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Global Governance and Cosmopolitan Democracy: Bridging the gap between proponents and opponents

Dr. Christos A. Frangonikolopoulos (*Aristotle University of Thessaloniki*) and
Dr. Filippos Proedrou (*ACT, Thessaloniki, Greece*)
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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to seize the middle ground between the advocates and the critics of cosmopolitan democracy. Although a number of critiques raised with regard both to the *feasibility* and the *suitability* of the project are rightly raised, a trajectory towards cosmopolitanism is necessary at a time when globalization not only connects different parts of the world in an unprecedented way, but also more than ever creates the need for more extensive cooperation, collective and effective global governance. Bearing that in mind, and with the aim to surpass the pessimism of the critics, the paper examines how global governance can become more inclusive and symmetrical by pursuing a gradualist approach in comparison to the more holistic cosmopolitan project.

Keywords: Global governance, cosmopolitan democracy, substantive democracy, global civil society, global institutions

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Introduction

Cosmopolitan democracy proposals for the reform of the system of global governance – defined as a broad dynamic and complex process of interactive decision-making at the global level that involves formal and informal mechanisms as well as governmental and non-governmental bodies (Karns and Mingst, 2009) – have become a highly debated issue. Cosmopolitan democracy scholars base their fundamental assumptions on the progressive shifts and challenges that have taken place in the last decades, namely:

a) the failure of the nation-state to stand up to an increasing number of transnational threats that transcend national barriers and borders;

b) the liberalization of the global economy and the increasing leverage, political and economic, of powerful private economic institutions; and

c) the understanding that more and more people feel they belong to a single humanity with one common fate, rather than to specific closed national communities.

These developments have led to a global governance system that endeavors to deal with mounting global threats and challenges, not only with co-operation among states, but also in conjunction with a broad array of NGOs, epistemic communities, social movements and corporations through the setting of social, ecological, developmental and economic goals and standards. However, a number of gaps remain, rendering global governance rather inadequate and asymmetrical in its current form.

Moreover, as the emphasis is progressively diverted from state to human security (Buzan and Weaver, 2003), analysts focus not only upon the functions and interests of states, but also on the welfare and rights of people regardless of their citizenship. Norms, such as human dignity, equal participation and access to global public goods (Kaul *et.al.*, 2003), traditionally provided by governments at the level of the nation-state, have become globally shared concerns due to the incapacity and/or unwillingness of states to address them (Castells, 2008). Given this reality, a number of scholars, the most prominent of which are David Held (2008), Antony McGrew (2007) and Daniel Archibugi (2008), have put forward the idea of cosmopolitan democracy – defined as the extension of democratic principles and ideals in all areas of global politics, ranging from global security and global economic governance, to human rights and human security. In particular, it suggests a framework for action with the aim to regulate

and democratize the global system. With the normative background of cosmopolitanism rooted in a belief in universal values of freedom, equality and the protection of human rights, cosmopolitan democracy theorists suggest the establishment of a multilevel global governance system which will not only be accountable to the people of the world, but will also serve global peace, development and justice by reducing inequalities, eradicating poverty and protecting human rights (Pogge, 2008; Sen, 2009).

At the core of this thinking is the radical reform of the United Nations, with a Second Assembly of the Peoples being added to the General Assembly of the States, dispute settlement mechanisms, the creation of permanent peacekeeping bodies under the UN flag, the establishment of regional parliaments and the democratization of the Security Council. Equally important to their proposals is the reform of the Breton Woods institutions, as their functions and goals are considered to be anachronistic (See also Griffin, 2003). The empowerment of a global public sphere, with an orderly integration of democratic and accountable NGOs and networks of global issues, is also regarded as a significant pillar for the success of the cosmopolitan project (See also Scholte, 2004).

Although a number of these proposals are hard to implement in the short and medium term, a cosmopolitan perspective *is* necessary at a time when globalization – defined as the emergence of a complex web of interconnectedness that blurs the distinction between the 'domestic' and the 'foreign' (Scholte, 2005) – not only connects different parts of the world in an unprecedented way, but also creates an increased need for more extensive cooperation, collective and effective global governance.

Bearing the above in mind, the main goal of this paper is to fully appreciate the contribution of cosmopolitan democracy proposals, comprehend and incorporate the critiques to cosmopolitan democracy and utilize these insights with an eye to improve global governance. In this direction, this paper briefly reviews the critiques to cosmopolitan democracy and points to the problems that such proposals encounter in practice. Following that, we attempt to show how it is possible to think and work in the direction of implementing a set of specific and moderate goals toward the direction of cosmopolitan democracy and, following from that, a more efficient, just and accountable system of global governance.

