LIVING WITH DIFFERENCE: COSMOPOLITANISM, MODERNITY, AND POLITICAL COMMUNITY

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Introduction In a recent trip to Munich, US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld was asked whether the United States is bound by international rules or legal framework. He answered “I honestly believe that every country ought to do what it wants to do … It either is proud of itself afterwards, or it is less proud of itself.”

Rumsfeld’s statement indicates that relations among states are far from being based on a sense of community governed by accepted rules. Despite the current climate in international politics, cosmopolitanism has nevertheless generated lively debate in various social science disciplines over the last decade. It may seem ironic that there would be growing interest in cosmopolitanism at the very time that the only superpower is rewriting the rules of international politics unilaterally, but we need to read this lively debate as a promising sign indicating a refusal to accept that relations among states be defined as merely based on complete anarchy and power politics.

Neither the debate on cosmopolitanism nor the dilemma it poses — whether one’s allegiance to humanity should override one’s loyalty to one’s immediate community — is anything new. Nussbaum defines the cosmopolitan act as follows: “We should recognize humanity wherever it occurs, and give its fundamental ingredients, reason and moral capacity, our first allegiance and respect.”

Nussbaum, like many cosmopolitans before her, points out that the essence of cosmopolitanism is to go beyond one’s own immediate community and give allegiance to humanity. In fact, leaving one’s own house to meet with others has been one of the fundamental premises of cosmopolitan thinking, not only in modern times, but since
the time of the Stoics in ancient Greece. The sense of being without cultural attachment that persists in cosmopolitan thought seems unacceptable to many who believe that living in the world, making sense of it, and understanding oneself is embedded in one’s own cultural framework.³

This article starts with the belief that cosmopolitan thinking could provide people with new ways of relating to others and imagining new solutions to complex problems emerging from globalization processes. It also proceeds with the caveat that cosmopolitan thinking has a long history of being associated with imperialism; this association is not accidental, but finds its roots in Enlightenment thought. In this context, the Kantian framework of universality, and its tremendous impact on the way cosmopolitan thinking has been imagined in modern thought, is particularly important. While Kant himself was a self-declared cosmopolitan, his assessment of other cultures was full of prejudices. Kant’s contradictory attitude towards cosmopolitanism is a good starting point for addressing some problems associated with cosmopolitan thinking because Kantian universality still influences recent cosmopolitan theorizing. This, of course, does not mean that we should abandon the cosmopolitan ideal altogether. After all, cosmopolitanism in essence means to be open to otherness, to accept difference, and to live with plurality. However, we should critically reflect on the cosmopolitan ideal in order to strip it from its problematic past.

Following Nussbaum, I argue that leaving one’s own house to meet with others, and acknowledging that when one leaves the house one may become someone else in the process, is fundamental to the cosmopolitan act. Put differently, cosmopolitanism does not necessarily mean becoming rootless or denying one’s own cultural belonging, but rather is to be constantly aware that there is nothing innate in cultural belonging and to be open to the idea that one’s sense of culture and belonging can be transformed in the process of meeting with others. Even though the very notion of leaving one’s own house is a central tenet of the cosmopolitan act, the historical record shows that this is far from being realized. Instead, cosmopolitan thinking has often been associated with abstract universality in which all cultural differences are dissolved into a unified whole. While cosmopolitanism has the potential to facilitate moving beyond one’s cultural framework
to meet with others, this desire to find a single common medium by which
differences would be resolved constitutes cosmopolitan thinking’s central
problematic. The challenge becomes how to rethink the cosmopolitan act
in a globalized world where distances are short and encounters with other-
ness are a daily reality. As a result, realizing the potential of cosmopolitan
thinking in present times rests on willingness to accept that the cosmopolitan
act should not be about erasing differences, but about finding ways to live
with them.

In this paper, I argue that reimagining cosmopolitan thinking to empha-
size the idea of living with difference can be realized on three levels. First,
cosmopolitanism should not be a form of cultural imposition, but should be
identified with democratic governance and pluralism on a global level. Second,
cosmopolitanism should lead to new forms of relationships between univer-
sality and particularity in which moral universalism and cultural relativism
are not acceptable options. Finally, in order to realize this new relationship
between universality and particularity, cosmopolitanism should be imagined
and read within the context of margins, local experiences, and cultures.

