

Cosmopolitanism or globalisation

“I am a citizen of the world”

Diogenes (404-423 BC) as reported in *Diogenes Laertius: The Lives and Opinions of the Ancient Philosophers 3rd Century AD*.

A child born today is one from a community of 7.4 billion people (United Nations, 2015) who are more interconnected and globally interdependent than ever before. As the child has no choice in its parents, or in which part of the world or the circumstances in which it is born, then which “world view” should this individual citizen aspire to as part of the earthly community? Which world is this citizen really a member of? What are the opportunities open to the citizen?

In simple terms, globalisation (Lane, 2006; Friedman, 2006; Cohen, 2005; Ohmae, 2005; Roy, 1995; Levitt, 1983) asserts trade and territorial extension towards the international integration of a standardised multiculturalism, as the “one world view” (Greider, 1997). Santos (2002, 2006) discusses this as imposing elitist political and poorly distributed economic realities, where dominant transnational alliances, along with converging judicial and governance systems have been eroding diverse multinationals in a non-consensual manner, characterised by power conflicts of social groups and hegemonic interests. Recent manifestations emerged in the form of the “1980s Washington consensus”, promoting “neo-liberalism” (Knyght *et al.*, 2011) for a conformance agenda. These policies have accelerated the economic boom-and-bust cycles (Schularick and Taylor, 2009) by encouraging the adoption of self-interests that, in turn, promote ever-rising credit levels (Jordà *et al.*, 2011) – all of which have led to a global imbalance and “secular stagnation” (Hansen, 1939; Summers, 2015). That is, the reality of excess savings to investment, very low interest rates, sluggish growth and chronic demand shortfall (Eggertsson *et al.*, 2016), which tend to be accelerated by “gold standard” higher education as a market commodity (Altbach, 2015). This, in turn, triggers a “beggar thy neighbour” effect.

More complexly, Brown (2008, p. 51) asserts that the question is no longer “what is globalisation and is it good or bad? But what should we do about what we know about bad globalisation?” The criticism is that its conceptualisations are narrow and lack normative underpinning (Manners, 2013; Brown, 2008). Hence, in today’s digital age, elitist influential networks (Kakabadse and Kakabadse, 2012) are adopting more mobile platforms in their wider exertion of ownership and control through ever larger media and corporate entities (Dobbs *et al.*, 2015; Vitali *et al.*, 2011), pursuing and imposing a single homogenous culture in the guise of the wider rise and fall of the *polis* and its peoples. Although globalisation has received considerable attention in the last three decades, its origins can be traced through history, such as the rise of Empress (O’Rourke, 2014).

The alternative world view with an equally long history, cosmopolitanism, (Brown, 2011; Held, 1995, 1996, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007; Woodward *et al.*, 2008) gives priority to the individual human (Hayden, 2002) and promotes a common community (Lu, 2000), where citizens from varied backgrounds and locations are considered “equal” (Barry, 1998, p. 145) and enter into relationships which mutually respect their differing beliefs[1] with humility and an awareness of interdependence (Jordaan, 2009; Pieterse, 2006).

Cosmopolitan principles in themselves do not presuppose commitment to a world state or to any other political architecture (Beitz, 1979). Barry (1998, p. 144) argues that “one may be a moral cosmopolitan without believing that its precepts would be best satisfied by institutions of the kind commended by institutional cosmopolitanism”. Socrates, when asked to which place he belonged, replies “To the world” (Cicero, 1991), where the goal of human life is in agreement with a reasoning. The cosmopolite is free from constraining local, national, cultural and political biases (Caney, 2005, 2006; Waldron, 1999; Nussbaum, 1995) and relates to others based on face value, openness, mutual trust and the common good (Aristotle, 384B.C.-322B.C.).

Cosmopolitanism has a rich and complex history. It surfaced periodically during times of rebalancing societies, only to become submerged again. In its initial form as a moral ideal, cosmopolitanism promotes both tolerance towards differences and the possibility of a more just “world order”, as often associated with the thinking of ancient cynics and stoics such as Zeno. During the Enlightenment, cosmopolitanism re-emerged as a thinking of universalism and “perpetual peace” (Kant, 1991), which these days is more often criticised by globalists as idealistic.