Cosmopolitan Democracy: Critiques and hurdles

Critics of cosmopolitan democracy point to the infeasibility of these proposals and to the potential problems created by these proposals that would make matters worse rather than improving global governance. *Liberal* critics view the neo-liberal form of globalization as practiced today as a panacea and hence every effort to regulate and infringe upon open market mechanisms as doomed to fail (Hettne, 2002, p. 7). *Realist* critics continue to work on the assumption that the world consists mainly of independent and sovereign national communities that work under the logic of anarchy, which does not allow them to operate beyond the goals of survival and security. Moreover, as Kagan (2008) would argue, twenty years after the end of the Cold War, global politics not only maintains, but has also developed a number of new geopolitical features of conflict and power to achieve nation-states' goals in the international system over other interests and actors. In this context, pursuing cosmopolitan ideals is a luxury (Gilpin, 2001, pp. 237-248; Jervis, 1998, pp. 971-991; Krasner, 1992, pp. 38-52). For Marxists, any attempt to only reform but not move beyond the logic and rationale of capitalism retains the adversities of the global capitalist system. In this light, the cosmopolitan democracy project is not welcome since it only deals with the most radical aspects of capitalism and aims to reproduce a civil democracy model at the global level (Wallerstein, 1995; Gorg and Hirsh, 1998). Although the above runs the risk of oversimplifying extensive and comprehensive schools of thought, it summarizes the main critiques against cosmopolitan democracy.

Beyond the scope of these traditional theories, other critics pose more *practical* questions, the most important of which is which agents are going to lead the transformation into a more democratic and accountable system of global governance, since all powerful actors, the states, the international institutions and global enterprises, are inclined to pursue their own interests (Cerny, 2009, p. 782, 785). In addition, concerns are raised by the absence of a common normative background as a result of the cultural, religious and ethnic diversity of the world (Patomaki, 2003, p. 353; Pogge, 2003; Mouffe, 2009, pp. 558-559), let alone the fact that democracy itself appears problematic and increasingly under strain (Calhoun, 2003, p. 100; Stoker, 2006). Moisi (2007) goes as far as to suggest that different regions of the globe have different priorities, interests and perspectives in accordance with their historical experiences and the evolution of global politics. While the West – which can be defined as a broad entity having its origins on the Judeo-Christian religion, the classical Greek and Roman inheritance, the industrial revolution, economic advancement, technological

development and the rational organization of political and social life (Heywood, 2011, p.26-27) – is *afraid* of losing its supremacy in running the world, the Arab and African world feels *embarrassed* and *humiliated* by the West. A third category of states, to which belong mainly the rapidly developing states of South-East Asia *hope* that it is their turn to enjoy prosperity and prominence in global politics and economics. It is in this context that critics reject the proposals of cosmopolitan democracy as utopian and potentially dangerous.

Moreover, it is indicative that a number of proposals the cosmopolitan democracy advocates make remain rather inconclusive. For example, this is the case in the proposal for a global immigration regime, which does not define the content and rules of operation (Overbeek 2002, Griffin 2003). Immigration is often viewed as a threat to states' political and cultural identity, as well as ethnic homogeneity. For this reason, national governments prefer not to cede sovereignty and deal with immigration problems individually. This remains a crucial factor that explains global inertia on the issue.

Characteristic of this inconclusiveness are the obstacles associated with the proposal for the establishment of a second General Assembly of the People. As its advocates would argue (Archibugi, 2008), this body should consist of elected representatives of nation-states that co-decide with the General Assembly. This proposal is intended to compensate for and correct the inconsistency between the preamble of the UN Charter "we the people and the states of the world" and the actual decision making reality within the organization, which expresses principally the voice and interests of the governments, but not of the peoples (McGrew and Held, 2007, p. 168). It remains questionable, however, whether authoritarian states would let their people participate in such international bodies. In case only Russia and China, for example, both of which seem hostile to models of participatory democracy (Ferdinand, 2007), refuse to do so, around one fourth of the global population would be left out of these democratic procedures. Can we, therefore, honestly believe in the feasibility of such a scheme? Cosmopolitan democracy, it is clear, is impossible to implement when a number of states, including some of the mightiest of the world, remain non-democratic. Although the cosmopolitan democracy project is not tantamount to the democratic peace proposition, it seems to be in need of the latter's implementation as a prerequisite for its own fulfillment.

In addition, although one could well imagine France, Britain and Germany organizing elections and sending representatives to such a body, is this possible for the poor and underdeveloped states of Africa and South-East Asia? Not only are a significant number of these states undemocratic, but they are also the least interested in such processes.

This is not because they cannot reap benefits in the mid-term, but because their political and social structures make such processes too distant and unfamiliar. At the same time, it is not possible to expect from a state whose citizens are dying from undernourishment and AIDS in significant numbers to be interested in such global-scale democratic processes. Engagement in such ambitious global political projects will also act as a distraction from the main pressing problems of poverty and high numbers of infant deaths. Moreover, due to the fact that democratic credentials in a number of these states are rather poor, it is possible that elections for the Assembly of the People will not be entirely free and fair. Given the obvious difficulties in the less developed parts of the world, would it not be wiser to make economic development, as well as political and social stability a priority, and in so doing, facilitate the creation of the necessary preconditions for both national and global forms of democracy?

Let us, however, consider that the creation of such a body is indeed feasible. What would then its powers be? Can we realistically expect governments to allow wide legislative and executive powers for such a body? This involves an intrinsic problem that the cosmopolitan project faces, namely how is it possible to extend and empower further the role of international law and global legislative bodies (Cerny, 2009, p. 782, 785). Although states have gone a long way towards questioning and reshaping the traditional meaning of sovereignty, which stands for the unquestionable and supreme authority of the state to operate autonomously and independently in the international system, it still remains important in a world that is not Westphalian any more but has yet to make the passage to another system. It remains inconceivable for states, at least outside the context of the European Union and the exception of the dispute settlement mechanism of the World Trade Organization, to accept independent legislative bodies to decide on matters the states consider being of primary importance.

