

# **COSMOPOLITANISM AND DEMOCRACY BEYOND STATES: THE COSMOPOLITAN DEMOCRACY PROJECT**

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## **Abstract**

Today we are facing a period of profound social and political transformation on a global scale, under the inevitable process of globalization. This brings an important debate about how to properly organize the international society in order to contribute to the resolution of global problems.

Among these global problems we can highlight the crisis of the nation state in a world where states by themselves can no longer provide security for citizens who call for greater representation and democratic participation, meanwhile telecommunications technology allows a human interconnectedness that has no precedents in history. The fact is that international society is changing into a new world order that is not clearly defined yet.

To face this reality, the cosmopolitan democracy project proposes updating the Kantian cosmopolitanism through a broad legal and political program that includes not only the democratic reform of governance institutions but the peaceful transformation of the world order as well.

However, political realism considers illusory this project, as any other that tries to organize the international society according to regulative ideals.

In response to this criticism, I consider extremely important the promotion of an appropriate education that enables to subvert the realism and help us to recognize our sense of belonging to a plural and diverse world, allowing this way the empowerment of the world citizenship and making possible a genuine cosmopolitan democracy in the twenty-first century.

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**Keywords:** Cosmopolitanism, democracy, peace, education

## **Introduction**

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Among these global problems we can highlight the crisis of the nation state in a world where states by themselves can no longer provide security for citizens who call for greater representation and democratic participation, meanwhile telecommunications technology allows a human interconnectedness that has no precedents in history. The fact is that international society is changing into a new world order that is not clearly defined yet.

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However, political realism considers illusory this project, as any other that tries to organize the international society according to regulative ideals.

In response to this criticism, this article foregrounds the promotion of peace education as a means not only to subvert the realism but also to help us to recognize our sense of belonging to a plural and diverse world, allowing the empowerment of the world citizenship and making possible a genuine cosmopolitan democracy in the twenty-first century.

### **Antiquity and contemporaneity in the idea of universal citizenship**

The origin of the term cosmopolitanism goes back to the fourth century of our common era and is associated with the cynic philosopher Diogenes Laertius, who seems to have been the first to use it to claim that he was a world citizen. Then the Stoic thinkers —both in its first historical stage in Greece and later in Rome—, proclaimed his belonging to a city as vast as the universe itself, justifying philosophically this idea of *kosmou politês* or world citizen.

Indeed, these ideas were first formulated in a time when the Hellenic world was witnessing a profound social and political change, once the conquest of Greece by Philip II of Macedonia determined a change that would forever alter the course of history of the Greek city-states. As explained by the British historian Arnold Toynbee, the abolition of the sovereignty of the city-state made by the Macedonians held as a relief for the individual, in a time when being a citizen of the *pólis* rather than being a stimulus had become a burden, after the incessant fratricidal strife coupled with the loss to the invading enemy will end up exhausting the energies of the citizens, obliged to provide a service and loyalty that ended up decimating their spirit (Toynbee, 1960: 131-132).

This important change caused a deep crisis in the soul of men those days, so that inspired a number of thinkers and philosophers to develop ideas that allowed them to formulate a new sense of belonging, once the Hellenic citizens were released to fulfill the usual civic obligations the *pólis* compelled them to do. Therefore, within this historical context, arised new currents of philosophical thought as the Stoic school, that tried to give not only relief to the woes of men but also to show a way forward in order to aspire to a good and virtuous life. According to the Stoics, reasoning ability was a quality shared by all human beings, an innate capacity that, coupled with the fact that the laws of nature are universal, led them to propose the equality of all people and the unity of all mankind, beyond any distinction related with culture, geographic origin or social position. Thus, in the famous work *Politeía*, Zeno of Citium will propose the oneness of humankind organized not around cities and *demos* with different laws, but within a single *cosmópolis*, having for fellow brothers and sisters all men and women, all of them considered as members of the same *demos*. As we can appreciate, the stoic emphasis was placed on what united the humankind, not what divided it. The latter allows us to prove that stoicism was part of Greek political traditions, rejecting the centralization of power which is the origin of kingdoms and empires and favoring that the world may function like a large city (Daraki and Romeyer-Dherbey, 1996: 52).