In the post-1920 era, cosmopolitanism was misinterpreted and gained a pejorative meaning in reference to Jewish rootlessness, nationlessness and non-belonging (e.g. “wandering Jew”) and to the Soviet regime (Bohm-Duchen, 2013). Cosmopolitanism then re-emerged as a positive concept after the Second World War in post-totalitarian thought. In its contemporary form, it resurfaced with distinct theoretical and analytical orientations, such as political, cultural and moral cosmopolitanism (Kleingeld, 1999; Delanty, 2006), drawing on a variety of disciplines including sociology, anthropology, international relations, political science and cultural studies (Vertovec and Cohen, 2002). With the expansion of globalisation, cosmopolitanism has received new momentum – as its antidote.

Political cosmopolitanism concerns itself with matters of citizenship, governance, democracy and political agency in an interconnected world (Maak, 2009) and is closely related to the notion of citizenship as a vision towards the harmony of humankind. Cultural cosmopolitanism concentrates on the diversity of cultures characterising modern society and emphasises the need to develop the capability of appreciating such diversity (Appiah, 2006). Moral cosmopolitanism attempts to go beyond a cultural assessment of cosmopolitanism and is concerned with the morality of the social processes through which cosmopolitanism is produced and reproduced.

However, the meaning of cosmopolitanism changes between disciplines and contexts (Turner, 2002). Use of the term has become increasingly specialised, whilst there is no consensus on what the cosmopolitan position is (Scheffler, 2001, p. 111). Additional labels such as “extreme, strict and moderate” are sometimes attached to “cosmopolitanism” within dialogues of justice and culture (Kleingeld and Brown, 2009). Some terminological issues can be problematic as they may cloud the basis of the wider debate. Meanwhile, on the positive side, multiplicity of terms allows for the broadening of disciplinary approaches in studying cosmopolitanism. This is exemplified by the feminist theory that is referred to as “cosmofeminism” (Pollock, 2000, p. 584). Moreover, philosophical underpinnings vary between the more liberal theorists’ recognition of rationality (which is fundamental to cosmopolitan conceptualisation) and the critical theorists, poignantly captured by Abrams (1999, p. 823), arguing that within the political context:

[...] processes of self-definition and self-assertion that have been characterized as autonomy may be more collective than liberal theorists have suggested, both in their genesis and in the targets of their operation.

Irrelevant of the perspective taken and in addition to normative and idolised cosmopolitanism, its practices have existed in history and are all important. The social sciences conceptualise cosmopolitanism on the basis of belonging to certain practices and to a certain mindset. Cosmopolitanism as an exhibited practice propels behaviour – what people do, what they say to positively engage with “the otherness of the other” and the oneness of this world. The range of analytically distinct conceptual understandings of cosmopolitanism, as a moral ideal and as enacted in the outlooks and practices of individuals and groups, are related at the level of empirical reality in how people are capable of acting as socially constituted yet autonomous individuals.

Cosmopolitanism spans ethical, political and cultural space (Kleingeld, 1999; Delanty, 2006) and thus requires both autonomy for expression and development to be exercised. Thus, in some social settings, cosmopolitan sensibilities remain undeveloped and/or latent. In other contexts, they are more developed and active, and thus consciously enacted by individuals and groups. Kögler (2005) notes that these individuals and communities can be recognised by their expressions of living in “one world” and the importance of “others” and how they articulate this view in their collective actions and “reflexive capabilities”. These sensibilities can be readily captured in personal narratives as their outlooks presuppose an ontological dimension (Rapport and Stade, 2007).

Regardless of being a more “globally coherent normative political theory” (Brown, 2008), its nature may also be why cosmopolitanism has struggled to counter the prevailing dominant globalisation movement (Jordaan, 2009). More so, it has been used as a mechanism to justify globalisation. How is this bottom-up approach, requiring dialogue and engagement, to gain momentum and impact more robustly at a time when more equitable structures and systems are urgently needed for greater citizen and societal co-operation (Pogge, 2002) towards resembling a cosmopolitan society (Brown, 2011)? Where globalist networks promote certainty as those willing to conform to their interests, cosmopolitans are more accepting of an association based on understanding the other’s interest as a human connection:

One may also observe in one’s travels to distant countries the feelings of recognition and affiliation that link every human being to every other human being. (Aristotle, 1925)

At a deeper level, globalisation and cosmopolitanism reflect ethical qualities to establish understanding and responsibility towards others and the world we live in. What do terms such as sustainability, diversity, corporate social responsibility, human rights and freedoms, education, competition and leadership represent? In a world where the few in controlling positions are deciding the interconnected “one world” agenda, how can the many stakeholders reconcile a position of interdependence, claiming back a peaceful and more equitable world for the citizen in the process?

