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Panel Cosmopolitan Global Governance and the Role of the State:

Rethinking Sites of Legitimate Authority

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Cosmopolitan Democracy: Paths and Agents

Abstract

One of the recurrent criticisms of the project of cosmopolitan democracy has been that it has not examined the political, economic and social agents that might have an interest in pursuing this programme. This criticism is addressed directly in this paper. It shows that there are a variety of paths that, in their own right, could lead to more democratic global governance, and that there are a diversity of political, economic and social agents that have an interest in the pursuit of these. Cosmopolitan democracy is an open-ended project that aims to increase the accountability, transparency and legitimacy of global governance, and the battery of agents and initiatives outlined highlight the direction and politics required to make it possible.

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Cosmopolitan Democracy: Paths and Agents

Twenty years after

When at the end of the cold war and at the beginning of a new wave of democratization we suggested the idea of a cosmopolitan democracy,¹ we were aware that we were pouring old wine into new bottles. The attempt to make world politics more transparent, more accountable, more participatory and more respectful of the rule of law had pioneers spanning from Immanuel Kant to Richard Falk. Still, the idea that “democracy” as a concept and a practice could and should be applied beyond nation-states was somehow innovative.

If we read the international relations textbooks prior to 1989, we may be surprised to note that many of them do not even contain the word “democracy”. When the word appears, it is generally in reference to the internal political system of states and certainly not in relation to the possibility of subjugating world politics to democratic rules. Even international organizations were mostly seen as purely inter-governmental bodies and the prospect of making them more democratic was not contemplated. The European Union, the first international organization composed exclusively of democratic regimes and with some germs of democratic norms in its *modus operandi*, was mainly discussed in relation to the limits it imposed on its member countries rather than in terms of its ability to deal publicly with transnational issues. The state of the art was not very different in the realm of democratic theory. Most of the textbooks dedicated to democracy, including the first edition of the work of one of us,² did not contain any reference to the problem of democracy beyond borders. Many of these textbooks addressed in detail how decision-making within town halls, counties and central governments could foster or hamper democracy. But democratic theory ended at state borders: it had nothing yet to say beyond this level of analysis.

Today the state of the art is substantially different: international relations and democratic theory both take for granted that “democracy beyond borders” is an issue to be discussed. Most of the recent international relations handbooks devote at least a chapter to the question of democracy within international organizations and of the impact of globalization on national democracies. The same applies to handbooks on democracy, which often devote the last chapter to the challenge of expanding democratic values to the international system. Of course, not everybody is convinced

¹ Daniele Archibugi and David Held, eds., *Cosmopolitan Democracy. An Agenda for a New World Order* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995); David Held, *Democracy and the Global Order: From the Modern State to Cosmopolitan Governance*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995).

² David Held, *Models of Democracy* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987, 1st edition).

that a cosmopolitan democracy is needed or desirable. Opponents are clearly more numerous than supporters. Robert Dahl, Ralf Dahrendorf, David Miller, Philippe Schmitter and many others have more or less politely declared that the idea of applying the concept of democracy beyond the state is premature or even naïve. However, other scholars, including Jurgen Habermas, Richard Falk, Ulrich Beck, Mary Kaldor, Andrew Linklater, Tony McGrew, Jan-Aart Scholte and Saskia Sassen have contributed to the development of this vision from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds. Moreover, the hope of cosmopolitan democracy has reached the hearts and minds of many young scholars, who are increasingly providing fresh ideas and sophisticated analytical tools.

The aims of the cosmopolitan democracy project have never been limited to academic discourse. On the contrary, the ambition was also to provide the intellectual arguments to achieve elements of transformation in the real world. It should be recognized that, while the academic discourse has been unexpectedly successful, the hopes to obtain a democratic transformation of world politics have achieved so far very modest results. In fact, most of the proposals put on the table in the last two decades have not been implemented; a fact that is not entirely surprising, given how long it takes to change and reshape institutions. A change in the rhetoric, at least, is perceivable: since the beginning of the 1990s, leading officials of international organizations have explicitly endorsed the idea of a global democracy,³ and statesmen are less likely to justify their actions on the ground of national interests. As a consequence, international organizations are now keener to be accountable not only to diplomatic circles but also to public opinion at large. It is difficult to foresee now if this change will remain a simple cosmetic coverage or if it might lead to substantial transformations.

In this paper we address an issue that has not yet been satisfactorily discussed in our previous work: who are the agents that might promote cosmopolitan democracy? While we have elsewhere illustrated the reasons that justify the need and the possibility of a cosmopolitan democracy,⁴ and others have discussed its possibility,⁵ we have not yet discussed at length the social, economic and political processes that may lead some agents to support the political innovations suggested by the model.