While the efforts of these thinkers to preach cosmopolitanism was itself a novelty in the ancient world, there was a feature not less innovative regarding the participation of citizens in public life, because the *cosmópolis* differed from the *pólis* in the sense that it no longer supposed political action. For this reason, the Stoics seemed to consider humankind as a group of citizens finally abandoned to their fate (Daraki and Romeyer-Dherbey, 1996: 52). They felt part of a universal city that did not require from them any commitment to exercise political action as in the *pólis*, an aspect that was not addressed by the Stoics.

This task will be developed tens of centuries later by Immanuel Kant, whose philosophy of law and political thought are directed to regulate and guide human action with a universal scope. Kant, as heritor to the ancient Stoicism, understands that the man is inserted into a universal community of rational beings, where their rights must be respected without distinction (Nussbaum, 1997: 36). But Kant goes further and tries to set the legal principles that can lead to a lasting universal peace. By incorporating the notion of cosmopolitan law as

ultimate condition for achieving perpetual peace, Kant introduces into the *corpus juris* the ancient Stoic idea of *kosmou politês*, which he asserts under the legal right to hospitality. Unlike the Stoics, Kant with no doubt will provide legal and political ties to the universal community (Kant, 1989: 192).

Undoubtedly, the contemporary political world has drawn heavily on the thought of Kant, which inspired the creation of the League of Nations in 1919, then expanded in 1945 in the form of the current United Nations, a body that has taken concrete steps toward creating a more just and solidary world. Nevertheless, we still live in an insecure world, no doubt! But we are not resigned to this state of things nor believe the solution is to establish a global state, a Leviathan provided with global capabilities to impose order. Instead, we believe that we must think of new options on how to organize and deepen our bonds of unity among peoples and among ordinary citizens. An union that arises, not through fear but out of deep respect for our shared humanity. We think this is a valid alternative that can be implemented through updating Kantian cosmopolitanism.

Today, our increasing interconnectedness as human beings is biased by political and legal structures that are necessary to reformulate in order to adapt them to the present time we are living. It seems that the configuration of the nation state has become obsolete to respond to the changes that are taking place in society as a result of the globalization process, which has accelerated particularly after the end of the Cold War.

Globalization involves the expansion, intensification, acceleration and increasing impact of our global human interconnectedness (Held, 2012: 38-39). As a result of the development of such interconnection, there have been international regimes and organizations that have expanded to manage entire areas of transnational activities in commercial, financial, environmental risk management, etc., changing this way the political organization at different levels.

As a consequence, the state is crossed by several instances of decision-making situated beyond its borders, involving many issues out of their control. Therefore, globalization and changes in the nature and form of global governance raised questions related to the scope of democracy, when the relationship between decision makers and those affected by them are no longer symmetrical or congruent in respect to the territory (Held, 2012: 45).

What is the democratic legitimacy within the current structure of governance at multiple levels? Representative democracy has been hailed as the key institutional innovation to ensure peace, social cohesion and satisfaction of rights under the sovereign nation-state, but when state sovereignty is violated by transferring important powers of government to transnational governance institutions is not clear at all the real degree of democratic legitimacy and accountability between those institutions and the public, whether it be local, national, regional or global. Both the expectations of the people for greater autonomy to local governments as ethnic, cultural or religious claims from different communities, can be interpreted as strong indications of a regression to nationalism (Habermas, 1997 : 130 ). As Habermas points out, we could say that we are facing a moment of international order transition where there are two opposing forces.

On the one hand, an integrationist force that due to globalization connects humankind through a cosmopolitan scenario where economics, finance, communications and cultural exchanges produce political aggregation spaces that span large areas (as in the case of the European Union). On the other, a disaggregation force that drives autonomy movements that aspire to recognition of their national, ethnic or religious identity.