No wonder then that the proposal regarding the establishment of specialized committees and judicial bodies to set criteria for the authorization or not of an intervention in third countries (Archibugi, 2008, pp. 239-240, 246-248) is also problematic. The same applies to the suggestion that states should surrender their right to initiate action to the UN. Why should a state do so, and who can force it to do so? On what realistic grounds can we be optimistic that these bodies will gain prevalence with the consent, and at the cost, of the states? Although the need for legitimacy is an increasing necessity in the 21st century, this has not stopped the US from going on with its decision to attack Iraq on rather fragile grounds. As the most recent example of Libya in 2011 and the ongoing crisis in Syria also indicate, multilateral peacekeeping,

humanitarian operations and interventions primarily remain geopolitically motivated and follow double standards, not operating according to the logic and criteria of global human security as suggested by cosmopolitan democracy advocates. State ambitions, historical ties and corporate interests continue to drive foreign policy. States remain loath to commit themselves to mutually agreed principles on humanitarian interventions and global operations under the aegis of the UN, preferring instead to retain the freedom to act at will.

The cosmopolitan trajectory

The fact that certain steps proposed by cosmopolitan democracy advocates seem infeasible and highly problematic *does not mean that the cosmopolitan orientation itself is problematic*. Cosmopolitanism projects that the individual, not the state, should be at the center of attention. All individuals are entitled to respect of their basic rights, not under their capacity as national citizens, but as humans inhabiting this world. This is not to deny the importance of self-determination and the principle of sovereignty, namely that the state should be a self-governing entity enjoying the acquiescence of its citizens. Self-determination had and continues to have influence in the post WWII era, with its most positive aspect being the permanent, stable, peace that democratic states have established among them (democratic peace thesis, see Doyle, 1995). At the same time, however, one cannot but detect that it is gradually being overshadowed by the overarching need for states and citizens to work within a globalizing environment. This is easy to discern. Borders have become more diffuse than ever, global capital is moving at unprecedented rates and producers and consumers are linked in a multitude of ways. Moreover, global threats, such as global warming, transnational crime, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and poverty, create common values and norms that are shared by significant parts of the world (Held, 2004).

Although one could well argue that the West, China and Russia, and the Arab world form three distinct categories of states following different ideological approaches (Moisi, 2007; Ferdinand, 2007), one cannot but accept the strong ties between them, with the only exception being the turbulent relationship between Islamic fundamentalists and the West. An international society of states does exist and preserves some form of order, although it may not be the ideal one (Bull 1977). A dense web of political, economic and social intergovernmental institutions, as well as proliferating channels and networks of communication between people of different states and regions, form the backbone of the current, but not equal or fair, global governance system (McGrew, 2007). This is

because the global system remains embedded principally within the mindset of thinking about and protecting states' rather peoples' interests. However, in today's "interlocking communities of fate" there is a lot of ground for cosmopolitan ideas and values to acquire primacy over narrow state interests.

At the same time, states become more and more multiethnic. France and Britain are leading historical examples of such states, which have regulated ethnic relations and potential controversies in multiethnic and multicultural societies for decades. Nation-state democracies with defined borders encompassing only people of one nation-state, have now, if they ever existed as such, given their place to democracies with features of cosmopolitan governance and coexistence, albeit of a restricted scale, encompassing people from a number of diverse nationalities and ethnic origins. Moreover, the right of citizens not to serve their military duty on humanistic grounds, together with the right to appeal against their own government to international bodies, reinforces cosmopolitanism as an expanding body of international law. This body of law, especially after 1945, seeks to regulate issues such as human rights, human economic and social rights, war and the peaceful resolution of conflicts (Held, 2004). A number of non-national affiliations, such as nongovernmental organizations, also transcend national boundaries and link people from different nationalities for common causes. They attract members from all over the world and expand their activities to all its corners (McGrew, 2004). Since the 1990s the steady growth in the number of non-governmental organizations has become a veritable explosion. Over a 1,000 groups have consultative status with the UN, with estimates of the total number of international NGOs exceeding 30,000 (Heywood, 2010, p. 6). The advent of technology lays the groundwork for the steady flow of communication, with the spread of the Internet not only uniting most parts of the globe, but also facilitating new forms of global political participation and awareness (Castells, 2007). This is clear in the role social media had on the acceleration and contagiousness of the political and social uprisings of Egypt and Tunisia (Cottle 2011).

In this highly interconnected world no state can impose its will through naked power. Power and justice nowadays co-exist with legitimacy. No great power can contemplate running the world along authoritarian lines. Public acceptance, recognition and consent for the authority of political and decision-making structures are a necessary prerequisite. It is the most potent states in particular, as Beardsworth (2008, pp. 88-91) argues, that have to conform to universal values and rights in case they aspire to retain a hegemonic role in the world. Obedience, consent and support are no longer ensured through military means, but *via* an

exemplary foreign policy that adheres to universal values, such as respect for human rights and peace. This is illustrated in the rising significance of "soft power" – the capacity to shape the preferences of others by attraction rather than coercion (Nye, 2005) - and the increasing use of public diplomacy which aspires to influence foreign publics through broader relationship-building with citizens, social movements and NGOs (Snow and Taylor, 2008).