The necessity and the possibility of transforming global governance has become a core political issue. Many ideas have been debated by diplomats and activists, governmental authorities

³ Paradigmatic examples include the statements of two UN Secretary-Generals and of the Director-General of the WTO. See Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *An Agenda for Democratization* (New York: United Nations, 1996); Kofi Annan, "Democracy as an International Issue," *Global Governance* 8, no. 2 (2002) 135-142; Pascal Lamy, *Towards World Democracy* (London: Policy Network, 2005).

⁴ Daniele Archibugi, *The Global Commonwealth of Citizens. Toward Cosmopolitan Democracy*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008); David Held, *Cosmopolitanism. Ideals and Realities* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010).

⁵ Mathias Koenig-Archibugi, "Is Global Democracy Possible?", *European Journal of International Relations* 16, no. 4 (2010), pp. 1-24.

and nongovernmental organizations, businessmen and scholars, at the United Nations, the G8 and G20 summits, the World Economic Forum and the World Social Forum. Some suggest reforms to current international organizations and others argue for new ones. Some stress the role of social movements, others the need to give more space to selected groups of stakeholders. There are campaigns that insist on the crucial importance of legal institutions, while other groups suggest giving to the business sector a more prominent role in managing global issues.⁶ Not all these proposals move in a direction of *democratic* global governance, but many of them include elements that will incorporate key democratic values such as accountability, representativeness, transparency and participation.

If we ever manage to achieve a form of global governance that embeds some of the values and norms of democracy, it is very unlikely to happen as a result of a single grand plan. It is, on the contrary, more likely that various changes and reforms introduced at the local, national, regional and global levels will together contribute to a progressive transformation of world politics, and that each individual innovation provides inspiration and encouragement for further changes. The idea of a cosmopolitan democracy was never intended to provide a closed recipe, but as a unifying framework for a battery of proposals and campaigns that, in different ways, aim to develop global governance in a democratic direction. Political change, including at the global level, can be pushed by economic, social and political actors, each of which may act within a limited scope. While each agent may act on narrow terms, it is also possible that, through imitation, institutional changes and innovative forms of participation will disseminate across countries and functional areas of governance. The growing number of initiatives and proposals indicate that the need to achieve transformations is widely felt. We do not consider that the various proposals currently put on the table necessarily compete against each other. On the contrary, we tend to look at most of them as complementary attempts to move towards a world order that progressively encompasses at least some forms of democracy at the global level.

We are well aware that political transformations occur because of a combination of idealistic and materialistic motivations and that both top down and bottom up forces do contribute to the development or obstruction of change. There are a variety of agents that act in a globalizing world. It is possible to identify at least three core analytical categories: economic, political and social agents. As suggested by Cerny,⁷ the ultimate goal of these agents is to acquire their own space in a changing and globalizing world. Not all the actions of individual agents will, of course, consistently

⁶ David Held, *Global Covenant. The Social Democratic Alternative to the Washington Consensus* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004).

⁷ Philip G. Cerny, "Political Agency in a Globalizing World: Toward a Structural Approach", *European Journal of International Relations*, 6, no. 4 (2000), pp. 435-463.

pursue the project of global democratization (nor this was the case when democracy was affirmed as the legitimate model of political authority within states). But their interests and also their ideology will often lead them to support and to act to obtain changes that are in line with more progressive, participatory, accountable and transparent world politics. In the next section we single out a few areas where changes in line with cosmopolitan democracy have been debated, while the subsequent sections are devoted to identifying the top-down and bottom-up agents that could promote cosmopolitan democracy.

Paths toward cosmopolitan democracy

Cosmopolitan democracy can be developed through a variety of changes. Some of them concern the already existing institutional sites such as states and international organizations. Others will imply new forms of political organization and will rely on the activities of new political agents. In this section we report a list of the ongoing and potential changes.

States as champions of cosmopolitanism

States can be champions of cosmopolitanism within their own borders. Most states have to deal with a citizenry with diverse languages, religions, ethnicities and ideologies. Each state has the opportunity to experiment with different forms of political participation, and with those minority rights that have been advocated by multiculturalists. Many states, especially Western states, are also facing an increasing challenge from migration. Aliens have fewer rights than natives in most states and, with transborder flows of people on the increase, this is making accommodation more problematic and it is generating mounting internal tensions. A state willing to become a champion of cosmopolitanism should make an effort, where possible, to reduce disparities between natives and strangers and offer to aliens the political rights enjoyed by its citizens. The expression “cosmopolitan state” may at first appear an oxymoron, but cosmopolitanism is a set of values and practices that can be implemented by any political institution, including the state.⁸ International institutions can also be a positive stimulus to induce states to introduce more progressive standards in this regard. The UN Human Rights Council, the Council of Europe and the European Union all have monitoring programmes that critically assess respect for minority rights within their member countries.