The first section of the paper concentrates on the growing literature on
institutional cosmopolitanism to discuss some existing problems related to
the three principles mentioned above. I will then argue that strict adher-
ence to the Kantian universal framework in the current literature runs the
risk of producing another universal discourse that situates itself against
particular experiences of local cultures. The final section of the paper discusses
how rethinking cosmopolitanism from the margins would help to overcome
some of the problems associated with the current literature.

**Institutional Cosmopolitanism: Cosmopolitanism without Agency**
Recent theorizing on cosmopolitanism aims to respond to neoliberal global-
ization and attempts to propose a framework in which market forces are
regulated on a global level and where there is a rule-based order to which
states adhere. Some have even suggested that cosmopolitanism is a “new
politics of the left, embodying middle-path alternatives between ethnocen-
tric nationalism and particularistic multiculturalism.” The horrors of
Rwanda and former Yugoslavia certainly created an urgency to find a middle
way between universalistic nationalism and particularistic identity positions, and cosmopolitan thinking encourages us to rethink how sameness and difference is dealt with in a highly complex globalized world.\(^5\) In a series of well articulated books and articles, Held and Archibugi have been defining the blueprint for a world polity that needs to be reimagined outside the scope of state sovereignty.\(^6\) Central to these and other works explaining the “cosmopolitan condition” is the need to redefine world politics that cannot be managed by states alone. Held argues that, as a result of the growing number of complex global issues such as regulation of trade, poverty, and the environment, we can no longer sustain the assumption that nations can control their own destinies alone. He then asserts that, as a result, we either leave our destiny at the hands of the market or try to create new forms of democracy, regulation, and accountability to subject global forces to effective political control.\(^7\)

Held’s explanation of why we need to reorder world politics answers the question of why the existing international system, based on state sovereignty, is no longer adequate for dealing with the challenges of globalization. Rather, complex interdependency arising from globalization requires a multi-layered form of governance in which states constitute only one level. Thus, cosmopolitanism constitutes both a critical reflection of the new state of world affairs in which traditional forms of politics are no longer adequate and a political project that aims to turn this critical reflection into coherent political action. Proponents of cosmopolitan theory remind us that we need to reimagine a political community that is not bounded by borders, one that would include all human beings as its members and adopt democracy as a cosmopolitan ideal implemented on a global level.\(^8\)

This cosmopolitan democratic ideal requires a paradigm shift in international relations and should base itself not on international law, but on cosmopolitan law that “would guarantee the fundamental rights of every individual human being whether or not such rights were respected by their ‘own’ nation-states.”\(^9\) This shift entails removing nation-states from their privileged status in international politics and extends the concept of sovereignty to individuals who would be the legitimate agents of the international domain.\(^10\) Laying the groundwork for democratic global order is one of the
principal objectives of cosmopolitan theorizing. However, it is important to scrutinize the basic assumptions of institutional cosmopolitanism to assess whether this articulation of cosmopolitan order would lead to greater democratization and plurality on a global level. The central question here involves the nature of political community in the cosmopolitan order, how this community comes into being, and how it is organized.

Immanuel Kant was one of the first modern cosmopolitans who recognized the dilemma of establishing a cosmopolitan political community in a world in which states jealously guard their sovereignty. Even though he remarked that a world republic would provide a much needed peace among nations, the most realistic alternative would be a “peaceable federation” among independent republican states. While Kant’s pragmatism is obvious in his acknowledgement of the role of states in a cosmopolitan order, he is also specific about the kind of states that are legitimate participants in such a cosmopolitan community. Liberal democratic republics would converge around an institutional framework that is supported by cosmopolitan law. In this respect, his cosmopolitan community was not supposed to be a replica of nation-states on a global level, but rather a loosely formed federation of liberal democratic republics. However, only liberal democratic republics could be meaningful participants in the cosmopolitan order because they not only respected the individual autonomy and rights of their nationals, but also had the natural tendency to enter into peaceful coexistence with others. According to Kant, this federation of states would form a cosmopolitan community, not on the basis of cultural affinity, shared history, or even common moral principles, but on the basis of adherence to the cosmopolitan law.

In Kant’s formulation, cosmopolitan law clearly differs from international law because the latter is oriented towards protecting rights and relations among states while the former aims to protect the rights of individuals as world citizens. Kant tries to reconcile the rights of individuals with the rights of states by emphasizing that cosmopolitan law “would guarantee the fundamental rights of every individual human being whether or not such rights were respected by their ‘own’ nation-states.” Hence, while keeping the basic tenets of international law and respecting the state’s role in inter-
national politics, Kant establishes a new legal layer that supersedes international law by making individual rights the principal focus of cosmopolitan order. As opposed to the thick and embedded nature of national communities, Kantian cosmopolitan community is based on the moral principle of universal human dignity and rights associated with it. The Kantian compromise between state sovereignty and individual rights may seem workable because the cosmopolitan political community neither aspires to be culturally homogeneous nor tries to manifest itself in a world republic. Instead, it acknowledges the autonomous nature of human societies and their right to govern themselves as long as they agree to observe the basic moral principle of universal human dignity. This Kantian framework finds strong resonance in recent literature on institutional cosmopolitanism.