Last but not least, the shrinking of the world also implies that an increasing number of problems are of a global rather than local, state or regional character. The financial crisis of East Asia in 1997-1998 threatened a worldwide economic crisis. The 2007-2009 financial crisis of the US was quickly transmitted to the rest of the world, with ongoing consequences not only for financial markets but also for the real economy and state budgets. The dynamics unleashed by the default of Lehman Brothers necessitated a retreat from the classical neo-liberal mindset with the scheme to rescue other banks and more broadly the whole financial sector. US public debt continues to be exposed to external pressures and the difficulties for the US economy to recover persist, despite the state-based rescue of its banking system in 2008. Although, one may rightly argue that this crisis has shown that states are willing to consider more capital control at the national level with the rescue and nationalization of many banks, the debt crisis of the European Union attests not only to the deep interdependence of the Euro zone (as indicated with the designation and implementation of the European Financial Stability Facility followed by the European Stability Mechanism), but also to the need for political solutions at the regional and global level (as indicated with agreement of the G20 in 2009 to contribute 500 billion dollars to a program of global reflation).

The most indicative global issue area is, of course, that of the environment. The greenhouse effects and the change of climatic conditions raise the specter of a truly global challenge. National policies can achieve only modest and limited results. What is required is a collective global response. The Copenhagen summit was an impressive one, attracting an astonishing number of diverse participants. Although actual results were rather mediocre and the process was plagued by national considerations, it is obvious that a global approach is needed and will have to be pursued in the near future.

Thus, collective governance based on cosmopolitan values and principles is necessary if we are to provide responses to mounting global threats. This is not to underestimate the many points of divergence between different nations, states and peoples, *but to stress what is unique in our times: the more the world shrinks, global*

governance will become more extensive. The challenge then is to devise strategies that will serve this cosmopolitan trajectory. This, however, should be done in such a way that these strategies are not considered infeasible or heralded as contributing to anarchy and instability, but rather to democracy and efficiency.

Seizing the middle-ground

Bearing the above in mind, what is necessary is to *re-conceptualize* the most important issues of global politics and goals of humanity. Now that globalization raises levels of human consciousness and solidarity to unprecedented levels (Rifkin, 2010), we have to reexamine the fundamental questions, "*who we are*" and "*were we are heading towards.*" "*We*" should be enlarged in order to encompass the whole humanity. This, as Patomaki would argue, (2003, pp.370-372) should not be viewed as pure humanistic rhetoric or utopian discourse, but is forced upon us by the number of global threats that know no national borders or barriers. Theoretical assumptions also have to adjust to the changing global environment in order to be able to continue to yield explanatory power. Realist insights about power, war and hostility cannot have the same value and meaning in an ever closer and integrated world. They have to be, as Beardsworth (2008) would argue, increasingly combined with cosmopolitan ideas and values, such as respect for others and cooperation, rather than conflict, in order to ensure the endangered global public goods.

In any case, it should be noted, international politics never took place among *closed* political communities. States have always been *open social systems* with significant domestic and foreign inputs and outputs. But this is, as Linklater (1992, 2007) rightly argues, all the more true today in our highly interconnected and interdependent world. In such a political framework the designation of policies and strategies cannot be based on myopic national interests and considerations, but should be collectively organized in order to cater global solutions for global problems that affect the globe as a whole. We should thus move away from traditional national differences and disputes, and turn to the actual problems that trouble our world (Patomaki, 2003, pp. 370-372).

This is of course no easy task. However, we are accustomed to a certain way of thinking according to which we have to be opposed against "something" or "someone." Indicative of this is the fact that shortly after the end of the Cold War and the disintegration of the Soviet Union, a number of scholars in the US rushed to raise the specter of a new "enemy" and shaped the clash of civilization rhetoric (Huntington, 1996). This discourse of reinvented *bipolarism* paved the way for traditional competitive and confrontational patterns of international

politics to re-acquire centre stage. As Cox (1986, p. 207) has put it, however, "*theory is always for someone and for some purpose.*" There was nothing inevitable in the emergent West-Islam controversy. The scholarly discourse reinforced these aspects rather than a prioritization of alternative problems and thinking (Dooley and Udayakumar, 2009). While realist lines of thinking continuously redraw the picture of polemical politics (Mearsheimer, 1990), we can conceive of other, more peaceful and conciliatory ways of coexistence. This point stresses the impact of academic and foreign policy discourse on actual policies. Those are not predetermined, but the outcome of specific conceptualizations of threats, challenges, ways of reaction etc. While great thinkers of the post WWII period, Spinelli and Monnet among others, facilitated European history towards a peaceful direction at turbulent times, foreign policy makers in the 1990s failed to grasp the post-Cold War opportunities for a more institutionalized, secure and amiable international environment.