⁸ Richard Beardsworth, *Cosmopolitanism and International Relations* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011, forthcoming); Garrett W. Brown, “Bringing the State Back into Cosmopolitanism: The Idea of Responsible Cosmopolitan States”, *Political Studies Review*, 9 (2011), pp. 53-66.

Cosmopolitan states could also encourage their institutions to take an independent stance in global affairs. There is already a wealth of institutions able to link sub-state initiatives, including the International Parliamentary Union and the International Union of Local Authorities.⁹ Often these institutions are regarded by national governments as simply decorative; a cosmopolitan state, on the contrary, would allow them to use their resources more independently, for example, as an external check and balance on the governmental action.

For a democratic foreign policy

One of the core demands of cosmopolitan democracy is to obtain a substantial change in national foreign policy priorities, especially those of the liberal and powerful Western states. A democratic state should use its foreign policy instruments to become a good member of the international community even at the expense of short term disadvantages. For example, consolidated democracies should support foreign political parties and activists willing to foster democracy in despotically ruled countries rather than those who might be more congenial to their own national interests. 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.¹⁰ 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. The 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.¹¹

The reform of International Organizations

⁹ These institutions are scrutinized, also in relation to the UN system, in Chadwick Alger, "Expanding Governmental Diversity in Global Governance: Parliamentarians of States and Local Governments", *Global Governance*, 16(2010), pp. 59-79.

¹⁰ See Thomas Carothers *Is a League of Democracies a Good Idea?* (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, May 2008).

¹¹ See Richard Youngs, *International Democracy and the West: The Role of Governments, Civil Society, and Multinational Business* (Oxford Oxford University Press, 2004). Something can be learnt from the European Union's policies: see Richard Youngs, *The European Union and the Promotion of Democracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). For the contribution provided by the UN, see Edward Newman and Roland Rich, eds., *The UN Role in Promoting Democracy: Between Ideals and Reality* (Tokyo: United Nations University Press 2004).

International Organizations (IOs) embed some elements of democracy as they are based on treaties and charters, their actions must not violate international law, their operations are transparent to a certain extent and their activities and policies are to a degree accountable to their member states. But many of the core ideas of democracy, such as the principle of equality among citizens, are not applied.¹² Most IOs started as clubs for national governments, but they progressively incorporated, often in a decorative role, larger numbers of stakeholders.¹³ As a result of the participation of the business sector and non-governmental organizations, IOs have managed to expand their authority and legitimacy. Yet, while plans to reform the UN and other IOs have emerged from policy debates and academic writings, they have not been implemented. The bulk of these proposals aim to increase the role and functions of IOs and to enlarge participation and accountability. Many of the reform proposals could substantially enhance the independent political role of IOs, making them something other than simple instruments of national governments. This would help make them one of the core institutions of a cosmopolitan democracy. Perhaps surprisingly, opponents of these proposals are not only found among autocratic states, but among democratic ones as well.

Global judicial authorities

The rule of law and its enforcement is an essential component of any democratic system. Cosmopolitan democracy supports the development of a more effective global rule of law, while remaining sceptical of the enhancement of coercive supranational powers in general. Several IOs, including the European Union and the United Nations, already have complex legal norms and embryonic judicial power although they lack enforcement capacity. If international norms and jurisdictions become more sophisticated, it will be increasingly costly for governments to violate them. There are at least three aspects of the global judicial authority that should be taken into account: the emerging global criminal justice system, the need to reinforce legal solutions to interstate controversies and the need to provide adequate transnational administrative rules for both the public and the business sectors.

Criminal justice. The creation of several *ad hoc* international courts and, above all, the International Criminal Court (ICC) have generated new hopes to hold egregious criminals, including politicians, accountable for their actions up to the point of creating a new branch of

¹² For a review, see Heikki Patomaki and Teivo Teivainen, *A Possible World: Democratic Transformation of Global Institutions* (London: Zed Books, 2004); Thomas D. Zweifel, *International Organizations and Democracy: Accountability, Politics, and Power* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2005).

