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Cosmopolitanism

From the Kantian Legacy to Contemporary Approaches

Edited by

Cristina Foroni Consani

Joel T. Klein

Soraya Nour Sckell



Duncker & Humblot · Berlin

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SORAYA NOUR SCKELL (Ed.)

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Contents

<i>Cristina Foroni Consani, Joel T. Klein and Soraya Nour Sckell</i>	
Introduction	7

Part I.

Cosmopolitanism in Modern Philosophy

<i>Maria Isabel Limongi</i>	
David Hume and “difference” as a cosmopolitan principle	17
<i>Delamar José Volpato Dutra and Cláudio Ladeira de Oliveira</i>	
There are no limits to the rights of a state against an <i>unjust enemy</i>	31
<i>Fernando M. F. Silva</i>	
Kant and the birth of the pragmatic	47
<i>Henny Blomme</i>	
Kant on the (im)possibility of attaining perpetual peace	65
<i>Joel T. Klein</i>	
Prudential reasoning in Kant’s legal cosmopolitanism	81
<i>Maria Borges</i>	
Kant on cosmopolitan law and the possibility of refugee rights	97
<i>Vinicius de Figueiredo</i>	
Two moments of Kantian cosmopolitanism	105
<i>Giorgia Cecchinato</i>	
Fichte’s <i>Closed Commercial State</i> from a cosmopolitan perspective: Identifying agreement in spite of apparent contradictions	117

Part II.

Cosmopolitanism in Contemporary Philosophy

<i>Bethania Assy and Rafael Rolo</i>	
Shaman cosmopolitanism: Amerindian resistance and perspectivism	129
<i>Celso de Moraes Pinheiro</i>	
Citizenship beyond borders	155
<i>Charles Feldhaus</i>	
Cosmopolitanism in Habermas: with and beyond Kant	173

<i>Cristina Foroni Consani</i>	
A constitution without a state? An analysis of the Habermasian proposal for global politics without a world government	189
<i>Darlei Dall'Agnol</i>	
Global bioethics and the need for better international governance	203
<i>David Hoyos García</i>	
Cultural cosmopolitics in Latin America: the case of Cumbia	217
<i>Marco Antonio Valentim</i>	
Cosmology and politics in the Anthropocene	229
<i>Milene Consenso Tonetto</i>	
Global Ethics and Climate Change	243
<i>Nythamar de Oliveira and João Henrique Salles Jung</i>	
Is a cosmopolitan world society possible? A dialogue between Critical Theory and the English School	263
<i>Thomas Bustamante</i>	
Is there an objective standard of salience for International Law?	285
Notes on contributors	311
Index	321

Introduction¹

By *Cristina Foroni Consani, Joel T. Klein and Soraya Nour Sckell*

Contemporary cosmopolitan theories have very different aims and approaches. However, all of them attempt to respond to current developments in the global scene concerning the status of the human being deemed a citizen of the world (cosmopolitan) rather than of a particular State. In Social and Political Philosophy, many authors² have addressed this question in the great debate between cosmopolitan liberalism and communitarianism, as well as in critical reflections on racism, nationalism, xenophobia, and in issues related to minorities, indigenous people, migrants, refugees, asylum-seekers, stateless and displaced persons. In international law, cosmopolitan theories include authors who outline the status of the human person as the fundamental subject of international public life (Cassese³), regardless of one's affiliation to a state, in opposition to state-centered internationalists. In international relations theory, cosmopolitan approaches review many paradigms, such as the network-society (Castells⁴, Harvey⁵, Lash, Urry⁶, Cox⁷), globalization (Giddens⁸, Sassen⁹, Bell¹⁰, Toffler¹¹), transnationality (Levitt¹², Smith¹³, Guarnizo, Portes¹⁴) and world-economy theories (Wallerstein¹⁵, Arrighi¹⁶), none of which consider the

¹ The first part of this introduction is based on *Sckell* (2020a), *Sckell* (2020b) and *Sckell* (2021).

² See for instance *Appiah* (2006), *Archibugi* (2008), *Balibar* (2018), *Beck* (2006), *Benhabib* (2006), *Brock* (2009), *Brown* (2009), *Brown/Held* (2010), *Caney* (2018), *Delanty* (2012), *Derrida* (1997), *Habermas* (2001), *Hayden* (2005), *Held* (2010), *Jones* (1999), *Kleingeld/Brown* (2006), *Kymlicka/Straehle* (1999), *Moellendorf* (2002), *Santos/Rodríguez-Garavito* (2005), *Scheffler* (2008), *Schuett/Stirk* (2015), *Singer* (2002).

³ *Cassese* (2008).

⁴ *Castells* (2012).

⁵ *Harvey* (2009).

⁶ *Lash/Urry* (1987).

⁷ *Cox* (2018).

⁸ *Giddens* (2011).

⁹ *Sassen* (2014).

