

# Reciprocal Cosmopolitanism

**Dorota Dralus**

Institute of Political Science  
University of Wrocław  
E-mail [dorota.dralus@uwr.edu.pl](mailto:dorota.dralus@uwr.edu.pl)  
ORCID <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6029-9230>

**Abstract.** In the paper I analyse Daniele Archibugi's conception of the new cosmopolitanism, aimed at formulation of a theory of cosmopolitan democracy capable of facing contemporary global problems that go beyond the competences of nation-states. My claim is that the advocates of the new cosmopolitanism have yet to come up with a theoretical minimum to which all parties of the cosmopolitan debate would subscribe. I argue that the main obstacle in formulation of a viable cosmopolitanism are attempts at imposition of the universalist uniformity inscribed in the traditional cosmopolitanism or, at best, a straightforward acceptance of cultural differences. In opposition to this, I outline the idea of reciprocal cosmopolitanism which, I believe, should proceed from the acknowledgement of human diversity, thus becoming a more inclusive project than its existing alternatives.

**Keywords:** democracy, globalisation, reciprocal cosmopolitanism

## Abipusiškas kosmopolitizmas

**Santrauka.** Straipsnyje analizuojama Daniele'io Archibugi naujojo kosmopolitizmo sąvoka, skirta suformuluoti tokiam kosmopolitinės demokratijos konceptui, kuris tiktų sprendžiant šiuolaikines globalias problemas, esančias už paskirų tautų-valstybių kompetencijos ribų. Straipsnyje teigiama, kad naujojo kosmopolitizmo užtarėjai dar neišplėtojo minimalaus teoretinio šios sąvokos pagrindo, kuris tenkintų visus kosmopolitizmo diskusijos dalyvius. Teigiama, kad pagrindinė kliūtis, trukdanti suformuluoti veikiantį kosmopolitizmą, yra bandymai primesti universalistinį vienodumą, esantį tradiciniame kosmopolitizme ar geriausiu atveju slypintį paprastame kultūrinių skirtumų priėmime. Prieštaraujant tam, straipsnyje apibrėžiama abipusiško kosmopolitizmo idėja, kuri, tikima, turi prasidėti nuo žmonių įvairovės pripažinimo ir taip tapti labiau visa apimančiu projektu nei šiuo metu egzistuojančios alternatyvos.

**Pagrindiniai žodžiai:** demokratija, globalizacija, abipusiškas kosmopolitizmas

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## Globalising Democracy

There is no doubt that today we are dealing with a crisis of democracy. Obviously, the inherent ambiguity of the concept of democracy itself significantly contributes to the sense of the crisis. As a matter of fact, the ambiguity of the concept is often invoked to justify the opinion that theory of democracy is in a state of permanent crisis. Nowadays, however, it is becoming problematic not only because of the vagueness of the term itself, but rather, and above all, because of the increasing complexity of various practices, processes and contexts in which today's politics is necessarily involved. These processes take place between what is local, national and global, public and private, material and immaterial, etc. The present political circumstances thus require opening of a new agenda for discussion on the meaning of democracy, as well as the variety of democratic theories and practices (Corbet 2019; Renwick and Palese 2019; Baldwin and Holzinger 2019). In other words, traditional questions about how to understand *demos*, what are the proper and desirable forms of citizenship, questions about the nature of the rights and obligations of individuals, the scope and extent of participation and representation, must be raised again both at philosophical and empirical-analytical levels, and in the context of interpenetrating processes, structures and socio-political systems at the local, state and global levels. It necessitates going beyond the hegemony of the concept of liberal democracy as the „dichotomized, limited and restricting concept of political space” (Anderson 2002: 15), as well as questioning the state as the proper locus of democratic politics (Anderson 2002: 15-17).