Similar to Kant, Held is also clear that the basis of cosmopolitan democratic society would not be cultural homogeneity or the disappearance of nation-states, but “democratic public law” upheld by nation-states both within and outside the boundaries of nation-states. It is obvious that cosmopolitan public law, with individual human rights at its centre, would constitute the unitary core of the cosmopolitan order. As the unitary core, cosmopolitan law is believed to be universal and applicable to any situation despite cultural differences. If cosmopolitan law is to be the unitary core of the cosmopolitan order, what would make it universal beyond existing cultural differences? Habermas draws attention to Kant’s explanation of cosmopolitan law as a social contract among states. Similar to a Hobbesian state of nature, the realm of international relations is a site of individual freedom in which participants exercise their natural right to achieve whatever is desirable for them. Again similar to Hobbes, Kant also observes that this state of nature with unlimited individual freedom is unstable and prone to endless conflict, which in turn destroys its participants. Participants in this state of nature eventually trade their ultimate freedom for a legally sanctioned order in which individuals have the legal guarantee of freedom and are prohibited from destroying one another to further their own interests.

Habermas bases the logic of cosmopolitanism on Kant’s reconstruction of the Hobbesian social universe: first of all, states would enter into a social contract not because they have a moral obligation or normative belief in a
cosmopolitan world order, but because entering into such a contract is clearly in their interest. Again similar to the Hobbesian universe, the basis of cosmopolitan order would not be a strong desire to form a community or to live with others, but would be informed by a strong desire to protect the state’s own well-being and survival. Immediately following this is that the desire to enter into a contract to secure the safety and well-being of states, which would in turn provide world peace, is driven by the use of reason. Especially, in Kant’s framework, it is only logical for democratic republics to enter into this contract, leaving the anarchical state of nature behind and extending the legally guaranteed individual freedom to the international realm. Kant’s reliance on reason as the basis of cosmopolitan order allows cosmopolitan law to avoid conflict with the particularistic cultures of nation-states. Nation-states may have their individual cultures and particular legal frameworks, but reason would rise above those particularities and provide the universal framework upon which the rule-based cosmopolitan order can be constructed. There is, in fact, a very strong teleological promise in Kant’s cosmopolitan ideal in that reason appears to be free from cultural elements and not locally produced, but part of the predetermined and natural destiny of the human mind.

Even though the recent discussion on institutional cosmopolitanism does not say much about the constitutive logic of cosmopolitanism and concentrates on how the international order can be reorganized to utilize cosmopolitan law, the role of reason as the inevitable engine of the cosmopolitan order is implicit. Habermas points out that, within the cosmopolitan global order, human rights violations would be punishable not because of a moral point of view but because of an internationally sanctioned judicial order.\textsuperscript{15} In an attempt to strip the cosmopolitan order from moral controversies, Habermas portrays it as a legal order and a procedural framework free from moral and cultural particularism. Yet, we are still left with the question of what guides and what constitutes the basis of this legal-procedural order. I would argue that the cosmopolitan order that is based on an institutional and legal-procedural framework derived from Kantian rationality will neither help to save this cosmopolitan ideal from its problematic past, nor allow for a pluralistic and democratic global order.
The real question here is not whether we need a rule-based cosmopolitan order that would protect the dignity and rights of individuals despite the particular legal frameworks of their respective nation-states. The problem, rather, is how such an order and its unifying medium would be acceptable to nation-states. Furthermore, the cosmopolitan order based on Kantian rationality poses two fundamental problems in terms of imagining a cosmopolitan political community: an immediate hierarchy between those nation-states that conform to the dominant logic of cosmopolitan order and those that do not, and failure to deal with the manifestation and acceptance of differences as part of the cosmopolitan ideal.