¹³ For a well informed analysis of the real processes at the UN, see Courtney B. Smith, *Politics and Process at the United Nations: The Global Dance* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2005).

international law.¹⁴ Indeed, the ICC is the most significant institutional innovation introduced in the post cold war era. Much could still be done to make the Court fully operative, and to induce all countries to accept its jurisdiction. But it is already possible to assess its first few years of activities.¹⁵ To date, the ICC has mostly acted on suspected African culprits, and on insurgents fighting against, and denounced by, incumbent governments (the case opened against the Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir is a significant exception). All investigations undertaken are well documented, but the coverage is still highly selective. There is the danger that the ICC will be perceived as an instrument of incumbent governments against rebels and another burden of the white man over the black man. Those who hoped that the ICC could also be an instrument in defence of the weaker against the most powerful have so far been disappointed. There is the need to balance the action of the Court to cover cases in which the crimes are committed by Western individuals. For these reasons, the operation of the ICC can be stimulated and reinforced by other bottom-up initiatives such as Opinion Tribunals, which may be selective and politically motivated, but are less influenced by diplomatic negotiations and could call the attention of public opinion and of the official criminal courts to cases that have been overlooked.

Lawful conflict resolutions. Interest in the ICC has somewhat overshadowed an equally important problem, namely the need to address interstate controversies through legal instruments. The International Court of Justice (ICJ), the body within the UN system that should address these controversies, is highly underused mostly because it can be activated only when both parties in a dispute are willing to accept its jurisdiction. Unfortunately, this happens very rarely and too often is activated for relatively insignificant controversies. If we read the sentences and the opinions provided by the Court, we will have a much distorted view of the world history of the last 60 years. The Vietnam war, the invasions of Hungary and Czechoslovakia, the recurrent war crimes committed by states, the Iraq war, the legitimacy of nuclear weapons and many other key international controversies have not received any attention from the Court for the very simple reason that states were not willing to submit core case to its judgement. A major expansion of the global rule of law would require empowering the ICJ with compulsory jurisdiction, making the Court, not just a sort of “referee” among two states but a proper Tribunal.¹⁶ This does not necessarily imply that the ICJ would have the power to enforce its own judgements. But even in absence of enforcement, a judgement denouncing the behaviour of some states would have an

¹⁴ See the handbook by Antonio Cassese, *International Criminal Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

¹⁵ Marlies Glasius, “What is Global Justice and Who Decides? Civil Society and Victim Responses to the International Criminal Court’s First Investigations”, *Human Rights Quarterly*, 31 (2009), pp. 496–520.

¹⁶ Richard Falk, *Law in an Emerging Global Village: A Post-Westphalian Perspective*, (Ardley: Transnational Publishers, 1998).

important impact on international relations. And, again, this is a change that each state could implement individually; several states have already accepted the compulsory jurisdiction of the ICJ.

International administrative courts. One of the most relevant trends in international law is the development of judicial or semi-judicial authorities for administrative purposes and the business sector. Rather than using national courts, both public and private players prefer to activate elements of *lex mercatoria* (the global framework of commercial law) and to use special courts set up for the purpose of hearing such cases. This new network of judicial institutions is in fact replicating, at the global level, the functions of the state: namely, arbitrating in cases of controversy.¹⁷ At the same time, these legal developments show that there are some possibilities to obtain conflict resolutions also in absence of a coercive power of last resort.

Citizens' participation in global politics

Cosmopolitan democracy advocates giving citizens political representation, in parallel and independent assemblies from those of their national political institutions. There is a wealth of proposals aimed at creating this, but the most straightforward way to achieve it would be to create a World Parliamentary Assembly similar in composition to the European Parliament. Such an institution would be the natural and most effective way to help bring together the peoples of the earth, allowing them to deliberate on common issues.¹⁸ While some proposals make an attempt to create a directly elected body, others suggest empowering the non-governmental organizations that are already recognized and participate to the UN activities.¹⁹ It is unlikely that such an organ would have effective powers (at least in the short and medium period), but even if it were simply a forum reflecting and deliberating upon global public opinion it could play an important role in identifying and confronting policies on world issues. This Assembly would not necessarily be involved in every aspect of global political life, but it could concentrate on the most relevant and pressing issues: for example, those with a high impact on global life (e.g. the environment) or those with huge political significance (e.g. major violations of human rights). On some occasions, the World Parliamentary Assembly could provide suggestions about what is the most appropriate constituency to address

¹⁷ See Sabino Cassese, "Administrative Law without the State? The Challenge of Global Regulations", *NYU Journal of International Law and Politics* 37(2006), n. 4, p. 663-694; Nico Krisch and Benedict Kingsbury, "Global Governance and Global Administrative Law in the International Legal Order", *European Journal of International Law*, 17(2006), no. 1, pp. 1-13.

¹⁸ Richard Falk and Andrew Strauss, "Toward Global Parliament", *Foreign Affairs* (2001) no. 1, pp. 212-220. Andrew Strauss explores the various juridical methods to introduce such an assembly in *Taking Democracy Global: Assessing the Benefits and Challenges of a Global Parliamentary Assembly* (London: One World Trust, 2005).