Problematic status of the theory of democracy becomes clear especially in the context of the debate aimed at formulating a concept of cosmopolitan democracy capable of facing contemporary global problems. The concept of cosmopolitanism plays particularly important role in contemporary philosophy and political theory. It can be argued that the doctrine of cosmopolitanism, initiated in antiquity by an enigmatic remark of Diogenes of Sinope (Diog. Laert. 1853, V, 2, 63), which in Kant's forceful formulation (1784) inspired the establishment of the League of Nations, is currently experiencing a revival and acquires previously unknown vigour. Despite the fact that democracy is nowadays facing a number of challenges, both as a theoretical concept and as a political practice, many political philosophers persevere in their efforts toward designing democratic systems practicable not only for the nation-states, in many of which it functions with varying success, but for the whole globe. The rationale for construction of systems of global, or cosmopolitan, democracy is grounded in the obvious fact that in view of the globalisation of economy, there arises an urgent need to design a method capable of managing the global political problems it generates. Among them is the climate change which does not respect the national borders, and an unprecedented migration of peoples on many continents. The overall ambition driving the quest for the cosmopolitan democracy is rooted in a belief that a democratic system of global governance would help to reduce inequalities engendered worldwide by the economic globalisation.

The re-emergence of cosmopolitanism in current philosophical debates can be interpreted as a sign of an intense search for a new meaning of the idea of political

universalism. On the practical level, the universalist view assumes many forms. One of them is the pursuit of the economic model developed in Western countries known as globalization. Another example of contemporary philosophical-political universalism is an endeavour towards building a legal and institutional political order, based on the concept of the universally binding human rights. Still another form of the universalist revival in contemporary political thought is the desire to formulate optimal and universally applicable forms of political management of political and territorial units, oriented towards the democratization of the states in which democracy does not function. The most important strand in this debate seems to be the problem of designing a global political agency capable of addressing problems which transcend the competences and abilities of the existing nation-states or their associations. This problem has been, and continues to be, addressed in philosophical and political thought as the issue of possibility of a “world government” which would fulfil the role of a political centre of global governance.

The new wave of cosmopolitanism is represented by a daunting number of participants. Undoubtedly the most influential among them are Daniele Archibugi (2004), David Held (2009), Jürgen Habermas (2001), Ulrich Beck (2002), Martha C. Nussbaum (1996, 2011), and Andrew Linklater (1998, 2007). Most of the participants of contemporary cosmopolitan debate are convinced that current problems of the world have nowadays become so grave that they can be solved only through designing global political agencies. Despite systematic failures of such universalistic aspirations, both practical and theoretical, and despite the often-negative consequences brought about in the past by various forms of practical-political universalism (Harvey 2009), the philosophical debate aimed at formulating the idea of a global cosmopolitan order does not show any signs of abating. In view of the wide range of issues raised in the debate in question, I focus my attention on the problem of the possibility of cosmopolitics through the universalization of democratization in the form outlined by the advocates of the so-called new cosmopolitanism. Its clearest and perhaps most mature version, based on the idea of globalization of democracy, was formulated by Daniele Archibugi. For this reason, my analysis of the new cosmopolitanism is based mainly on his contribution.

## **Cosmopolitan Assumptions**

Proponents of the new democratic cosmopolitanism formulated a number of assumptions detailing the point of departure of their doctrine. The assumptions may also be read as a diagnosis of the current political practices and as conditions enabling the nation-states to evolve towards global democracy. Simultaneously, they reveal metatheoretical principles of the new cosmopolitan thinking.

The assumptions, in Archibugi’s formulation, may be summarised in the following way. Firstly, democracy should be understood as an endless process rather than a set of established rules of conduct and norms. Secondly, the existing world order, based on a system of competing nation-states, negatively affects the condition of democracy in those countries themselves even if, as a matter of fact, a number of them do already conform

in many respects to the proposed standards of democratic cosmopolitanism. Thirdly, although the democratic system functioning already within existing states favours peace, it does not always encourage the states to maintain proper ethical standards in relations between them. According to the fourth assumption, cosmopolitan democracy should not be understood as the dissemination of democratic systems within the existing states individually, but rather as a democratic system of a supranational nature. Fifthly, economic globalization has a negative impact on the political autonomy and sovereignty of states, and thus limits the effectiveness of the democratic process within the individual states. Sixth, the global stakeholder communities are not confined anymore by the boundaries of the existing political and territorial units, but transgress them. The seventh assumption concerns the cosmopolitan governance and asserts that globalization contributes to the emergence of new social movements, centred around various issues vital for people living in very distant regions, which are aimed at their global solution, and that the solutions will not be possible without building some cosmopolitan platform for political action (Archibugi 2008: 439). Archibugi attaches particular importance to the issues of climate change, migration (Archibugi 2018a) and international jurisprudence (Archibugi 2018b).