The first problem presents the risk of turning cosmopolitan political community into a hegemonic system in which several powerful states would define the boundaries and content of such a cosmopolitan order. The Kantian cosmopolitan order is not a pluralistic order and would ultimately reproduce marginality and otherness, defined according to who is part of the accepted norms of the cosmopolitan rationality and who is not. Proponents of institutional cosmopolitanism do not appear to be flexible in terms of negotiating the boundaries of the cosmopolitan community. While the cosmopolitan order is said to be defined by democracy and individual rights, the very application of those ideals without participation and negotiation of all members of the cosmopolitan community would simply reproduce the civilized/uncivilized divide in which some would need to be civilized and brought up to the level of cosmopolitan rationality. It would be unfair to suggest that this is what institutional cosmopolitanism advocates. In fact, both Held and Archibugi clearly state that the cosmopolitan democratic order would not be coercive, but rather that participation is voluntary and states would join at their own pace.16

Yet, the fact that cosmopolitan order is voluntary does not resolve the fundamental question of who defines it. States are free to join the cosmopolitan order at their choosing, but they are not free to participate in deciding how the cosmopolitan order is to be defined. Furthermore, what would happen to states that are not part of the cosmopolitan community and violate its core principles of human rights? Some already suggest that it should be the duty of Western democratic states to intervene in such cases.
and protect individuals from their oppressive governments. Therefore, in cases where there are genocidal regimes and clear violations of human rights, voluntary participation does not apply. It is hard to argue against the need to protect human dignity and rights. Yet, this compelling argument should not prevent us from identifying fundamental weaknesses of institutional cosmopolitanism.

What makes such a compelling argument so highly problematic and potentially hegemonic is the lack of attention to plurality within the assumed cosmopolitan community. In other words, we are faced with a paradox: democratic cosmopolitan order is built on a highly undemocratic cosmopolitan society in which the legal-procedural and institutional framework is already decided by powerful states; others have the option of joining this community, but do not have the opportunity to intervene, change, or negotiate the very principles of the cosmopolitan order. If we are going to celebrate the humanitarian intervention in Bosnia and Kosovo as signs of an emerging cosmopolitan order, do we also celebrate the invasion of Iraq as another indication of this same cosmopolitan order? Lack of democratic participation makes the line between the idealistic voice of institutional cosmopolitanism and the employment of cosmopolitan ideals for imperialistic reasons dangerously thin.

Before 11 September 2001, prospects for cosmopolitan thinking looked positive. There were strong signs that emerging global civil society was creating new political realities that would challenge the privileged position of states in international relations and connect individuals around issues that bypassed national affiliations and solidarities. Not only was the antiglobalization movement able to cut across national lines and connect diverse groups around issues related to individual lives, but it was also able to raise consciousness about how global flows connect human lives and affect groups and communities beyond their immediate borders. Furthermore, nation-states were indicating that they were ready to share their jealously guarded sovereignty with other players, such as international institutions or global civil society groups. The Westphalian international system privileged the sanctity of state borders in such a way that even if a state
committed the most heinous crimes against its own people, that state was considered to be a non-intervention zone by other states.

All of this started to change with the horrors of the Rwandan, Bosnian, and Kosovar crises. These circumstances validated the cosmopolitan argument that such situations cannot be tolerated by hiding behind the accepted norms of the international system and the inviolability of state sovereignty. Some, for example, argued that NATO’s intervention in Kosovo was the sign of a coming cosmopolitan order in which the integrity of human life would come before the cherished principle of state sovereignty. Others suggested that Western democratic nations have the necessary resources and “culture” to support and lead the new cosmopolitan order. It was even argued that “new wars” would be waged to protect human rights and it would be justified to violate state sovereignty in order to rescue individuals from their own governments. That the new cosmopolitan order should be based on Western democratic institutions and culture not only reinforces the civilizational divide, but also establishes categories and hierarchies according to which human societies are judged and deemed worthy of participating in the cosmopolitan order. This portrayal of the cosmopolitan order not only uncritically accepts the civilizational approach, but reverts back to the national model of international politics by assuming that there are “civilized” and “democratic” states that are the leading forces of the cosmopolitan order and others that need to be saved, disciplined, and possibly punished. Who would want to argue against saving Bosnians and Kosovars from ethnic cleansing and bringing to justice those who are responsible for such barbaric acts?