Dynasties and empires have dominated globalisation prior to and after the Greek and stoic shift towards cosmopolitanism. Cosmopolitanism calls for shared understanding of different moralities, economic and political relationships for mutual benefit: “a universality for differences”, where diversity is respected (Appiah, 2006). Is the ultimate objective a world government (Giscard d’Estaing,

2006) or multi-governed respectful diversity? Globalisation is at a crossroads where the Anglo-American governance system is being challenged by the rise of China. At the same time, this is an opportunity for the cosmopolitan world view to press towards greater stability and more equitable norms.

The reality is that these simple terms persist in underpinning important complex issues that are impacting human societal structures and cultural acceptability. This emerges where competitive economic crises and political terrorisms appear to be increasingly dividing the moralities of communities and steering the control and monitoring of human rights and freedoms that are becoming more constrained. It is the conformist “one world view” that presently pervades promoting greater control.

The five papers in this special issue focus on different aspects of cosmopolitanism. The first paper by Mouraviev and Kakabadse conceptualises cosmopolitanism drivers from the “third-level power perspective” (Lukes, 1974, 2005) and explores the relationship between entrepreneurs’ cosmopolitan dispositions and *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1990). The second paper by Nikolopoulos, Kakabadse, Nicolopoulou, Alcaraz and Sakellariou draws on 30 semi-structured interviews with transnational entrepreneurial elites (expat/national) in linking the field (i.e. the city of Dubai) to its capacity for attracting elite entrepreneurial dispositions of cosmopolitanism. The third paper by Jackson proposes a broader cosmopolitan soft-law jurisprudence framework that acknowledges non-coercive forms of power and proposes more decentralised power. This paper rejects the current global jurisprudence framework as narrow and controlling and driving towards regulatory breakdown, in part due to its weak legitimacy and accountability. Jackson asserts that cosmopolitan jurisprudence embraces more the intrinsic values of law and human rights that globalisation cannot. The fourth paper in this special issue by Figueira, Caselli and Theodorakopoulos engages Bourdieu’s (2011, 1990) theory of capital and highlights that migrant entrepreneurs, as non-elitist, can have an important part to play in bringing about cosmopolitan change. They bring their own values to host communities and better reflect more the cosmopolitan mindset. Empowering this group with economic, social, cultural and symbolic capital within the current globalised context may be a policy consideration in host environments. The fifth paper by Alcaez, Sugars, Nicolopoulou and Trado approaches the issue of cosmopolitanism versus globalisation from the Anthropocene angle (i.e. cultural, ethical and governance intersections). This planetary consideration is different from existing literature in business and society and argues for a global perspective inspired by cosmopolitan sensitivities.

Whether a new “4.0 economy” ignited by the fourth technological revolution, i.e. the pervasiveness of digital technologies such as the World Wide Web, social media, digital devices, artificial intelligence, robots, Bitcoin and the internet of things that, in turn, spawns digital societies, will further reinforce globalisation and digital control or adopt a cosmopolitan perspective remains to be seen (Helbing, 2014). Furthermore, many current government/governance structures have yet to evolve from industrialisation’s “2.0 economy” where the societal pressures are for a shift towards cosmopolitanism. However, key thinking and powerful seats remain stuck in the old globalist ways.

There are some examples of the sharing economy. Co-producing consumers (“prosumers”) and the makers’ community indicate the beginning and possibility of developing “the participatory market society” and “participatory democracy” within a cosmopolitan perspective. At the same time, increased dominance of a few digital

platforms and providers and increased digital control suggest that globalisation is on the increase, but in a less visible form.

Ultimately, globalisation in the pursuit of control and materialism reflects higher degrees of uncertainty within self, whereas cosmopolitanism asserts a greater confidence in knowing self as part of others and within the real world circumstance. What kind of society we will have is open to choice. The real question is whose choice? Are there opportunities for empowerment through social collaboration platforms and collaborative projects? We hope that readers of this special issue will embrace and further this debate.

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Note

1. Respect for religious, cultural and personal beliefs promotes self-restraint, honesty, openness and tolerant societies which threaten those seeking material control and power. Thus, narrow interpretations and the misguidance of these can support elitist agendas for globalism.

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Further reading

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