### **Dynamic Nature of Democracy**

At the outset I have pointed out to controversies regarding the modern sense of the concept of democracy. The debate on the new cosmopolitanism clearly illuminates its problematic nature. Various contemporary concepts of the new cosmopolitanism, as theoretical projects of globalising democracy, have exposed both significant changes in the understanding of democracy, as well as revealed new, previously unregistered issues.

Undoubtedly, among the most prominent aspects of the contemporary cosmopolitan debate is that the attempt to advance democracy to the global level prompts its participants to emphasize its dynamic nature. This means that democracy should be understood as a never-completed process, while its proper goal may be defined as never-ending agonistic struggle to define and implement it (Archibugi 2004: 439). Adopting such a dynamic perspective, Archibugi claims that democracy should be seen as an endless process whose directions we are not able to predict. He thus rejects teleological and essentialist views, and accordingly claims that new paths of democracy will be fashioned by future generations by means of various, yet unknown, forms of contestation, participation and management. “Such assumptions place democracy not only in an historical context, but also within the historical evolution specific to each political community. The way in which political systems are effectively assessed becomes therefore decisive – each and every democratic system can be evaluated more effectively on the basis of a scale relative to its own development, rather than through a simplistic democracy/non-democracy dichotomy. This would imply that, in order to evaluate the political system of a state, it becomes necessary to take into account both the level of, and the path to, democracy” (Archibugi 2004: 440). Therefore, the cosmopolitan attempt to endow democracy with a global dimension requires substantial changes in the meaning of the concept. Importantly,

however, the new meaning of democracy results from the reinterpretation of elements of its traditional sense, i.e. the cardinal principles of its traditional understanding. The first principle is the postulate to avoid violence, the second reasserts the political equality of citizens, while the third is the idea of public control of the political authority. These three aspects of democracy become for Archibugi the starting point for his project of cosmopolitan democracy.

The principle of avoiding violence in political life means that democracy differs from other political systems in the nature of political interaction it considers admissible. Competing parties are not to strive to annihilate physically their adversaries, but are only expected to try to demonstrate the advantage of their own ideas vis-a-vis those of the opponents, all acting within the framework of mutually accepted system of rules. The use of violence in democracy is to be kept at an unavoidable minimum; the parties accept and use methods of action understood as competition, or agonism, rather than antagonism (Archibugi 2008: 25). Despite frequent use of terms taken from the vocabulary of military warfare, democratic practice is more like a sports contest rather than war. Analysing this aspect of democracy, Archibugi writes: “Karl Popper defined democracy as that political system in which the citizens can change their government without causing a bloodbath. Although this definition is not sufficient to characterize a democratic government exhaustively, it captures one essential aspect, namely, the preexisting will of the political parties to take turns at governing without the need for violence” (Archibugi 2008: 27). The substitution of violent struggles by competition results from the fact that in a democratic system all agents are aware of the incompleteness, imperfection and insufficiency of their respective political visions. This kind of scepticism or anti-absolutism translates itself into a prohibition of permanent elimination of adversaries from the democratic game, and explains the ephemeral nature of political formations and programmes (Archibugi 2008: 25). However, the principle of non-violence should not be absolute; it is a necessary but not sufficient condition to fully characterize a democratic system. He gives examples of undemocratic yet non-violent communities; such regimes may be authoritarian theocracies which nevertheless are accepted by the population or, due to ethnic or other reasons, their populations passively allow themselves to be dominated by ruling elites (Archibugi 2008: 27-28). The norm of avoiding violence is limited by an obligation to use it only as a last resort, and even then, to use it only “within the bounds of legality.” In order to consider non-violent political action as genuinely democratic, two other principles are necessary: equality and the public control of political authority (Archibugi 2008: 27).

The principle of equality of citizens in a democratic system establishes that all members of political community enjoy the same rights, including the right to participate in political life. Moreover, all members are expected to take part in the process of making appointments to public offices, and to be appointed themselves to them. “For this condition to be possible, the political system must be able to guarantee adequate representation, and at the same time the political community must view the promotion of equality and solidarity as a priority task” (Archibugi 2008: 28).

In relation to the third cardinal principle of democracy, i.e. citizens’ control of political authorities, two issues should be kept apart. First is that universal and equal civic

participation is a source of internal support for a democratic political system. “Only in the presence of bottom-up pressure can democratic institutions function materially. Even when the democratic institutions have been imposed by external forces, such as in the case of Germany, Japan, and even Italy, after World War II those democratic institutions became established only thanks to the reconstruction of the social fabric, including political parties, unions, and social movements, inside these countries that allowed the acceptance and daily application of the democratic rules” (Archibugi 2008: 25).