If the apparent Western orientation of the cosmopolitan order was problematic from the beginning, the whole matter of how a cosmopolitan order should be defined and implemented has become that much more complicated after the US-led wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Whatever the real reasons, the US administration used the discourse of achieving peaceful international order and helping people living under tyranny as the basis of their onslaught in Afghanistan and Iraq. The Bush administration repeatedly reminded critics of the war on Iraq that the war removed a brutal dictator from power and brought Iraqi people much deserved freedom.
would not suggest that proponents of cosmopolitan theory and the Bush administration share the same world view. In fact, the cosmopolitan theorists are clear that their main preoccupation is to imagine a world order in which no single power can wage wars to pursue and further its own interests. Nevertheless, there is something deeply disturbing in the fact that some arguments in support of a cosmopolitan world order can find such rhetorical presence in the Bush administration, which is highly adversarial and fails to share anything remotely cosmopolitan. Nor is it sufficient to point out that the Bush administration’s use of humanitarian language is nothing but shameless opportunism. If the cosmopolitan order, as suggested by some supporters of institutional cosmopolitanism, is to be defined by Western democracies while others are integrated into such an order without choice, how would we evaluate the Bush administration’s intent (and policies) to establish democracy and freedom in the Middle East? We face a real possibility that George Bush and his foreign policy advisers are accidental cosmopolitans. I believe that the post-11 September world has made some of the problematic aspects of the recent cosmopolitan arguments more visible. I also believe that the disturbing similarity between the Bush administration’s banal humanitarian arguments and some recent cosmopolitan theorizing is not accidental, but rooted in the theory’s emphasis on the need to create a world order in which the institutions and moral framework of participants converge around the same universal values.

This lack of democratic engagement in the cosmopolitan order is also related to the second problem mentioned earlier: the failure to acknowledge difference and multiplicity as part of the cosmopolitan ideal. The crucial question to ask is whether a cosmopolitan order based on Kantian ideals is well equipped to provide a form of cosmopolitanism that is open to difference and comfortable living with conflicting and competing value systems. I have argued that the Kantian cosmopolitan universe is not a democratic cosmopolitan political community because of its strict adherence to reason as the unifying principle of the cosmopolitan order. I would also argue that the failure to deal and live with difference is another aspect of the Kantian universe that seriously curtails the possibility of achieving a truly cosmopolitan order.
Universality and Particularity in the Cosmopolitan Order  Difference and multiplicity have always been problematic aspects of cosmopolitan thinking because the cosmopolitan ideal invests a great deal of energy in finding a common medium that would allow individuals to go beyond their particularistic attachments. In other words, reconciling the need to allow differences, whether national, ethnic, cultural, or religious, to manifest themselves with the need to unite individuals around a common framework has never been an easy task. The history of cosmopolitan thinking has not shown much progress on this issue. As a result, there emerges a sharp dichotomy between the universal and the particular which cannot be resolved and eventually results in the representation of differences among human beings as detrimental to the achievement of the cosmopolitan ideal. Even though the idea of leaving one’s own home to find greater hospitality in a larger humanity represents a noble ideal, in reality finding a common home where everyone feels at home has never been easy. Instead, many have left home only to find themselves in someone else’s home that has not always been hospitable.

The Stoics, for instance, believed that reason would be the common ground where everyone would feel at home despite cultural and ethnic differences. Even though we are divided by religious, ethnic, and cultural differences, reason would allow us to go beyond those differences and discover what is common in all of us. The same belief in reason provided Enlightenment thinking with the teleological idea that humanity would finally leave divisions behind and unite around the common purpose. Sooner or later, all humanity would discover the enlightening voice of reason, a natural faculty that exists in each and every human being. The historical record, however, tells us that the unifying voice of reason has not always been so charitable to those who were not quick to discover its promise. After all, this unifying voice of reason developed its civilizing mission with a history of colonialism replete with attempts to civilize those who were not capable of using their reason, declaring them incapable of governing themselves, and governing them on their behalf until they reached the level of maturity to use their own reason.
Some may argue that it is too far-fetched and unfair to link colonialism with the cosmopolitan ideal. It is true that Kant was a vocal critic of colonialism and argued that “a right to visit is not a right to conquer or a right to settle.” Yet, Harvey calls our attention to Kant’s little known geographical writings in which he engages in an extensive discussion about different human societies. In it, Kant remarks that “humanity achieves its greatest perfection with the white race” and “the yellow Indians have somewhat less talent. The negroes are much inferior and some of the peoples of the Americas are well below them.” He also mentions that inhabitants of hot climates are lazy and, surprisingly enough, his geographical writings go into great detail about distant lands and people, and he does not have any positive remarks for them. Furthermore, Kant also says that “colonization may sometimes be justified in terms of ‘bringing culture to uncivilized peoples’ and purging the home country of ‘depraved characters.’” In his approach to other cultures and peoples, Kant does not sound like a real cosmopolitan. How should we explain this apparent contradiction in Kant’s thinking? On one hand, we have a cosmopolitan thinker who condemns colonialism, calls for universal hospitality, and advocates world peace, while on the other hand he establishes clear hierarchies among human societies and accepts colonization if it brings civilization to uncivilized people.