The common element in these two realities is the crisis of the nation state, an artificial political entity that in the twenty first century is on decline and fall, because of the massive transfer of many of its functions to supranational venues but also for its growing inability to carry out the main functions that were part of its original reason for being: to produce

national unification as well as the internal pacification. As Luigi Ferrajoli noted, this is a time where the state has become too big for the small things and too small for the big things. Not only national but also transnational government structures need to be reformulated, if what is sought is to ensure that this period of transition leads to a truly democratic world order, thus establishing the realization of the Kantian dream of a society and a cosmopolitan law guarantor of peace and human rights (Ferrajoli, 2004: 92).

In the days when the Greek city-states crumbled, a group of philosophers proposed a sense of universal belonging that would allow citizens to live under one law of equality. Perhaps the idea of those ancient Stoic thinkers, that we are inhabitants of a *cosmópolis*, really does not belong to a past age. On the contrary, it seems to embody a contemporaneity that reminds us Kant's reflection that the violation of human rights in one place affects every place on earth.

### **The Cosmopolitan Democracy and the actualization of Kantian cosmopolitanism**

There is an important bibliography which delves into the idea of democratizing governance institutions and empowering global citizenship in order to ensure justice and global peace, in times when it is urgent to expand democracy beyond the States. To do this, it is proposed that the international society actors be involved in a common political structure, according to a model of cosmopolitan democracy that benefits from the prevailing conditions of the current international context (Held, 1995: 174).

As we well know, with the creation of the United Nations it was laid the foundation of a supranational legal system based on the prohibition of war and the universal protection of human rights, which would overcome the system of interstate relations based solely on strength and that would lead to the tragic experiences of the wars that ravaged the world in the first half of the twentieth century. This new system was delineated from specific instruments, namely the UN Charter (1945), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the two Covenants on Civil, Political, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966).

The above instruments, which all together make up a world constitution embryo, determined the end of the era of absolute sovereignty of states in the external sphere, since the new international legal framework established by the UN Charter would serve to hold all States as *pactum subiectionis* and not just *associationis*, so that they would remain subjected to a common authority coated with coercive powers (Ferrajoli, 2011: 479; Bobbio, 1995: 28-29).

Albeit this *pactum* means an extraordinary progress by itself, unfortunately it has been thwarted by the lack of political will of the most powerful states to submit to the new legal framework, as well as by major transnational economic and financial powers which every day evade effective control of the global public sphere. Whereupon the development of global constitutionalism is imprisoned by the powers that precisely was meant to control, with the risk that this entails: setting up an uncivil international society characterized by a neo absolutist regression to the law of the strongest, dictated in this case by the most militarily powerful states and the major transnational economic groups (Ferrajoli, 2011: 484).

Against this background, the cosmopolitan democracy project seeks to expand democracy beyond states to develop a global public sphere that would put limits on those wild powers: we refer to the most powerful states, large economic powers that prey on weaker nations and transnational criminal networks operating with impunity. According to Ferrajoli the *formal democracy* currently faces a crisis in its political and civil dimension that involves the loss of sovereignty of States and the weakening of the correspondence between rulers and ruled, while the *substantial democracy* crisis, in its liberal and social dimension

implies the absence of boundaries to the new powers, which in the current context of globalization act without an adequate juridical frame (Ferrajoli, 2011: 485).