Secondly, democratic activity of citizens is necessary in order to exercise public supervision of the operations of power. Democracy means that the functioning of the government is under constant public control. Decisions are subject to public scrutiny both during their making and throughout the entire process of their implementation. In other words, both decisions and decision makers are subject to public accountability. “This means that political action must be authorized and accountable and, in order to allow popular control, it must be shaped by transparent rules. This presses the administration to respond to people’s needs.” (Archibugi 2008: 28).

The above-enumerated elements do not yet exhaust the definition of democracy. The right to vote, periodical elections, pluralism of political parties competing with each other for power, free access to information, respect for institutional principles, rotation of public officials, protection of human rights are no less necessary aspects of its understanding. However, Archibugi believes that a definition based on these three principles, i.e. non-violence, equality and public control of political authority, expresses in the most general way the spirit of what we commonly call democracy. Thus defined essence of democracy may also be helpful in identifying its various models.

Most important in the recognition of internal dynamics of democracy seems to be the fact that its acknowledgement is a necessary prerequisite for the democratic norms and values to be extended from the realm of nation-states to the international level. It can thus be said that in order to furnish democracy with a cosmopolitan dimension, it is necessary to redefine it as a system endowed with an inherent ability to learn. This statement refers to the ability of democratic systems to face new, previously unknown challenges in accordance with general principles definitive of democracy as a method of political management. Archibugi emphasizes that, for example, the phenomena such as the gradually expanding electoral rights, strengthening the rule of law, greater protection of minorities and development of novel forms of representation justify the belief that the democratic process is dynamic and that it consists in the ability to draw lessons from the past. He also points out that in democracy new problems are constantly emerging, such as public control of the mass media and protection of privacy in the age of ubiquitous information technologies. He thus believes that the ability to face new challenges is the essence of democracy: as democracy stops developing and transforms into a static set of rules and procedures, it loses its legitimacy. Vitality of democracy expresses itself in “constantly setting up in the political arena new objectives that only very slowly transform into additional, universally shared milestones. In the long and controversial journey of democracy, and observing its vicissitudes from the vantage point offered by the early

twenty-first century, one may note that none of the main milestones of democracy have so far been removed” (Archibugi 2008: 23).

### **Cosmopolitanising Democracy**

The problem of territoriality is one of the issues to which the new cosmopolitans devote a lot of attention for the very simple reason that territorial confinement of the democratic political arrangements is becoming increasingly questionable. The main stimulus for the development of cosmopolitan thought is the growing conviction that democracy limited to individual states has exhausted its potential. From the point of view of an individual citizen living in contemporary societies, the emergence of supranational individual and group relationships is becoming a tangible reality. More and more people are able to contact inhabitants of other cultures and enter into dialogue and cooperation with them. Many are forced to participate in various political communities at the same time. Numerous processes, mainly economic, shape the lives of individuals and political communities in a similar way around the world. State borders are disappearing or becoming ever more permeable, while differences between internal and external affairs are becoming increasingly blurred. These obvious observations, however, are rarely taken into account by the theory of democracy. As Shapiro remarked, it is an “enduring embarrassment of democratic theory is that it seems impotent when faced with questions about its own scope. By its terms democracy seems to take the existence of units within which it operates for granted” (Shapiro, Hacker-Cordon 1999: 1).

No less importantly, there is a growing gap between the geographical “anchoring” of democratic politics and the conceptual extension and complexity of the category of space. Confinement of the theory of democracy to a “territorial trap” (Agnew 1994) collides with the real political processes which increasingly occur within spaces without clear-cut borders; conventionally understood borders are no longer a sufficient reference point for them. Economic, political, legal, and cultural areas in which the individuals function are no longer mutually consistent and are subject to various rules which often contradict each other. In view of the ongoing obliteration of time and space, territoriality cannot be seen any longer as a binding principle, but is increasingly becoming a freely constructed set of spatial systems in which borders are treated as tools employed accordingly to the particular conditions. The space for political action is then no longer given in advance, durable and predictable, its borders can be a subject of choice, freely interpreted and flexible, and they must be continuously re-marked and legitimized (Beck 2002: 19). The spaces of human life are nowadays uneven, relational, reticulated, blurry, out of focus, layered, covered with grooves, bent, porous, etc. (Barnet, Low 2004: 9). In this approach, the category of space thus assumes new properties.