In addition, although the pressures of systemic factors are important, the construction of an alternative social reality, as Wendt (1992) and Ruggie (1998) have illustrated, can reshape politics. It is not material factors themselves, but how actors conceive of them, of themselves and of the others that are crucial for policy making. States do not just succumb to systemic pressures, but are in a continuous process of interaction with other actors. It is these processes that formulate their approach. Conflict and war are only one potential outcome out of many. Why, for example, are neighboring states U.S.A. and Canada on good terms, while India and Pakistan continue to hold inimical relations? How can one account for that if not by the social structures underpinning these two pairs of relations? Greece and Bulgaria, two countries that fought against each other in the second Balkan war of 1913 and then twice more in the two world wars, managed to improve impressively their relationships and signed a number of peace, friendship and cooperation agreements by the late 1980s, although they were still belonging to opposing camps during the Cold War. The same is of course true with France and Germany managing to let their onerous past behind in order to be able to ensure mutual survival and welfare.

The *logic of consequences* has dominated explanations in international politics quite justifiably. International actors seek to maximize their security, economic advantage, welfare and other fundamental goals, and in so doing pursue controversial and conflictual politics (Gilpin, 1986). However, an increasing number of actions can no more be understood under that prism. The fundamental changes that the international system has been undergoing necessitate an increasing

adherence to norms, principles and moral values. The *logic of appropriateness*, intimately connected with the high order goal of human justice, thus, becomes a crucial prism through which to account for peaceful, negotiated solutions in progressively more parts of the world than in the recent past. The emphasis has turned from specific *interstate conflicts* (although in a number of cases these remain highly contested issues) to *global public problems and goods*. For example, how are we to ensure that all citizens breathe clean air? How can we ensure that the world remains free from nuclear attacks? The need to secure such public goods obliges international actors to follow global norms. The organization of global solutions, then, is not so much driven by the logic of consequences, but by that of appropriateness. People feel that action *should* be taken so that fundamental human rights are not endangered.

On these grounds, we are not only entitled but also well advised to think alternatively for our world. The cosmopolitan democracy project provides foundations for this enterprise. Nevertheless, in the face of stark difficulties surrounding this project, we suggest a more gradualist approach, leaving aside the thorniest issues and proceeding to three main suggestions that may seem not ambitious enough to cosmopolitan democracy scholars (and at the same time too ambitious for its critics). We deem this as a less utopian and hence more pragmatic approach which, nevertheless, does not compromise the ideals and fundamental goals of cosmopolitan democracy.

These suggestions are as follows:

a) The prioritization of *substantive* rather than *participatory* global democracy;
b) The strengthening of global civil society as an agent of global democracy; and
c) The reshaping of the contours of global institutions.

The first two prescriptions emphasize human security and human rights. The first suggests that global democracy should not only be of participative nature, but also substantive as it is important in a world of economic, social and technological inequalities to ensure the promotion, respect and protection of basic human rights globally. Some kind of democratic participation nevertheless is important. As participation at the national level is no longer adequate, the second prescription suggests that global civil society can act as an agent for global democracy. The third prescription aims at dealing with the hidden Eurocentrism of the cosmopolitan democracy project. Specifically, most, if not all, of its advocates come from the West and their scholarly work reflects a normative background with an emphasis

on democracy and human rights, which historically is contingent upon the history, civilization and progress of the West, and therefore also upon the Western liberal assumption of progress and the linear evolution of humanity. Such a view of history, however, may well not be shared by all, or most, parts of the global population (Patomaki, 2003). It is argued here that lip service has to be paid to the necessity to create truly global institutions that are more inclusive and representative of the world order. This is not limited to extending participation and realizing reforms, but aspires to making global security and economic governance more symmetrical than is the case today. This presupposes not only the re-orientation of the institutions' actions towards the needs of the non-Western world, but also allowing for the developing states' voice to be heard more powerfully, coming on par with that of the long dominant West.

(a) *Substantive democracy*

The bulk of the critique against the function of democratic regimes in the 21st century focuses on its problematic participatory dimension. Democracy means control by the people and it is through elections that people mostly are able to control democratic procedures, appoint their representatives, show their preferences for some policies and express their disappointment with existing governments by voting them out of power. Democracy also presupposes a vibrant public sphere, where citizens exchange information and views and debate public issues. This bottom-up approach is crucial to more democratic forms of governance that are closer to the citizen. At the same time, it is more difficult for authorities to deceive the involved and well-informed demos, rather than an ignorant, disinterested one. In other words, participation may well deter the application of governmental measures that may satisfy the ambitions of the elites, but not the interests of the majority of the people.

Yet, what we are currently witnessing is disinclination of the majority of the people to participate. People are often loath to discuss public issues in a number of democracies. They may be too tired to bother or have no time to do so; they may just not be educated sufficiently to comprehend the most demanding aspects of policy making; they may find the public issues too complex to grasp, or not worth the time and effort required; or they may simply view the political system under a clientelistic light with disregard for the common good. Even when they are willing to do so, however, the political system allows so many loopholes and is so non-transparent that it is difficult for anyone willing to do so to effectively monitor the legislative procedures (Stoker, 2006). High percentages of abstention from national elections highlight the

indifference with which many citizens, alarmingly enough the younger generation, face politics. Part of the explanation may lie in that citizens understand that a number of crucial problems cannot be solved at the national level and thus regard their participation in national elections unworthy (Castells, 2008). This, however, cannot explain why, for example, EU-wide elections have an even lower turnout. The roots of the problem lie in the participatory dimension itself. This is not to argue that participation is not crucial, since it can influence decision-making, as well as monitor the implementation of the decisions made. Broad and substantive participation, however, remains very hard to achieve. Once we accept that participation is nominally excellent but actually very difficult to implement in order to yield the intended result, we may understand that other means may be more useful (Weinstock, 2006, p. 13; Bohman, 1999, p. 54).