¹⁹ Andrew Strauss explores the various juridical methods to introduce such an elective assembly in *Taking Democracy Global: Assessing the Benefits and Challenges of a Global Parliamentary Assembly* (London: One World Trust, 2005). Chadwick Alger. "The Emerging Roles of NGOs on the UN System: From Article 71 to a People's Millennium Assembly", *Global Governance*, 8 (2002), pp. 93-117, explores the potential of UN recognized NGOs.

issues that cut across borders. Such a new institution would complement the UN General Assembly and could work in close connection with it. It could provide political representation in global affairs to individuals and collective groups that are so far deprived of it: ethnic or political minorities within states, stateless groups, immigrants, refugees and, more importantly, peoples who still live under authoritarian regimes. Its usefulness will not just be for groups at the margins of political representation: individuals living in consolidated democracies would also have the advantage of engaging with a new level of governance and representation.²⁰

Political communities without boundaries

Deliberative communities are not necessarily based on a territorially contiguous space. There are increasing areas in which political problems are non-territorial or involve stakeholders in very different capacities.²¹ Professional associations, ethnic communities, groups of citizens linked by common diseases or by strong economic interactions may be willing to address their problems through democratic procedures. Capacity to address these challenges is strongly limited by the current representation of interests in world politics, whereby most foreign affairs issues are addressed by national governments. While many of these specific groups have neither interest in nor the capacity to become a state and claim sovereignty over a given territory, they may nevertheless find it necessary to have a political space to address their problems that is recognized by states and international organizations.²² The number of transnational actors that are in charge of specific domains is increasing, as is the number of administrative bodies involving both public and business members. Transnational movements for social justice have already experimented with many ways to link players across borders.

Recognizing the importance of non-territorially bounded political communities composed of individuals with common interests raises a crucial question for political theory: who are the legitimate stakeholders? For good or for bad, the organization of political communities based on states provides a straightforward answer: it is the state that decides who the citizens are and how to represent their interests on the international scene. In cases of other forms of political representation, it will be much more difficult to assess who the stakeholders are. Who are the stakeholders of the oil industrial complex? We can name the shareholders of the oil companies, the employees of the industry, the consumers of the industrial society and the citizens of oil-producing

²⁰ The Campaign for the Establishment of a United Nations Parliamentary Assembly has even prospected the electoral systems and the number of deputies of such a World Parliament. See <http://en.unpacampaign.org/news/374.php>. See also Fernando Iglesias, *Globalizar la democracia. Por un Parlamento Mundial* (Buenos Aires: Manantial, 2006).

²¹ Carol Gould, *Democratizing Globalization and Human Rights* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

²² John Dryzek, *Deliberative Global Politics* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006); Terry Macdonald, *Global Stakeholder Democracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

countries, among many others. All of them are legitimate stakeholders, and even if there is an attempt to differentiate among primary and secondary stakeholders,²³ it is still open what the relative weight that each of these categories should have in the political process. In some cases stakeholders themselves will find the system of representation congenial to their interests, but in more controversial cases it is likely that they will need to rely on an external assignment of competences and electoral weights. A World Parliamentary Assembly may be the instrument that could minimize political exclusion providing political representation and also attribute competences and functions to dedicated functional areas where the relative importance of stake-holders is not properly acknowledged.

Top-down and bottom-up agents of cosmopolitan democracy

We have briefly discussed a number of areas and institutions that could make world politics more democratic. It is now important to ask: which political and social agents might have an interest in supporting these reforms? Political change occurs when there are interests at stake and agents willing to mobilise. The question just posed can in part be answered by reflecting on those social groups that are today excluded from political participation, that find the traditional channels to access world politics insufficient or that feel strongly motivated to act in selected domains.²⁴ These are the players that should have an interest in generating more democratic global political institutions.

The dispossessed

The first group of agents that could have an interest in minimizing exclusion in world politics and gain greater access to decision-making are the dispossessed, those that Frantz Fanon labelled the “wretched of the earth”.²⁵ These are people concentrated in underdeveloped countries, with very low living standards, and that are more vulnerable to environmental, economic and political crises. A significant part of this grouping has also experienced major political instabilities associated with failed states. This group has also been called “the bottom billion” but perhaps its number is even higher.²⁶ It is a group of people that rely heavily on the support provided by international agencies and donors. The structural weakness of this group does not allow its voice to be heard directly in

²³ Macdonald, *Global Stakeholder Democracy*, pp. 95-96.

²⁴ The necessity to reduce exclusion in international affairs is at the core of Raffaele Marchetti, *Global Democracy: For and Against* (London: Routledge, 2008).