The cosmopolitanisation of democracy is thus to be understood as an open project which, through abandoning the traditional focus of the political theory on locality and territoriality, aims to establish a platform for responsibility, transparency and legitimacy of global governance, as well as to develop measures and means to facilitate it. As Archibugi

writes, “cosmopolitan democracy is but one of the possible forms of global governance, but it is one that tilts heavily toward a democratic management of the global commons. [...] To opt for a democratic management of global problems is a partisan choice. I make this choice, but not only as an act of faith. Just as democracy has bestowed more advantages than disadvantages on individual nations, I deem that democracy can bring long-term benefits to all the inhabitants of the Earth” (Archibugi 2004: 86-87).

## Designing the Global Democracy

Archibugi stresses that the mere existence of a number of democratic states is not synonymous with the existence of a democratic global order. Global democracy cannot be imagined as the direct result of democracy within states. He thinks that even if it were possible to create a situation in which each of the existing states would transform into democratic regimes, the scale of the problems faced by humanity at the current stage of its development is so great that such an imaginary community of democratic states would not be able to face them effectively. It requires the creation of special procedures and institutions that would add another level of political representation to the existing ones. He also argues that this is not a simple transfer of the democratic model conceived for the nation-state to the world level. Too many aspects of this model need reformulation to give it a global dimension.

In this context it is necessary to refer to the commonly accepted stereotype that democracies do not wage wars with each other. This claim suggests a close causal connection establishing an internal relationship between the political systems and peace (Archibugi 2004: 441). This purported link is based on the tacit assumption that armed conflicts are caused by undemocratic regimes. On this basis, it is usually concluded that peace at international level can be guaranteed by exerting appropriate pressure upon internal political systems of the states. Archibugi claims that this argument overlooks the obvious fact that democratic states do not have to apply the same principles and values in the field of foreign policy upon which their internal system is built. “The West has often declared its intention to promote democracy in other people’s backyard but is by no means willing to share the management of global affairs with others. This is what I call democratic schizophrenia: to engage in a certain behavior on the inside and indulge in the opposite behavior on the outside. It is a contradiction that is difficult to justify” (Archibugi 2008: 6).

Even though Archibugi advocates the establishment of a system of global governance, he is not in favour of abolishing the nation-states. He believes that a global level of political representation could coexist with already established states and that they would retain some of their political and administrative functions. However, he agrees that the transformations of the modern world on individual and social levels necessitate the design of new forms of democracy that respect the universal human rights.

One of the main demands of cosmopolitan democracy is to bring about significant changes in the priorities of foreign policies of the existing states, especially among the



strongest Western states with liberal democratic systems. A democratic state should use the instruments of foreign policy at its disposal to become a good member of the international community, even at the cost of certain short-term losses. According to Archibugi, established democracies should provide assistance to foreign political parties and activists ready to support democracy in despotically ruled countries, instead of extending their help to those regimes when it is in their own national interests to do so. As Archibugi and Held write, “For too long democratic countries have passively accepted or even actively supported dictatorial regimes when this was in their interest. A new foreign policy doctrine based on solidarity among democratic forces is now needed. This does not necessarily mean that democratic countries should create new institutions to exclude other despotic governments, as suggested by the proposal for a League of Democracies. Such a proposal risks creating a further divide among countries and could have the paradoxical effect of creating international cohesion among despotic countries and the isolation of democratic movements within these countries (Archibugi et al. 2012: 17). Attempts to export democracy through coercive means have been discredited by the Iraq war, but attempts to promote democratization through incentives, transnational linkages and cooperation are still in their infancy. In other words, the goal of globalization of democracy is globalization of the rule of law.