I would argue that this contradiction is not simply a blind spot but indicates a fatal shortcoming in Kant’s cosmopolitan thinking. The privileged and ahistorical as well as disembedded articulation of reason as the engine of human progress in Kant’s theorizing in particular, and in Enlightenment thought in general, has a devastating impact on the understanding of difference and marginality. Again, this rather ahistorical and teleological representation of reason has resulted in a universal/particular dichotomy in which the relationship between the universal and the particular is nothing but conflictual. The natural outcome of this uncompromising position is that difference and marginality go against the natural development of human progress and therefore need to be controlled, governed, and assimilated. This is why Kant was a cosmopolitan who did not want to leave his house to meet with others. Instead, his cosmopolitanism invited others to join his home, which was the universal meeting point, and involves the
illusion that his particular home would be the home for all humanity. I believe this conception of cosmopolitanism is not a true cosmopolitanism. Moreover, it is extremely dangerous to imagine a cosmopolitan order based on Kantian principles in a global world in which there is not only increased awareness of difference, but also intense and immediate interaction between human societies. Diminished distance among human societies, close contact between different cultures, and constant interaction with others requires a new way of imagining the relationship between universality and particularity in which moral universalism and cultural particularism are not real options.

**Cosmopolitanism and Local Forms of Modernity** So far, I have reflected on recent discussions of cosmopolitanism and some problems associated with them. The final section of this paper will concentrate on possible ways of rethinking cosmopolitanism to allow for a greater manifestation of plurality and difference, both within nation-states and on a global level. Before anything, cosmopolitanism should be an attitude that requires an acceptance of otherness, living with it, and being open to the possibility of being transformed with it. It is an act of leaving one’s own house to meet with others in possible places that cannot be predetermined. This is why cosmopolitan theorizing needs to reflect on the traditional dichotomy between the universal and the particular, where the particular is represented as marginal and difference is treated as a deviation. Therefore, living and interacting with difference should be an integral part of any cosmopolitan ideal that tries to find common ways of imagining a cosmopolitan society. The current phase of globalization with its attendant risks and hazards presents opportunities to reimagine the relationship between the universal and the particular in cosmopolitan thinking.

One outcome of the current phase of globalization is the localization of modernity and the emergence of multiple modernities. Cosmopolitan thinking, whether in the Enlightenment ideal, modernization theory, or, more recently, in neoliberal globalization, has operated on the assumption that modernity is a unidimensional process that can be (or should be) produced in different locales and cultures. Very often, “modernity” was used interchangeably with “Westernization,” implying that the modern experi-
ence was alien to places and cultures outside the West. This is why the implementation of modernity in non-Western locales has been a tension-ridden process, always identified with antagonism, placing itself against local cultures and traditions. This ahistorical representation of modernity and its articulation in non-Western places constantly reproduces a logic of marginalization based on the fact that indigenous economic, cultural, and political formations are believed to be in constant and unresolvable conflict with modern ways of being. The complex and multidimensional relationship between global and local forces has significantly altered the representation of modernity as an external force. Instead, modernity in its political, cultural, and economic forms is reproduced in distant locales on a daily basis. The circulation of goods, constant innovation of new technologies, increased connectivity among human societies, ease of travel, different forms of mobility, and reorganization and linking of distant territories to meet the demands of flexible capital have not produced the global nirvana promised by advocates of neoliberal globalization. Instead, along with new inequalities and redistributive problems as well as disorganized and uneven global governance, it fragmented the representation of modernity as a unidimensional and completely Western phenomenon and has opened up new possibilities of modern interpretation in each and every locale.

This new condition of modernity may not necessarily indicate a pluralistic social order, nor does it imply that the outcome of every local articulation of modernity leads to a better distributive mechanism that would remedy some of the excesses of the current globalization process. Yet, it reminds us that the condition of universality and particularity is now radically different in that the idea of modernity as a unique Western phenomenon no longer applies. This new condition of modernity provides new possibilities for imagining cosmopolitanism as open to difference and multiplicity.

