes realizing the vision of the UN as it was initially intended nearly seven decades ago.

Cosmopolitanism from Below

Although it is seemed, at least statistically, that a majority of the planetary population in the 1990s still rooted their identification in their most immediate locality, there is no doubt that a cosmopolitan phenomenon of subaltern counter-publics began to rise up, *from below*, in resistance to globalization’s negative effects. Key institutions like the United Nations, World Bank, and World Trade Organization were targeted, along with globalization and a rampant neo-liberal capitalism that propagated worldwide. In *A Cosmopolitanism from Below: Alternative Globalization and the Creation of a Solidarity Without Bounds*, author and Professor of Sociology at York University, Fuyuki Kurasawa, acknowledges that while the “process of trickle-down integration of the world’s citizens through their adherence to a common political culture composed of universal principles (participatory

democracy, human rights, etc.), through international law” and global institutions “is a kind of process from above that is essential to achieving cosmopolitan solidarity”(Kurasawa, 234), “cosmopolitanism from below via normative and politically oriented forms of global social action”(Kurasawa, 234) are far more powerful in cultivating a widespread *cosmopolitan consciousness*.

A very different form of solidarity politics is being made manifest with events like: the 1994 Zapatista rebellion in the Chiapas region of Mexico, Battle in Seattle protests in 1999 that played a part in the collapse of World Trade Organization negotiations, the launch of the World Social Forum in 2001 that sought to make global solidarity and counter public forums visible on the world stage, the worldwide protests to the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, and most recently the international student protests and Occupy Movements in dozens of countries and across nearly every continent. As Kurasawa intones:

The Alternative Globalization Movement (AGM) is useful in coming to understand that social bonds with distant others are not solely derived from normative principle or institutional arrangements, since they must also be constructed out of public discourse and socio-political struggle (Kurasawa, 236).

This emerging transnational social integration along cosmopolitan lines does not require cultural assimilation, which indeed would be a dystopian project—and in many ways is taking place as a byproduct of globalization’s flattening homogenization. Instead, a practice of cosmopolitanism *from below* “must strive to reconcile egalitarian universalism with a respect for a right to cultural specificity and difference, and thus to include a multiplicity of experiences premised upon an ethos of cultural openness”(Kurasawa, 240). On the ground, as evidenced by the diversity amongst people who prescribe to these alternative globalization movements, the call for egalitarian universalism, once dismissed as a utopian dream, *is realized*, and on an ever growing scale. In fact, it is this very scope and diversity that gives the AGM its coalition power.

Furthermore, beyond the physical mobilization of cosmopolitan resistance, the Internet and social media outlets represent a crucial fa-

cilitator of uprisings *from below*, like the global anti-sweatshop campaign, the global anti-GMO campaign, and the democracy-driven revolutions that mark, most profoundly, the shifting in consciousness so immanently needed for the strengthening of a genuine global community. Although the Internet is a contested political terrain, “it remains an essential tool for organizing and exchanging information within the AGM”(Kurasawa, 248). Without it, the February 12, 2003 marches against the unjust Bush-led war in Iraq—“which was predominantly coordinated and publicized in all continents through electronic resources (websites, email listservs, etc.)—would scarcely have been conceivable”(Kurasawa, 249) without the interconnectivity that globalization provides.

As participation in the AGM seems to be fueling a planetary consciousness against war, governments and regimes, and capitalist institutions, there is equally the continued hardening of ethno-religious conflicts and the acceleration of global integration that has “thrust cosmopolitanism into the limelight with an ever-increasing number of thinkers championing it as a way out of our current intellectual and political morass”(Kurasawa, 251). As Kwame Anthony Appiah illuminates: “the counter-cosmopolitans” of the globalized age are the networks of radical neo-fundamentalist terrorist, mostly of distorted Muslim and Christian faiths, “that are building not a universal state, “but an *ummah*, the community of the faithful”(Appiah, 140). This kind of ‘universal ethics’ is one that inverts the picture and progress of cosmopolitanism, for it exalts “a universalism without toleration [which it is clear]... turns easily to murder”(Appiah, 140). With the radical neo-fundamentalists there is no hope for a cosmopolitan conversation. In that worldview there is no exchange of ideas to facilitate a common respect or understanding. There is only the ‘worth’ of the life of true believers, and even then, through jihad, that worth of life is never honored. And so we see that the cosmopolitan project of recent decades is just the beginning of a consciousness that could cultivate a far-reaching moral universalism, where there could be both the celebration of the plurality of humanity, and a toleration to agree to disagree. There is, then, “a sense in which cosmopolitanism is the name not of the solution but of the challenge”(Appiah, xv).