In order to achieve the ambitious project of the Great Transition (Raskin et. al. 2002), and to overcome the “democratic schizophrenia” among the Western states, Archibugi envisages, on a practical-political level, a global body of United Nations Parliamentary Assembly, an idea inspired by the successful example of the European Parliament, as well as by his critical view of the UN. He also advocates the establishment of the assembly of the nongovernmental organizations to be recognized by the UN General Assembly, and a World Parliamentary Union which would gather the “like-minded states” (Archibugi 2018a). Such institutions would be a natural and most effective way to gather the nations together, allowing them to deliberate on common problems, and would jointly make up a system capable of guaranteeing the citizens the political representation independent of the national politics and institutions. High on Archibugi’s cosmopolitan agenda is the climate change, which cannot be dealt by individual states only, problems of local and global governance, and the implementation of the principles of international justice, especially the International Criminal Court (Archibugi, 2018a, 2018b; 2018c; Archibugi et al. 2012: 20).

No less important challenge to be faced by the cosmopolitan institutions is reduction of political and economic exclusions; masses of economically excluded people are considered to be the most important stakeholders of such initiatives (Archibugi 2008: 87). Nowadays they depend on the support of international aid agencies and donors. Inhabiting underdeveloped countries with a very low standard of living, they are particularly vulnerable to the consequences of political disturbances, economic exclusion and environmental damage. It is these groups of people who are the first victims of the fallen states. We learn about their existence usually in situations of war conflicts and disasters. International aid agencies and non-governmental organizations have been highlighting the

problem of inadequate living conditions because they are unable to improve their position on their own. It is also in their interest to minimize exclusion from political influence on the global decision-making process. The new cosmopolitans are convinced that it is these people who can benefit most from cosmopolitan democracy: granting them political rights in world institutions can be an important step in their acquiring the bargaining power in their struggle to improve their fate in the countries they live in.

Cosmopolitics oriented at overcoming economic and social exclusion has an obvious moral justification. The democratic cosmopolitan project will remain unfulfilled until the problem of inclusion is resolved; overcoming political exclusion is perceived as a key to overcoming the economic and social ones. Democracy operating only within individual states, even if their number increases, is vulnerable to weakening by globalization and, unless granted a real and effective power at higher levels, will be ultimately transformed only into a formal assembly line. Democracy can only survive insofar as it manages successfully to face the global challenge by becoming global itself (Archibugi 2008: 87).

### **New Cosmopolitanism and its Critics**

The above delineated conception of cosmopolitan politics has been received with mixed reception. Voices of approval were contradicted by critical arguments, moderate support aimed at improving the presented projects were opposed by opinions entirely rejecting these projects, both in their theoretical and moral aspects. Critics of cosmopolitan democracy, though themselves usually ardent defenders of democracy as a form of governing states, typically approach the projects of global democracy with a great deal of scepticism. Acknowledging the gravity of problems resulting from spontaneous globalization of modern politics, and appreciating the rationale for a supranational form of government capable of regulating the uncontrolled globalization, they believe that globalization of democracy is at least immature and infrequently view the cosmopolitan faith as a naive idea.

Paul Kelly recommended the project by generously asserting that it results from the accurate recognition of the contingent nature of the modern system of states and from the realization of a need to separate universal values from specific institutional structures such as states. The need in question is justified by not so much by the fact that the existing states do not respect rights and values but rather by the important qualitative changes undergoing in the world policy due to the globalization process. He remarks approvingly on Peter Singer's idea of ceding more power to international institution like World Trade Organisation, UNESCO and International Labour Organisation, as well as on Held's concern with democratising the existing institution of global governance. He concludes that "The analysis of global politics in these cosmopolitan theories is subtle and comprehensive, and it covers precisely those issues of global injustice that liberal theory is supposed to ignore. This attempt to reconnect the aspiration of universalist egalitarian political theory with a more nuanced account of politics does mark a change in direction in political theory away from the narrowly domestic concerns of some liberal theories, which seems to assume that the only issue in politics is the level of taxation and the structure

of the welfare state. Cosmopolitan theories of global governance and democracy mark a refreshing change of direction” (Kelly 2005: 153).