Therefore, cosmopolitan democracy in its *political dimension*, entails interpreting the cosmopolitan right as the right to liberty and equal form of government based on the deliberation and consent of the citizens (Held, 2012: 96). From this point of view, the actualization of the Kantian cosmopolitanism allow us to argue for a legal framework in which citizens could participate actively beyond the borders of their states, pursuant to the exercise of cosmopolitan law understood as the right to democratic public participation on common issues affecting the citizens of different political communities. In the *civil dimension*, it is proposed to restore the government's role in the public sphere, understanding public sphere as the scope of the functions and institutions for the protection of the general interests such as peace, security and fundamental rights (Ferrajoli, 2011: 516). The *liberal dimension* of cosmopolitan democracy proposes legal recognition of universal citizenship, which implies the transformation of the political rights of citizenship into residency rights and the recognition of the same fundamental rights to all human beings (Ferrajoli, 2011: 569), this means the legal formalization of the idea of belonging to the universal human community. In fact, the cosmopolitan law advocated by Immanuel Kant over two hundred years ago and updated in terms of this global context should admit that citizenship rights can no longer grant or deny privileges within a given territory. On the contrary, they would have to be incorporated as fundamental rights of individuals as human beings, which implies to enshrine as a subject of these rights, the global citizen or citizen without borders .

Regarding the *social dimension* it is proposed the urgent reform of those institutions of government of the United Nations dealing with fixing the economic, financial and trade on a global scale, such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank Group and the World Trade Organization, to act on the original meaning for which they were created: moving towards economic development of poor countries and employment growth. Moreover, it would have to strengthen the functioning of institutions that do not have sufficient resources to act effectively like the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO). Finally, provides for the creation of new institutions in health, provisioning water and prevention of natural calamities and disasters (Ferrajoli, 2011: 573).

Thinking about democracy in times of globalization and crisis of the nation state, means to put democracy in a historical moment of transition of the world order. The mirror of the state crisis and globalization brings back the image of a world pierced by hunger, poverty, dubious humanitarian interventions, endless war on terror...the fact is that in this time of uncertainty we should seek and deepen on alternative ideas that can ensure the transition to a more peaceful and just world. The democracy project we advocate in this article set the general guidelines of an organizational model that involves all actors in international society, which we now recognize endowed with a truly cosmopolitan character when it legally admits the existence of a universal *demos*, so each citizen carries inalienable rights as a citizen of the world. This political model should not be confused with a world government, that assumes the existence of a government body acting with universal executive powers. On the contrary, the cosmopolitan democracy favors the maximum possible government of local communities and the appropriate democratic representation of the citizens in governance institutions at multiple levels .

For Thomas Hobbes, the state was the way to get out of the state of nature and to establish civil peace: the logical consequence of this reasoning will provide the Leviathan (the nation state) of the greatest possible power to ensure its survival, against the stalking of the other Leviathans, always threatening in the field of the anarchic international society.

Because that is the place where would continue prevailing the state of nature, that idea of *homo homini lupus...*

Unlike those authors who defend the idea of a world state with well-defined governance institutions (Marchetti, 2012: 40), we believe that foster a government of such features would nullify any claim to ensure the transition to a more peaceful and just world order. Instead, the global federation model that promotes cosmopolitan democracy project involves a network of federated arrangements with adequate separation and division of powers at its different levels. Moreover, there is no admission for supreme powers because federal institutions would only retain the strictly necessary functions of government and guarantee, with forms of parliamentary government (instead of presidential) and collegiate governing bodies (instead of mono-cratic).

Therefore, this model is completely different from the pyramidal federation model that distinguishes federal states, so it would bring more democracy within states, but fundamentally more democracy beyond states. Otherwise, how could be possible to ensure justice, understood in terms of the right to speak freely for all citizens? Besides, this figure could resolve the so called *circulus vitiosus*, term used by Norberto Bobbio to describe the necessary conditions to realize a global democracy (Bobbio, 1995: 39).

It is true that the process towards a fully democratic world society is full of obstacles: the political will of the powers that comprise the aristocratic Security Council of the UN, along with the interests of large economic groups emerge as some of the more difficult pitfalls to overcome. But we are not pessimistic, however, we assume long-term realism grounded in our belief that we can choose new ways for making peace (s), giving us the legitimacy to ask for making things differently (Martínez Guzmán, 2009: 279). The global context of the twenty-first century determines a level of interconnection as never before experienced by humankind, this provides the conditions to assume the legitimate right to ask each other for making things in a different way: in our approach this would result in the aspiration to organize the world society in accordance with the principles of cosmopolitanism .