¹⁰ *Bell* (2016).

¹¹ *Toeffler* (1991).

¹² *Levitt/Khagram* (2007).

¹³ *Smith/Eade* (2017).

¹⁴ *Portes/Guarnizo/Landolt* (2003).

¹⁵ *Wallerstein/Chase-Dunn/Suter* (2016).

state as the main actor in the global scene. Instead, global politics replaces international and transnational relations), and theories like “globalisation” (the global in the local) and “multi-level analysis” appear in efforts to understand the interconnectedness between the global and the local. In sociology and the political sciences, cosmopolitanism considers, in addition to the political logic of the state, the logic of economic, cultural and religious orders and that account for how non-state actors challenge the prerogative of the state as the main actor in the international scene (Beck¹⁷, Held¹⁸, Archibugi¹⁹), and how citizenship can be constructed across borders (Falk²⁰, Balibar²¹). Across these debates, five main dimensions of the concept of cosmopolitanism can be identified.

The first dimension of cosmopolitanism concerns the ethical horizon of building a cosmopolitan worldview. Since its formulation in Antiquity, cosmopolitanism has represented the moral ideal of a universal community of human beings considered apart from their links to particular communities. Cosmopolitanism, in this sense, maintains as its ethical horizon the construction of a cosmopolitan self. But this ideal face within the psyche exclusive private bonds such as nationalism, racism, sexism, and all forms of discrimination attached to identity issues. It is then necessary to analyse the conditions of cosmopolitanism in a context where violence is supposedly produced by the imposition of exclusive identities to those considered to belong to a “we” at the exclusion of all others.

The underlying question is: is personal identity a concern for public life?²² As Balibar²³ proposes, one response determines that public space must reflect universal values and take a neutral stance on social and cultural elements of identity in order to secure plurality (Rawls²⁴). A second response argues that politics and justice always legitimize a certain degree of personal identity by making invisible, devaluing or stigmatizing others. Justice necessarily requires the recognition of particularities (Taylor²⁵, Kymlicka²⁶). A third response focuses on “translation” as a prerequisite for effective universalism, which depends on the ability to establish successful communication without having pre-established common codes (Balibar).

¹⁶ Arrighi (1994).

¹⁷ Beck (2006).

¹⁸ Held (2010).

¹⁹ Archibugi (2008).

²⁰ Falk (2016).

²¹ Balibar (2018).

²² Renault (2004).

²³ Balibar (2010).

²⁴ Rawls (2002).

²⁵ Taylor (1994).

²⁶ Kymlicka/Straehle (1999).

While cosmopolitan liberalism is based on rationality devoid of affection (Rawls²⁷, Habermas²⁸), other cosmopolitanism approaches also consider the role of emotional motivation in moral and political deliberation. These approaches question the devaluation of lives that are deemed dispensable – those who we ‘let die’ and for whom we do not mourn (Butler²⁹).

A second question addressed by cosmopolitan theories is: how might we give local democracy a cosmopolitan horizon? Cosmopolitan theories aim to analyse the conditions by which even a territorially limited local policy considers its consequences for human beings (including future generations) seen as an entirety rather than as members of a certain state. According to these theories, local politics in particular must express cosmopolitan values by respecting the environment and the civil, political, social, economic and cultural human rights of the inhabitants of a certain territory, regardless of their citizenship.

Cosmopolitan theories consider that a democratic state must not wait for the development of an external cosmopolitan law³⁰. The first goal of cosmopolitanism is therefore the cosmopolitanisation of local democracy. In order to be truly democratic, the government of a group, according to the principle of popular sovereignty, must include the whole of humanity (including future generations) in its considerations. It is crucial that a democracy respects the civil rights of political community members (such as the right to vote), the fundamental rights of all those living in their territory and the human rights of all people in the world, regardless of their citizenship. This is the profound sense in which the interrelation between constitutional, international, and cosmopolitan law must be understood.

A third issue addressed by cosmopolitan theories is: how might the global system be democratised? How should principles and practices that have been created within the framework of the nation-state be transposed into this global system? How can new forms of democracy be developed with something other than a territorial foundation? How can we move beyond national citizenship if there is no formal cosmopolitan citizenship? Which plausible conception of organization, praxis and historical transformation would then correspond to these new forms? There is no democratic representation in the most influential international organizations or global institutions of governance. On the other hand, there are a number of forms of association in civil society that transcend borders, creating new forms of citizenship – citizenship in network, in contrast to territorial citizenship. Modern political theory conceived that democratic citizenship and legitimate representation can only be fully exercised within the framework of local political institutions. However, notions of justice have been developing increasingly in recent years to conceive new forms of democracy and citizenship beyond the state as well. If the state still makes strong,

²⁷ Rawls (2002).

²⁸ Habermas (2001).

²⁹ Butler (2009).

³⁰ Menke/Pollmann (2009), Pogge (2002).