The success of the new cosmopolitanism, however, depends to a large extent on its ability to face the problems identified by its strongest opponents and critics. Mouffe believes that the establishment of cosmopolitan democracy or cosmopolitan citizenship is a desire to promote the Western concept of democratic values and to promote a Western understanding of human rights. Employing Nadia Urbinati’s distinction between government, whose business is politics, from governance, which is about formulating policies, she stresses that cosmopolitan governance cannot be an abstract process of smooth implementation of legitimate, uniting all postulates, but a tough negotiation between a variety of forces and interest groups (Mouffe 2005: 103). In such negotiations “Costs and benefits are therefore distributed unevenly, and the central question is always, who should decide and on whose criteria? Hence the importance for those decisions to be open for contestation. If it is already difficult at the national level, it becomes intractable when one considers the case of a hypothetical international *demos* where differences exist in the magnitude of the population and the power of different states” (Mouffe 2005: 105). She concludes that any political decision will always mean the victory of some at the expense of others, which undermines the cosmopolitan idea at the outset. According to Mouffe, the dilemma regarding the choice between two types of world order: cosmopolitan or multipolar should be resolved in favour of multipolarity. Accordingly, she argues against cosmopolitanism and on behalf of a multipolar world order which recognizes diversity and pluralism, and which does not see the world as a universe but as a multiverse, or “pluriverse” (Mouffe 2005: 115).

## The Reciprocal Cosmopolitanism

A decisive criticism of the patronising attitude inscribed into the projects of the new cosmopolitanism has been formulated by David Harvey. First of all, he emphasises that appealing to universal and cosmopolitan ideas by Western theorists, as well as – at the ideological level – by political leaders of the Western world, systematically stumbles over the real practice of Western states which as a rule turns out to be a violent, intolerant imperialism (Harvey 2009: 8). Historically, a noble ideology and sentiment of universal brotherhood, in its practical application, is systematically distorted into cruel repression of great masses of people, and infrequently generated a violent backlash against it. There is an overwhelming evidence which might be cited in support of Harvey’s claim, e.g. by a reference to the poignant example of the attitude of the Western powers toward countries in Asia and Middle East. One of the most telling illustrations of the consequences of this attitude is the case of Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī, an Islamic intellectual and activist of the 19th century, whose ideas have exerted tremendous influence in the Muslim world as a whole during his lifetime, and continue to do so until today. The story of al-Afghānī’s intellectual evolution, and his enduring influence, is a sobering reminder of the problems the Western cosmopolitan projects would have to face. Initially a radical reformist critical

of a substantial part of the Islamic tradition and doctrine, as well as an advocate of Western science and social organisation, and never a Muslim fundamentalist, Al-Afghānī gradually evolved towards the idea of a militant pan-Islamic unity which he formulated in the course of his first-hand experience with brutality of colonial powers in Afghanistan and India, its insidiousness in Turkey and Egypt, as well as in the discussions with Western intellectuals, Ernest Renan among them. He recognised how the universalist and egalitarian ideology served as a justification for the repressive and exploitative Western colonial policies and as a doctrinal ground for denigrating and patronising attitude towards Islam and Arab peoples (Mishra 2012; Norman 2011; Keddie 1966; 1968; Kohn 2009). Those and numerous similar facts unavoidably raise serious questions concerning the credibility of Western cosmopolitan universalist designs. In his search for the roots of this problem, Harvey claims that real politics motivated by universalist intentions is more often than not transformed into its own opposite due to disregarding the diversity of cultures and the specificity of the regions in which is to be implemented.

No less severe critic of the Western new cosmopolitans, Mouffe enumerated a number of conceptions which she believes to be more convincing alternatives to it. Among them are the vernacular cosmopolitanism (Bhabha 1996); the multicultural cosmopolitanism (Robbins 1999, 2017), or decolonial cosmopolitanism (Mignolo 2011). One might also add the rooted cosmopolitanism (Cohen 1992) as well as Boaventura de Sousa Santos's subaltern cosmopolitanism (Sousa Santos 1995; 2006). The latter refers to a cosmopolitanism of the politically marginalized and economically exploited groups inhabiting the region described in the West in a denigrating manner as the Third World. Mouffe claims that the aim of these doctrines is to reconcile cosmopolitanism, understood as an abstract model "for planetary justice, with a need for belonging and acting at levels smaller than the species as a whole. Their aim is to foster a sense of reciprocity and solidarity at the transnational level, and they stress the need to bring to the fore the negative consequences of economic, political and cultural neo-liberal models. [...] [This alternative version of] cosmopolitanism does not emphasize the values of rationality and universality, and it criticizes the Eurocentrism it sees at the core of the traditional cosmopolitanism, linked as it is to the Enlightenment and the European experience of modernity" (Mouffe 2013: ch. 2).