### **Education for making peace(s) in our diverse world**

There are not a few objections to the feasibility of the cosmopolitan democracy project, which seeks to democratize the governance institutions and involves the creation of a truly global public sphere that can give curb to the great powers who act in a world of globalization without rules. Danilo Zolo, one of the harshest critics of this project, believes that cosmopolitan democracy is part of a legal globalism which attempts to impose a hegemony of Western values that masks the wars and atrocities that have been perpetrated in recent years on behalf of the human rights and democracy. Based on the arguments of the *political realism* that has dominated the study of international relations since the mid-twentieth century, he considers illusory to think that law can act on the underlying reasons of our aggressive human nature and can be capable of ensuring peace and security globally (Zolo, 2002: 200-201).

In response to this criticism of Zolo, in the sense that the law is ineffective to regulate conflicts, it comes to our mind the struggle of civil movements which led to the recognition of many rights through history, thanks to which it was possible to cap many abuses of power: the limited-hour workdays (against working without time limit), the female vote (against the ban on women's vote), the right to public education (versus restricted access to education for the wealthier classes). Each of these rights was the result of conquests that were born as social conflicts, all of them now corrected and regulated by the rule of law. So why not to ask for the democratic organization of the political affairs and the global economy in order to respond to our demand for a more peaceful and just world?

Beyond any legal arguments, we believe it is essential to implement a peace education that allows us to subvert our understanding of what we call "real". Those who call themselves realists defend a notion of human beings violent by nature, where the *animus dominandi* governing our conduct is an unchangeable truth (Morgenthau, 1986: 11-12). However, we believe that *the real* is that the human condition involves a number of skills that we have to make us things in different ways (Martínez Guzmán, 2009: 247). This perspective allows us to argue for new ways of organizing, new ways to regulate our society. We can not accept the march of global affairs just as they are because certain scholars or schools of thought justify that there is nothing we can do to change human nature, based on supposed objective laws. Not by chance those schools and theories come from the same power centers that refuse to be controlled, a curious coincidence!

From our point of view, we believe that those determinisms rooted in allegedly objective laws only serve to encapsulate our infinite human capacity to make things differently, we mean the possibility to conduct our lives respecting and enforcing fundamental rights. The eminent scientist and humanist Rita Levi-Montalcini, asserted that human behavior is not genetic but epigenetic and she gave education an unavoidable role in the task of rooting out violence and hatred (Levi-Montalcini, 2009). Therefore, based on the premise that education means ways of behaving (Martínez Guzmán, 2005: 100) it is possible to think of an education that subvert the realism and promotes harmony in the context of new forms of political organization regulated by the law instead of violence or force. We understand that within this period of transition that experiments the international society in which we live today, this means promoting a cosmopolitan order endowed with democratic institutions, in order to allow the full participation of citizens, within and beyond the States.

Within the multicultural societies in which we live, where it is verified a mixture of peoples and cultures that do not recognize pause, the fact to take on the challenge of educating as a means to forge new ways of behaving also supposes nurturing with strong philosophical fundamentals the basis for an education for conviviality. The idea of cosmopolitanism understood as our belonging to the entire world, not only is an important part of the traditional rationalism cultivated by the Greek philosophers, also is present in the universal messages transmitted by other traditions, Western (Judaism, Christianity) and not Western (Buddhism, Confucianism, Hinduism). For example, in Buddhist cosmology there is a wonderful parable that explains the intimate interdependence and reciprocity of all living beings and phenomena of the universe, it is the story of the net of Indra—a Buddhist deity representing the protective and nurturing forces of life—, at each node of the net that hangs over the palace of Indra, there is a brilliant precious gem that contains and reflects the brightness of the other jewels that hold the net, as a whole they all exhibit a beam of magnificent beauty and splendor: the infinite connection that constitutes the weft of life itself (Ikeda, 1999: 83).