In any case, democracy does not rest only on its participatory dimension. The promotion, respect and protection of basic human rights globally, what Nussbaum (2006) defended as global political liberalism is also of utmost priority. In this context, the setting of standards and provisions for those not participating is highly important. In democratic political systems there are groups of people not allowed to participate in the electoral processes. Take for example children and teens under 18, as well as the old and handicapped people. The fact that they are not allowed to participate does not mean that they are not entitled to rights, privileges (education, health, pensions etc.). It is exactly this point that fundamentally differentiates democracies from non-democracies. Democracies guarantee the basic rights of their people. Bearing this in mind and taking into account the fact that the most demanding aspect of democracy at the global level is participation, perhaps it would be wise to re-conceptualize what kind of global democracy we aspire toward. Would people living within autocratic regimes be allowed to vote in global bodies? Could immigrants and refugees do so? From a technical point of view, global elections could be held *via* the Internet. But how can we even contemplate organizing such a digital democracy when even many citizens of Western states have no access to the Internet, not to mention the starving populations of Africa. It is necessary, then, that we aim toward a more global democratic regime that can guarantee rights and provisions for all, with special emphasis on the underprivileged (Weinstock, 2006, p. 13). Such a global democracy could make up for domestic inefficiencies of democratic and non-democratic regimes. It could also extend rights and provide global citizenship to those fleeing from their homes due to inhumane conditions (Overbeek, 2002, pp. 86-87). This kind of democracy could initially develop among the developed and democratic Western states and then gradually expand to incorporate other zones as well. Once a

number of states adhere to this logic, the process should be able to propel the dynamics to encompass most of the states and global population. The final aim, perhaps, would be to create a binding supranational constitution by which all signatories would abide.

(b) *Global civil society*

The goal, however, should not only be global political liberalism, but also to achieve some kind of democratic input and participation. Nowadays, we cannot aim at reproducing the domestic electoral procedures and the nation-state participatory model on a global scale, especially since its weaknesses are so clearly exposed at the level of the state. To compensate for this, participation can be safeguarded in a different way, namely with the fortification of global civil society. In this direction, global civil society should not be understood as an undemocratic sphere comprising associations, groups and movements that lack internal democracy and accountability (Andersson & Reiff, 2005). Rather, global civil society should be treated as the sphere of cross-border relations and collective activities outside the international reach of states and markets. It should be treated as a sphere of international relationships among heterogeneous individuals and actors who share civil values and concern for global issues, an alternative project of globalization from below, which aims at minimizing violence, maximizing economic well-being realizing social and political justice, and upholding environmental quality (Falk, 1997).

In addition, it is also important to surpass the argument that global civil society cannot exert influence and impact in global politics (Donelly, 2002). To do so we must not only focus on the *decisional* power of global civil society. While it is true that this aspect is problematic for global civil society, as transnational movements and international non-governmental organizations find it difficult to infringe on political fora and contribute to the decision making processes, one should not overlook that they entertain more decisional power than in the past (take, for example, the crucial role of the international campaign in the signing of the Ottawa Convention). Besides decisional power, a significant aspect of global civil society's role is its *discursive* power, which should be encouraged and strengthened, as it refers to the power of global civil society to set issues on the agenda, influence the terms of the discussion, and crystallize possible alternatives. Human rights, for example, have become a central point in foreign policy discourse and policy making, not least because a number of human rights movements were active in promoting and securing through global agreements their protection and in so doing stimulating a vibrant global debate on the issue (see for example International Amnesty). Last but not least, it is also important to recognize that global civil society also possess

increasing *regulatory* power. In a number of cases, as for example environmental standards for the industry, movements and non-governmental organizations have set ground rules for sustainable development and created a *fait accompli* for enterprises that were willing to abide by such international norms and saw the collateral advantages of earning a positive reputation among the public (Aarts, 2003).

In further encouraging these neglected dimensions of global civil society's role, it is also possible to facilitate a vibrant global public sphere. In the increasing number of issues that transcend national borders and the authority of national governments, national *demoi* are not powerful enough as democratic pillars. The weaker the links of national representation become, the more the need for a vibrant public sphere that will not only compensate for the apathy of domestic politics, but also activate citizens at the global level (McGrew, 2007). It makes more sense now more than ever for citizens to engage themselves in global transnational movements that have the power to reach most corners of the earth and lobby international fora and institutions, rather than to put pressure on their own domestic government to act for global issues (although the significance of action at the domestic level should not be undermined).