Arguing along similar lines, Harvey points out that the problem of cultural difference is only rarely noticed by the theorists of the new cosmopolitanism, Martha C. Nussbaum (1996; 2011) being one of the few exceptions. He also emphasizes that appreciation of diversity and respect for other cultures, if occurs at all, usually does not go beyond the formal educational postulate. The truth of this assertion may be conveyed by referring to the example of the educational policies introduced by Sayyid Ahmed Khan, a Muslim leader in India under the British colonial rule (Mishra 2012: 103). His well-meaning initiative of providing Western-style education to the young in India was vehemently rejected by those who thought that it is nothing but a yet another and particularly insidious form of colonialism. As an Indian Muslim poet Akbar Ilahabadi wrote: "We of the East break our opponents' heads, they of the West change their opponents' nature. The guns have gone, and

now come the professors” (Mishra 2012: 103). Harvey argues that cosmopolitan attempts are likely to succeed only when the genuine cosmopolitan education takes seriously the diversity of “geography of freedom.” Discouraged by the Western cosmopolitan ideas he invokes the above-mentioned subaltern cosmopolitanism believing that it opens up a greater chance of the globalization of democracy (Harvey 2009: 95).

The most serious crisis presently facing the entire Western world today, namely the unanswered requirement to deal with the masses of refugees fleeing the Middle Eastern and African countries, which were devastated with a significant assistance and infrequently on the initiative of the Western countries, is becoming an important test also for the Western cosmopolitan projects. The refugee crisis demonstrates particularly acutely how much we still need to learn in order for the Western cosmopolitan ideas to secure for themselves the credibility and to dispel the patronising attitude associated with them. The latter issue indicates that the theoretical ideas of cosmopolitan politics, and even more so the attempts to implement it, have yet to develop a certain cosmopolitan minimum that would make them genuinely and universally acceptable to all parties.

To summarise the debate sparked by the new cosmopolitanism one has to stress not only the controversies it raised, but also important contradictions it generated. The most important of the contradictions stems from the fact that the Western cosmopolitan doctrines are being pitted against the cosmopolitanisms proposed by intellectuals representing the underprivileged regions of the world. Cosmopolitanism of the privileged is thus opposed to the cosmopolitanism of the oppressed, leaving very little space for any mutual understanding, to say nothing of a possibility of working out a cosmopolitanism which would be acceptable to all its stakeholders.

In response to this deadlock, I would like to suggest an idea of reciprocal cosmopolitanism. It may be illuminatingly explained with the help of three concepts, namely: universalism, difference, and diversity. These concepts may help to distinguish the old and new cosmopolitanisms, developed (to use Ilahabadi’s expression) by the “Western professors”, and the reciprocal cosmopolitanism recommended here. As the above analysis demonstrated, the traditional Western cosmopolitanism, which inspired the colonial policies, was grounded the idea of universalism which in its practice degenerated into ruthless imperialism. In distinction from it, an important feature of the new cosmopolitanism is that even though its advocates continue to stress the idea of universalism, its universalist attitude is moderated by an acute awareness of the differences between various groups, ethnicities and cultures. Despite this, the new cosmopolitans seem oblivious to the negative associations which, in view of the past colonial experience, are unavoidably evoked in the troubled post-colonial territories by the Western universalist ambitions. Thus, even if they cannot be accused of crude attempts to impose Western universalist uniformity on other regions of the world, they seem to satisfy themselves with a rather straightforward acceptance of cultural differences.

Against this I would like to argue that such an attitude will not be sufficient to guarantee the success of cosmopolitan doctrines. It seems that in order for a future doctrine of cosmopolitanism to win a genuine approval by all interested stakeholders on

a global scale, it should rather proceed from a firm acknowledgement, recognition and appreciation of human diversity. For this reason, reciprocal cosmopolitanism will have to involve an attitude of compassion, understanding, mutual respect and receptiveness. What I mean is a moral attitude of a sincere reciprocity which thus far has been prominent in the Western cosmopolitanism, the new one included, by its absence. I would also like to suggest that the proper method of realizing the ideals of cosmopolitan democracy is to formulate them in a truly cosmopolitan and democratic way. This means that they would have to be worked out in a collaborative manner, that is, in a way which would involve the participation of those whose voice has so far been ignored, i.e. on an authentically equal footing with them. For this reason, a lesson in humility, particularly on the part of the Western established democracies, should be the first step toward a genuinely new, compassionate cosmopolitanism based on the principle of reciprocity.

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