As a result of constant interaction between human societies, mobility of people, and shrinking distances caused by circulation of information and rapid travel, modern forms of life are no longer foreign and distant but local and present. Furthermore, economic and cultural globalization introduces new actors and conditions to local political structures, while local actors constantly interpret and subvert global forces to imagine new political strate-
gies and forms of social coexistence.\textsuperscript{27} This appropriation of modern forms by local actors is not new and has been an integral part of modern experience in non-Western geographies.\textsuperscript{28} However, what is new is that modern experience, whether cultural, economic, or political, is no longer accepted as given, as something that is absorbed and internalized by local actors. Instead, local groups and actors actively engage with the modern experience introduced by various global forces, interact with it, interpret it, and rework it according to their own objectives.

In Turkey, for example, Islamist groups engage with modernity on various levels, such as lifestyle and capital accumulation, and rather than rejecting modernity outright, they create their own version of it.\textsuperscript{29} In Latin America and Asia, a similar trend can be seen in urban centres where the local and global are in constant interaction.\textsuperscript{30} In each case, the outcome is not the traditional antagonism between the modern and traditional, universal and particular, or a rejection of the universal or its complete acceptance, but an intervention by the particular in the content of the universal forcing it to adopt local conditions. For example, people who adopt an Islamist lifestyle in Turkey have special vacation spots catering to their needs. These vacation spots have all the amenities and luxuries of five-star hotels, while excluding alcohol and providing separate beaches for men and women. This demonstrates selective modernization, an appropriation of modern lifestyle while rejecting parts that do not conform with an Islamist lifestyle. Similarly, some of the same key concepts of institutional cosmopolitanism, such as individual autonomy and human rights, are part of the everyday language of Islamists, but not necessarily in the same way they are used in a Western liberal context. Head-scarved female university students in Turkey, for example, protest the ban on head scarves on campuses and other public places by using the language of human rights and human dignity, and even use international forums such as the European Court of Justice as part of their political campaign. However, their use of human rights and individual autonomy is not limited to the Western notion of an abstract individual, but instead is grounded in the situatedness of individuals in communities and value systems.

These examples of local modernity suggest that cosmopolitanism is experienced on a local level and the process of imagining a cosmopolitan ideal
should take these divergent examples and practices into consideration. Of course not every local articulation of modern experience leads to a cosmopolitan understanding; in fact, the same process may result in closure and inward orientation. Yet, the outcome of the relationship between global modernity and local experience is never predetermined. More importantly, the content of the relationship between global modern experiences and local cultures is the location from which a cosmopolitan ideal should be imagined. Mignolo suggests that cosmopolitanism should be reconceived from the perspective of coloniality because the experience of colonial discourse contains what Kant misses: the ability to read the cosmopolitan experience critically from outside. I would add that cosmopolitanism should also be read from the perspective of locality because locality is where the modern experience is lived, where individuals engage with others and develop forms of coexistence. Furthermore, the local appears to be the site where the impact of global modernity is fully felt and therefore contains the possibility of reading cosmopolitan experience from the outside. Advocates of neoliberal globalization suggest that global capital has the ability to connect locales and overcome differences among human beings; they try to convince us that travelling “businessmen” are the agents and writers of a new cosmopolitanism. Cosmopolitanism read from the margin, however, tells a different story. The experiences of a female worker in a maquiladora, a child worker in a textile factory, a farmer who has been pushed out of his/her field by a multinational company, a software engineer in an Indian high tech industrial park, or a downsized factory worker in upstate New York or Manchester enable us to see cosmopolitan experience from both inside and outside, to narrate a cosmopolitan experience that cannot be narrated by a cosmopolitan business class.

**Conclusion** In the previous section, I suggested that we should rethink cosmopolitanism within the context of the margins and local experiences of modernity. Such a form of cosmopolitanism would enable us to go beyond the strict and procedural universalism of institutional cosmopolitanism. But what does this alternative form of cosmopolitanism mean in the context of the existing international order? In addition, how do the cosmopolitan
experiences that emerge from the margins and multiple experiences of modernity inform existing debates on institutional cosmopolitanism? It seems that the current debate on institutional cosmopolitanism fails to address two important obstacles, thereby preventing cosmopolitanism from fulfilling its true ideal. The first obstacle is the hegemony of state action within the international order and the territorially bounded populations whose cultural borders are framed by national identities. The second is the top-down institutional regulation of international organizations to promote a cosmopolitan order, as suggested by the advocates of institutional cosmopolitanism.