These movements also introduce a qualitative criterion in democratic processes: interest, motive, and, possibly, knowledge and capacity to act. The individuals that are indeed interested in politics and the public good, and are therefore active in the public sphere, should be encouraged to influence actual policies (McGrew, 2004). This differentiation is not crystallized in electoral processes where the most and least active individuals have one vote each. Such initiatives enhance public participation, a core component of democracy, and should be greeted as facilitating democracy, legitimacy and effectiveness. The emphasis "*slips*" from formal, domestic-based politics to actual pressure from global society to enforce necessary policies and reforms at the global level. As Bohman (2004) would argue, a vibrant global civil society will not only mediate between governmental institutions of global governance and the human populations that they govern, but also enhance the deliberative credentials of global governance through contest and engagement – an intersection between global civil society and international regimes.

(c) *Global institutions*

The fortification of global society does not mean, however, that the role of states and international institutions are not important. To the contrary, international institutions are crucial pillars of global governance, despite their frequently poor record of transparency, accountability and overall legitimacy. Nevertheless, they are not the panacea to all global problems. They do cultivate close relations among member-states and an atmosphere of negotiation, rather than of outright conflict, and thus frequently do serve to contain conflict. At the same time, however, they are composed of states that frequently have colliding interests and worldviews, and carry these contrasting points of view to the negotiation table. That means that we should not only point to the number of cases where international institutions failed to raise up to the expectations of the people, but comprehend their function in the current world and, most significantly, *contemplate how the world would be in their absence* (Buchanan and Keohane, 2006). When considering that we do not apply such high standards to more cohesive and well-organized entities, such as democratic nation-states that are often involved in conflicts, why do so for international institutions?

This conceptualization introduces different criteria for judging their success. While the failure to intervene, act decisively, reach bold decisions and avert crises allows one to easily critique international organizations as inefficient, divided, and indecisive, one should also question whether things would have been better, or the same, had these institutions not been in place. In the event we are no better off with international organizations, then these institutions are indeed a case of failure. If, however, they do facilitate global politics and yield results that would not have been achieved through interstate cooperation alone, then international institutions prove themselves useful in global governance. For example, the International Monetary Fund is under severe critique for the neoliberal policies it promotes and the emphasis on economic, rather than social indicators (Stiglitz, 2002). Would, however, crises be averted and dealt with more efficiently in its absence? Why, then, do states run for help to the IMF whenever they are in trouble? If the IMF ceased to exist, would this benefit the states under economic strains or allow them to better deal with their economic problems? If the answer is 'obviously not' then the IMF serves a useful purpose. This is not to support its fervent neoliberal policies. The IMF should face up to its critics and improve its efficiency and transparency (Brau and MacDonald, 2009). In particular, the IMF has taken a step forward to facilitating the voting rights of the most powerful developing countries. Furthermore, the mission of the IMF has been redirected less towards conditionality packages directed at the Global South and more

towards the surveillance and maintenance of stability of the global financial sector (Heywood, 2011, p. 468). These steps aside, the IMF should embrace much more multi-faceted reforms (see below).

The UN provides an even more indicative example. It has attracted fierce opposition for its delayed reaction towards the Yugoslav crisis and failed plans to rescue the country and thwart the war in Bosnia, to prevent the genocide in Rwanda, as well as for its failure to take a stand toward and avert the US interventions in Kosovo and Iraq. It is hard, nevertheless, to ignore the work made by its Social and Economic Committee, a number of its agencies, such as UNICEF, and many others. Although people may criticize the UN's role and make suggestions for its improvement, few would prefer to see the institution being dismantled altogether (Kennedy, 2006).

It would be wiser then to look at international institutions as democratic pillars of global governance and judge their performance based on whether they contribute to global governance. Although some analysts have suggested the abolition of some institutions, for example the World Bank (Griffin, 2003, p. 803), what is really needed is the reform and empowerment of international institutions. In this direction, and given that international organizations operate at the global level, and are legitimized by the democratic character of most of its member states, they should be *strengthened* and *supplemented*.

Restructuring and supplementation of international organizations in the above manner will not yield tangible results unless it includes moves toward greater representation, inclusivity, and better orientation toward the needs of the global population. Financial inputs, voting rights and executive positions should be reallocated within the IMF to better reflect the changing world order as well as representing the interests, ideas and values of the non-Western world (Stiglitz, 2002; Lamy, 2006; Foley, 2008). In this way, the IMF's neoliberal programs that have spread economic hardship and provoked social turmoil in recipient states will begin to take into account not only macroeconomic factors, but also social ones. This would boost the IMF's performance and ensure a smoother recovery for economically troubled states (Stiglitz, 2002). In this direction, decision-making processes should be redesigned with an eye to increase the political influence of developing countries, as well as weaken links between these institutions and the interests of the Global North. In addition, it is of paramount importance to ensure that countries that are adversely affected by debt crises are adequately supported. Finally, the IMF should undertake more of a preemptive, rather than responsive, role to the treatment of financial crises especially now that there is move towards more representation

with the G20 substituting the G8 as the financial directorate of the world.