Conclusion

Whether cosmopolitanism is cultivated *from within*, in the interior expansion of the psyche of each individual, *from above* through the establishment of legally enforceable moral obligations, or *from below* with a countering resistance against the oppressive derivatives of globalization, there seems no doubt that in today's 21st Century age, the two have become increasingly interdependent. For the most distinctive cosmopolitan commitment *that everybody matters*, the only supranational organization that seeks, though at times with great flaw, to cultivate this sort of cosmopolitan ethic is the United Nations. When the United Nations fails to intervene, or when other, predominantly Western institutions like the World Bank and World Trade Organization fail to promote the moral aspirations of the global community at large, there is growing hope in the countervailing collectives of global movements, rebellions, and revolutions to push for our cosmopolitan responsibilities and commitments. Thus, it can be said that globalization is promoting cosmopolitanism, and cosmopolitanism is equally pushing from the globalization of more humanitarian ideals. Although the relationship between the two forces did not exist when the cosmopolitan philosophy of the Cynics and Stoics that emerged in the 4th and 3rd Century BCE, they increasingly interlinked from the time of the Enlightenment onward, when the ideal of *reason* was held high as the core means to a vision of human progress. Still isolated, as cosmopolitanism was from the European 18th Century onward, its revival over the last two decades reveals its invocation as a response to the dark sides of globalization, advocating for and inspiring the ideal of a flourishing humanity in this uncertain age. Indeed, it is globalization, itself, that has given cosmopolitanism new life and new breadth across greater regions of the world, offering a flickering but nonetheless present hope for global peace—the greatest global project of our time.

Bibliography

- Appiah, Anthony. *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2007.
- Archibugi, Daniele. *The Global Commonwealth of Citizens: Toward Cosmopolitan Democracy*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2008.
- Barbalet, Jack. "Globalisation and Cosmopolitanism: Continuity and Disjuncture, Contemporary and Historical." *Journal of Sociology* (June 15, 2012).
- Calhoun, Craig. "'Belonging' in the Cosmopolitan Imaginary." *Ethnicities* 3.4 (2003): 531-53.
- Giddens, Anthony. *The Consequences of Modernity*. Stanford UP, 1990.
- Hill, Joseph. "The Cosmopolitan Sahara: Building a Global Islamic Village in Mauritania." *City & Society* 24.1 (2012): 62-83.
- Kurasawa, Fuyuki. "A Cosmopolitanism from Below: Alternative Globalization and the Creation of a Solidarity without Bounds." *European Journal of Sociology* 45.02 (August 2004): 233-55.
- Marcus, Aurelius. *Meditations*. Trans. Gregory Hays. New York: Modern Library, 2002.
- Norris, Pippa, and Anthony McGrew. "Chapter 25: Global Governance and Cosmopolitan Citizens, Pippa Norris, Professor at the J. F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University." *Global Transformations: Politics, Economics and Culture*. Ed. David Held. 2nd ed. N.p.: Stanford UP, 2000.
- Norris, Pippa. "Society, Politics and Values 1981-1006." *Confidence in the United Nations: Cosmopolitan and Nationalistic Attitudes*. Proc. of World Values Conference, Istanbul 3-4, November 2006.
- Nussbaum, Martha C. "Kant and Stoic Cosmopolitanism." *Journal of Political Philosophy* 5.1 (1997): 1-25.
- Plutarch, *On the Fortunes of Alexander*, 329A-B; see Long and Sedley, p. 429. For other relevant texts, see Long and Sedley, pp. 429±37.
- Rooney, Caroline. "Utopian Cosmopolitanism and the Conscious Pariah: Harare, Ramallah, Cairo." *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 46.139 (2011): 139-55.
- Salecl, Renata. *The Tyranny of Choice*. London: Profile, 2011.

- Snauwaert, Dale T. "Democracy, Public Reason and Peace Education | Saybrook University." *The Saybrook Forum: Humanistic Thought-From The Library to the Street*. Saybrook University, Issue #88 Nov. 2011. Web. 30 Oct. 2012. <<http://www.saybrook.edu/forum/phs/democracy-public-reason-and-peace-education>>.
- Trawny, Peter. "Globalization and Cosmopolitanism." <[http://webappl.sh.se/C125702700229BA0/0/BD847E3091192A1DC1257571004B2C0A/\\$file/Trawny%20Cosmopolitanism%20and%20globalization.pdf](http://webappl.sh.se/C125702700229BA0/0/BD847E3091192A1DC1257571004B2C0A/$file/Trawny%20Cosmopolitanism%20and%20globalization.pdf)>.
- United Nations. "Charter, United Nations." UN. 1945. <<http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/>>.
- Urbinati, Nadia. *Can Cosmopolitical Democracy Be Democratic? Debating Cosmopolitics*. Ed. Archibugi. London: VERSO, 2003.
- Vaughan-Williams, Nick. "Beyond a Cosmopolitan Ideal: The Politics of Singularity1." *International Politics* 44.1 (2007): 107-24.
- Watters, Ethan. *Crazy like Us: The Globalization of the American Psyche*. New York: Free, 2010.