²⁵ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1963).

²⁶ Paul Collier, *The Bottom Billion. Why the Poorest Countries are Failing and What Can Be Done About It* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

world politics, to reach world markets and often even to participate actively in the domestic politics of their own country. If its voice is heard at all in global fora it is because of extreme actions, humanitarian catastrophes or because other players report its needs and its opinions. International relief agencies and nongovernmental organizations call attention to the conditions of these people as they are not sufficiently powerful and organized to obtain it themselves. Civil society groups also take an active role in representing their needs and interests.²⁷ The dispossessed have even to rely on Western celebrities as their spokespersons.²⁸ In principle, this is the group of people that could benefit most from a cosmopolitan democracy: within states the dispossessed obtained substantial advantages when they achieved the franchise, and empowering them with political rights in world institutions could be an important step in improving their bargaining power.

Migrants

Migration flows motivated by economic reasons are generating major changes in affluent countries. Most of these migrants move to countries that are not only wealthier but also have democratic regimes. Authorized immigrants are seldom guaranteed the same economic, social and, above all, political rights as the natives, while unauthorized immigrants can have no rights at all. This is creating an increasing discrepancy between the rights and the duties of these people. Immigrants are engaging in forms of civil disobedience such as the Great American Boycott on 1st May 2006 in the United States²⁹ or the “Sans-Papiers” movement in France and other European countries.³⁰ Immigrants are not isolated and they have often been supported by civil society groups, trade unions and other organizations, creating a social and political coalition supporting their rights.³¹ The immediate target of these protesters is the government of the host country and the principal aim is to get their status recognized. But these protests go far beyond national boundaries: there is a more general claim about freedom of movement that does not correspond to the state alone.³² Most democratic states are also associated with IOs that monitor their human rights regime, including the treatment of aliens. Individual EU member states, for example, have often been reproached by the EU and the Council of Europe for unfair treatment of immigrants.

²⁷ See Jan Aart Scholte, “Civil Society and Democracy in Global Governance”, *Global Governance*, 8(2002), pp. 281-304.

²⁸ Paradigmatic cases are George Clooney as campaigner for Darfur and Angelina Jolie as Goodwill Ambassador for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

²⁹ On May 1st 2006, immigrants in the United States boycotted businesses, shops and schools to show how important their presence was to the American economy and society.

³⁰ The Sans-Papiers (“without documents”) movement started in France in April 2007 when a group of undocumented immigrants occupied the Church Saint Paul in Massy claiming their right to be regularized.

³¹ See Luis Cabrera, *The Practice of Global Citizenship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

³² Seyla Benhabib, *The Rights of Others. Aliens, Residents and Citizens* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

Cosmopolitan groups

There are some collective groups that are already sociologically “cosmopolitan”. Some rock stars, football players and actors have not only become global icons but they already live in conditions that make national boundaries irrelevant to them. While these icons are the most visible cosmopolitans, they are certainly not alone: cosmopolitans are also made up of many intellectuals, businessmen, public officers and social activists. This group has periodically attracted the hostility of nationalistic and totalitarian leaderships and have often been called derogatorily “rootless cosmopolitans”.³³ It is not easy to identify the size of this cosmopolitan group and even less to what extent they simply belong to privileged elites. It is however possible to distinguish between two relevant analytical factors: that is, between having a personal cosmopolitan lifestyle and holding cosmopolitan values. The cosmopolitan democracy project needs more support from the latter than from the former.

The available empirical evidence shows that as many as 15 per cent of the world’s inhabitants perceive their principal identity as post-national (either regional or cosmopolitan), compared with 38 percent who privilege their national and 47 percent their local identity.³⁴ Moreover, identification with ‘the global’ identity increases among young people and among those with a higher educational level, suggesting that in the near future cosmopolitan identity might become considerably more important. It could be argued that it is the privileged elites who hold these cosmopolitan values, but this assumption is disproved by other empirical evidence which, on the contrary, indicates that the share of cosmopolitan values is spread evenly between elites and the population at large.³⁵ The existence of cosmopolitan values does not, of course, necessarily translate into political mobilization, but if and when it does, it could resonate with a considerable proportion of the world population.

It is often stated that the cosmopolitanism is a Western project supported by privileged elites. It true that, so far, the agenda of the democratization of global governance has predominantly been written in the West and by Western advocates. A major attempt to ask citizens of the world to provide their own understanding of, and requirements of, global democracy is the ongoing project “Building Global Democracy” directed by Jan-Aart Scholte at the University of Warwick.³⁶ The

³³ Eleonore Kofman, “Figures of the Cosmopolitan. Privileged Nationals and National Outsiders”, in Chris Rumford, *Cosmopolitanism and Europe* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007).