The vagaries and unprecedented scale of the 2007-2009 global financial crisis forced Western states to move beyond the G8 institutional framework and to include, via the G20, the new developing centers more firmly in the global economic governance structure with the understanding that the global crisis called for a global, rather than solely Western response. This marked a decisive switch away from a Western-centred world and toward a more representative mode of decision-making. The G20 includes most leading economies of the world with its GNP reaching 90% of the global GNP. This signifies the emergence of a new economic institutional order that is a much better fit with current economic realities and, thus far, more legitimate than the G8. This is clear in the response to the 2007-2009 global financial crisis. In particular, the G20 agreed to the expansion of the IMF borrowing program, and has made a strong point for the reallocation of voting rights in both the IMF and the World Bank. Furthermore, it moved on to establish the Financial Stability Board with an eye to coordinate the work of national financial authorities at a global level, as well as international standards-setting bodies. Last but not least, it facilitated the implementation of effective regulatory, supervisory and other financial sector policies (Heywood, 2011, p. 117, 476).

In contrast, the UN Security Council, with its current composition and operation rules, remains an anachronistic and dysfunctional institution. Unless it welcomes rising powers of the developing world and accommodates their worldviews, it is hard to see how it will live up to high expectations for peace monitoring and conflict resolution. The lack of political will to move in this direction indicates that global governance not only remains structured and mediated by power capabilities and thus rather asymmetrical, but also, as the impasse out of the Copenhagen Summit indicates, fails to tackle mounting problems. Furthermore, current structures reflect the West's historical dominance and thus aggravate global injustice, raising the critical question – in whose interest, and for whom, does global governance actually work? In a world plagued by high starvation rates, systematic undernourishment, poverty and epidemics, the free trade regulations of the WTO seem insensitive to the pressing needs of the third world. The stalemate of the Doha Round (2001-2009) is primarily due to, first, the developing world's resistance to both the rationale and substance of free trade regulations, in particular with reference to the legislation on intellectual property rights and, secondly, due to the reluctance of Western states to relinquish protectionism in sectors such as the agriculture and textiles industries. In particular, the failure of

negotiations reflected not only the growing influence of countries like China, India, Brazil etc., but also the ideological debate about the benefits and merits of free trade. This failure has enabled the US and the EU to maintain agricultural protectionism, while penalizing developing countries that would benefit more from reducing those barriers and subsidies in farming. What is at stake here is the potential to reshape the operations of such organizations toward the goal of combating the quandaries of the developing world, rather than perpetuate the West's superiority (Griffin, 2003, p. 797; Storm and Rao, 2004, pp. 577-579).

In addition, there are some notable cases where the need for international institutions to be created is obvious. The starkest example, of course, is the absence of an international organization for the environment and sustainable development. Although environmental problems are by definition global, or regional, states prefer to abstain from collective schemes that can improve environmental standards (Lamy, 2006). Last, but not least, nongovernmental organizations can and should be more actively engaged in the discursive and, potentially, decision making processes of the international institutions. This is so because firstly they can act as a link between the peoples and the bureaucrats/technocrats of international institutions, thus adding legitimacy and ensuring consent in global-wide projects, and secondly because they can enrich the debate on global issues and contribute their knowhow. It should be stressed however that most nongovernmental organizations remain largely Western. Most of their headquarters are to be found in the developed world, most members come from the West and their operations obviously reflect Western priorities and worldviews. It is necessary for these organizations to expand in representation terms in order to encompass different ways of thinking (Wild, 2006, p.9). This will impact on the function of non-governmental organizations and will help make global governance both more representative as well as more symmetrical.

Conclusion

Despite the fact that the world is currently preoccupied with dealing with the repercussions of the ongoing financial crisis and the first priority is the rescue of national economies, cosmopolitan democracy is not a project for another world, but fits well with the needs of humanity in the beginning of the 21st century. The body of scholarly work on cosmopolitan democracy, while impressive in both is extent and depth of analysis, has led to critiques encompassing valuable insights concerning the practical limitations, empirical and normative constraints, as well as the desirability of extending democracy at a

global level. The outcome has been an enriched discussion on the future of our world and the architecture of global governance in the near future.

The aim of this paper is to build upon this discussion and provide theoretical and empirical arguments on the way forward. We have argued that redrawing international politics along conflictive patterns according to realist lines of thinking is self-defeating. To the contrary, we can re-conceptualize the main challenges, threats and priorities faced by humanity as a whole. In today's world, where the dimensions of space and time are being compressed without precedent, a cosmopolitan perspective is forced upon as; any endeavor to stick to independent political communities with loose bonds with each other is futile. This, however, is not tantamount to embracing all the proposals that cosmopolitan democracy scholars make. A number of their proposals seem quite farfetched, face essential practical difficulties, and may well lead to more problems while attempting to solve existing ones.

Under this light, we suggest a gradualist methodology in the trajectory of cosmopolitanism, which removes some of the hurdles the cosmopolitan democracy project faces. In addition, we also underline the need to move beyond liberal prescriptions and to reformulate the contours of global politics by means of escaping the lurking West-centrism and giving the developing world the place it deserves in global governance structures. In that direction, we suggest that seizing the middle ground between the critics and advocates of cosmopolitan democracy should revolve around substantive democracy on basic human rights and needs, a strengthened and vibrant global civil society as a pillar of global democracy, and more inclusive and representative global institutions.

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