The response to the first obstacle rests on the recent transformations that nation-states have undergone in the last couple of decades. There is now a greater demand for representation and recognition of identities long marginalized by the unitary voice of national narratives. In addition, there is also an increasing awareness that identity does not have to be singular and that one can have divided loyalties and conflicting senses of belonging. This is both bad and good news for the cosmopolitan ideal. It is bad news for the traditional cosmopolitan position in which the cosmopolitan individual is free from local attachments and appears to be rootless; rootless enough to be everywhere but belong nowhere. Yet, the multiplication of identity positions and divided subjectivities in multiple locations of modernity is good news for the cosmopolitan ideal because we do not have to choose between colourful and passionate particular identities and a rootless cosmopolitan subjectivity. If cosmopolitanism means leaving one’s own house to be with others, and accepting the possibility that leaving one’s own house means becoming someone else in the process, then multiple belongings and conflicting subjectivities provide the perfect background for such an embedded cosmopolitanism. In this form of cosmopolitanism, one’s sense of subjectivity is embedded within the social and cultural practices of the surrounding communities, yet without being totally fixed in an inhibiting rigidity that prevents one from engaging with others. To avoid misunderstanding, I should caution that I am not suggesting that we now live in a social environment of hybridity and cultural mélange of constantly transforming identities. We are far from that. However, if our task is to revive the
cosmopolitan ideal and save it from its problematic past, then we need to look at the possibilities that would allow us to go beyond seeing and experiencing subjectivity as a fixed and unchanging experience.

Finally, out of the fragmentation of modern experience and the inability of nation-states to reproduce national narratives emerge new forms of territoriality in which different locales are connected to each other, but in ways that differ from the strict boundaries of state sovereignty. Individual identities are no longer produced within the confines of national borders, but are the product of several national narratives. In fact, transnational communities within the borders of nation-states are constant reminders of the respective national narratives that the very content of national identity is linked to places outside those borders. Turkish-German, Algerian-French, or Pakistani-British communities are constantly challenging national narratives in both home and adopted countries, and forge links that cut across the lines of state sovereignty. Furthermore, the hazards of a global economy, the risks of environmental degradation, and awareness that global and local solidarities are not mutually exclusive do not leave much choice for us but to become cosmopolitans in the true sense of the word.

Equally important to the cosmopolitan narrative emerging from the margins and the multiple experiences of modernity is the existing debate on institutional cosmopolitanism. The literature on institutional cosmopolitanism provides a very detailed action plan of how to reform existing international organizations. David Held, for example, suggests an overhaul of international institutions, ranging from the reform of the Security Council, the creation of a UN second chamber and compulsory jurisdiction before the international court, to the establishment of an international military force. However, Held's account of cosmopolitan order in particular, as well as other examples of institutional cosmopolitanism, speak in one voice and frame the entire international order within the same universal framework. Cosmopolitan voices emerging from the margins are crucial not only for eliminating the top-down universalism of institutional cosmopolitanism, but also for restoring a cosmopolitan spirit to proposals put forward by Held and others. A cosmopolitan experience from the margins is a constant reminder that institutional cosmopolitanism lacks
the agency of a cosmopolitan act. This is why any institutional reform geared towards eliminating the dominance of state action and restoring a cosmopolitan spirit to the global order must represent divergent experiences within the reformed international institutions and refuse to reform these organizations in the image of Kantian universality. Instead, the proposed reforms should be based on a dialogical universality emerging from the intervention of the margins. This means that no reform of international institutions would be complete until it took the experiences of affected groups and identities into consideration.

This means that reforming the World Trade Organization and other international economic organizations, such as the World Bank and the IMF, requires taking into consideration the experiences of groups who have been affected by policies formulated by these institutions. For instance, the recent initiatives for United Nations reform propose to create a legal framework for humanitarian intervention in cases of genocide and crimes against humanity. A cosmopolitan order informed by the experiences of the margins necessitates that humanitarian intervention cannot be legitimate without the active participation of the groups and identities that supposed to be saved by that intervention. In the absence of such participation, the cosmopolitan act of saving others from cruelty and murder simply recalls the imperial attitude of assuming that only the protector shall decide how and when to protect. After the Bush administration’s invasion of Iraq, the arbitrary interventions in the former Yugoslavia, and the absent intervention in Rwanda, there can be no cosmopolitan order without the active participation of those very people who have been subjected to genocide and murder. They are the ones who must take part in the process of deciding how and when to intervene.

Notes


18. M. Kaldor, Global Civil Society: An Answer to War.


23. S. Muthu, “Justice and Foreigners: Kant’s Cosmopolitan Right.”