³⁴ Pippa Norris, “Global Governance and Cosmopolitan Citizenship”, in Joseph Nye and Joseph and Donahue J. eds., *Governance in a Globalizing World* (Washington, Brooking Institution Press, 2000).

³⁵ See Peter Furia, “Global Citizenship, Anyone? Cosmopolitanism, Privilege and Public Opinion”, *Global Society*, 19(2005), no. 4, pp. 331-359.

³⁶ See the website of the “Building Global Democracy” at <http://www.buildingglobaldemocracy.org/> for a description of the ongoing activities.

results of this project, along with a variety of other mushrooming ventures, will allow the identification of the most significant differences between a Western and a non-Western vision and, if need be, necessary re-conceptualisations of the aims of the project.

Global stakeholders and global civil society

Political mobilization in favour of a more progressive world politics rests on two important and often overlapping groups: global stakeholders and global civil society. Global stakeholders include sectors of governance, networks and social movements, as well as other groups with specific sectoral interests. In all cases, these groupings do not necessarily overlap with established political communities nor receive a mandate from states. These stakeholders are very active and have considerable mobilizing and lobbying capacity which they can direct at both national authorities and international institutions. Often these global stakeholders are better informed, technically more competent and certainly more motivated to pursue their agenda than their national or international counterparts.³⁷ As might be expected, in many areas stakeholders have managed to secure key positions in decision-making and can even act as suppliers of global governance without an explicit delegation: crucial stakeholders may be active in financial services as much as in healthcare, in air-traffic control and in education. Some of them may pursue an agenda aiming at facilitating secure business transactions and others at providing global public goods.

Stakeholders aiming to produce and distribute global public goods are dispersed and less organized than stakeholders motivated by specific and concentrated aims. The latter have often more lobbying capacity and availability of resources than the former and manage to get their agenda discussed in traditional intergovernmental fora more often than the former. Stakeholders aiming at producing global public goods often have their contribution unheard in official settings and have to rely on their political mobilizing capacity to make their case public. Often, the participation of these global stakeholders has to balance different factors: the more inclusive they are, the more difficult it can be to ensure transparency and accountability, never mind direct participation, effective deliberation and representation.³⁸

³⁷ Kate Macdonald, "Global Democracy for a Partially Joined-up World. Toward a Multi-level System of Public Power and Democratic Governance?" in Daniele Archibugi, Mathias Koenig-Archibugi and Raffaele Marchetti, eds., *Global Democracy: Normative and Empirical Perspectives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2011).

³⁸ For an optimistic but nevertheless disenchanted analysis of transnational actors as promoters of a democratic global governance, see Magdalena Bexell, Jonas Tallberg and Anders Uhlin, "Democracy in Global Governance: The Promises and Pitfalls of Transnational Actors", *Global Governance*, 16(2010), pp. 81-101.

Mary Kaldor and her collaborators have also described and mapped another important player that overlaps with stakeholders: global civil society.³⁹ Global civil society is often the most vocal supporter of progressive changes in world politics, including the democratization of global governance and IOs reform.⁴⁰ Non-governmental organizations and other players have become increasingly important in setting the agenda of global politics and often also in delivering public goods in areas of crisis. Global civil society is, according to Kaldor and her colleagues, also transforming the canons of international politics, often providing more effective solutions to local problems than national governments or even international organizations, and acting as a powerful counter-weight to traditional power politics. The “politics from below” pursued by global civil society often pushes for a different organization of interests at the various levels of policy, local, national and global.

Global political parties

Political parties continue to be mostly national in scope and it is hardly surprising that they have been at the fringe of global studies.⁴¹ But it is increasingly difficult for political parties to maintain a national reach when political processes are more and more acquiring a global dimension. So far, the tension between the national orientation of political parties and the global scope of politics has largely remained unsolved. Even when political parties have a transnational affiliation, as it is the case of the Socialist International, the Centrist Democrat International and the Liberal International, the loyalty of the members is low and political priorities are largely dictated by national interests rather than by the parties’ international ideologies. The area where international political parties appear to be more effective is in addressing the functions of international organizations. The Socialist International, for example, has already published a far-reaching document on UN Reform which urged member parties in government to support actively the proposals made.⁴²

Global politics is transforming political parties and it is often re-shaping their agenda.⁴³ Traditional national parties have increasingly to deal with global issues, while new focus-based political parties, such as the Greens, are more likely to develop stringent transnational programmes,

³⁹ See Mary Kaldor, *Global Civil Society: An Answer to War* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003). The *Global Civil Society Yearbook* produced by LSE Global Governance since the year 2000, which has produced a wide range of analyses on the significance and activities of global civil society.