From the conceptual framework that allows us to incorporate other knowledge to rebuild our capacity to make peace(s) through education, we can appreciate the value of this beautiful parable in all its expression. It encourages us to cultivate the kind of wisdom that allows us to appreciate the infinite connections that sustain our own existence and that each of us also help to sustain. Thus, we may be able to feel the pain and suffering of those who are even far from us, as if they were our own.

Danilo Zolo criticizes any reference to the moral or spiritual unity of the human race, because he finds those ideas lacking of any practical value (Zolo, 2002: 24-25) and notes that any attempt to apply universal rules appealing to cosmopolitanism would be almost a Western imposition covered under the form of juridical globalism. Furthermore, he identifies the normative body inherited by Kant and other authors of the legal pacifism within the Jewish and Christian tradition (Zolo, 2002: 217).

Nevertheless and beyond any relevant reply that can be done from the legal field, here we wish to emphasize that the famous philosopher of Königsberg never travelled through the world nor had the opportunity to cross long distances. Even so, and although he followed the Christian religious tradition —Kant was pietistic—, his own intuitive understanding perhaps led him to feel that kind of deep empathy with the cosmos —the weft of the net of Indra—, necessary to defend the right to hospitality, the right to speak freely, promoting this way the union of mankind for the sake of peace. We do believe that it has an inestimable practical value to update these principles and knowledges, many of them have been there for centuries as part of the *acquis* and the common cultural heritage of humankind and now, in the globalized and interconnected world we live in, we could apply them to nurture epistemologically an education that promotes the practice of making peace(s) and help us to recognize our intimate connection with the diverse world. This way we will be able to build the foundations of a true cosmopolitan democracy.

### Conclusions

We know the Cynic philosophers and then the Stoics were the first to preach the cosmopolitanism in ancient Greece, at a time of profound social and political crisis. In our day, we also live in the midst of a deep crisis where the political structures that organize our life in society are undergoing a marked capsizing, the crisis of the nation state seems to be accentuated through the passage of globalization, a process that from the end of the Cold War does not recognize pause. Between the crisis of the nation state and the rise of governance institutions, ordinary citizens are becoming more connected to the world, but it seems every time we have less impact on what happens on it. In any case we have less ability to decide democratically our future compared with the wild powers that grow at pace of globalization.

Cosmopolitanism, as in ancient Greece, allows to insert ourselves conceptually within an unavoidable reality: our unity as human community. Before this reality, the possibility of recovering the illustrious indicators offered to us by Immanuel Kant would let outline the adequate political organization of the society in which we live, increasingly interconnected, increasingly cosmopolitan.

The development of democracy beyond the States through the actualization of cosmopolitan law, would let the appropriate political organization of the international society, so the current transitional process can lead to a world order where our right to peace and to live with dignity prevail over any other consideration. Here is the conceptual relevance of cosmopolitanism, an idea as ancient as contemporary.

Following the arguments of the *political realism* that has dominated the study of international relations since the mid-twentieth century, Danilo Zolo considers illusory that law can ensure peace and security worldwide. However, the evolution of the rule of law has made valuable contributions to the realization of peace as well as the promotion of human coexistence. Law will probably never be able to modify aggressiveness, but it can regulate our behavior, and to regulate normatively the action of the international society actors means start to build civility beyond States in defense of the weak, those men and women oppressed by the real powers that resist any control.

Beyond any legal consideration, what is proposed here is to subvert the realism appealing to an education that allows us to recognize our plurality of characteristics and skills to make things in a different way. What we just need is to organize our lives in another form, not only applying the law as a way of regulating our relationships but also empowering us through the discovering and putting into action of our innate capacities to make peace(s).

As a corollary, promote a peace education that can draw on the knowledge that pertains to the common cultural heritage of humankind would allow us to recognize our sense of

belonging and responsibility to the world that surrounds us, encouraging each of us as world citizens to build the foundations of a true cosmopolitan democracy and world peace.

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