⁴⁰ Scholte, “Civil Society and Democracy in Global Governance”.

⁴¹ For a notable attempt to explore the potential and limits of political parties in the global age, see Katarina Sehm-Patomaki and Marko Ulvila, eds., *Global Political Parties* (London: Zed Books, 2007).

⁴² Socialist International, *Reforming the United Nations for a New Global Agenda* (New York: 2005).

⁴³ See Jan-Aart Scholte, “Political Parties and Global Democracy”, in Sehm-Patomaki and Ulvila, eds., *Global Political Parties*.

perhaps because they are oriented predominantly toward a single issue. Transnational social movements, such as those associated with the World Social Forum, are somehow starting to resemble global parties in the making.⁴⁴ And there is also a growing scope for regional political parties. Within the European Union, parties have a greater international coordination and this is associated with the powers and functions of the EU as well as with the existence of the only directly elected international Assembly: the European Parliament. In fact, in the European Parliament national parties are organized within European groups. This is far from reflecting a genuine Westminster-style majority and opposition, but it still provides a sense that, certainly at the European level, there are different options. The European example indicates that institutions do shape the ways in which interests are organized.

Trade unions and labour movements

The labour movement is seriously challenged by economic globalization. The labour movement built its political power at the national level, when in alliance with leftwing political parties it managed to guarantee labour rights, labour standards and the welfare protection of the lower and middle classes. Ideologically, however, the labour movement always had an internationalist standpoint, as shown by its mobilization against many wars and colonialism in many places. One of the most important challenges of the labour movement in the twenty-first century is to help guarantee adequate standards of living and economic and social rights to the working classes in a global economy dominated by multinational corporations and the high mobility of capital.⁴⁵ The labour movement's mandate to defend wages and jobs at the national level is now in tension with notions of the transnational solidarity of the working class. This tension is reflected in the ambivalent attitude of labour movements towards trade liberalization and migration. Most trade unions have been actively involved in defending the labour rights of immigrants, but some of them have been hostile to uncontrolled trade liberalization and inflows of labour when these risk reducing employment and wage levels.

How could the labour movement face a much better equipped transnational business sector? The differences in labour costs and labour rights at the world level are still so high that it is difficult to create an effective alliance linking labour interests in countries as different as Sweden and China, the United States and India. This issue has been addressed in the attempt to standardize and upgrade labour standards through the International Labour Organization and to prevent unfair trade practices

⁴⁴ See Heikki Patomaki and Teivo Teivainen, "Researching Global Political Parties", in Sehm-Patomaki and Ulvila, eds., *Global Political Parties*.

⁴⁵ For an overview, see Ronaldo Munck, *Globalization and Labour. The New 'Great Transformation'* (London: Zed Books, 2002).

through the World Trade Organization. Expanding labour rights to include social and economic rights, and ultimately political rights in global fora, might allow the labour movement to become a powerful agent in democratizing global governance.

Multinational corporations

Multinational corporations (MNCs) are formidable players and drivers of the global economy. A few hundred MNCs account for a very large share of world income, employment and technology generation and they are also very efficient in lobbying to protect their interests. To secure materials, to organize their production and to reach markets, MNCs need to overcome institutional barriers, including barriers to trade, capital movements and migration. MNCs have also shown their capacity to shape global governance in line with their interests, as they have done with national governments.

Some scholars believe that MNCs will always act against the democratization of global governance since can satisfy their agenda with lobbying or functional networking, rather than with transparent and accountable policy-making.⁴⁶ This is certainly part of the story, but not all MNCs interests are convergent and often their agenda also needs effective and accountable global governance. In some core areas, such as telecommunications, transports, standards, crime prevention and law enforcement, MNCs require more effective, transparent global governance. In the area of business law and property rights, the lack of appropriate transnational jurisdiction often makes transactions less certain and more risky. In such cases, MNCs push for transnational legislation and law enforcement. They are also making increased use of international arbitration and public or semi-public judicial powers. While it cannot be expected that MNCs will develop an interest in promoting a cosmopolitan democracy, they may pursue a limited agenda of strengthening global governance in core areas of their interest, mostly in the area of regulation and administrative law.⁴⁷

Effective combination of top-down and bottom-up politics

The two sections above have presented two lists, neither of which pretends to be comprehensive. The first is a list of actions that can be taken to advance cosmopolitan democracy. The second is a list of the political and social agents that may have an interest in or an ideological motivation to introduce greater transparency, accountability and participation in global governance.

⁴⁶ See Jackie Smith, *Social Movements for Global Democracy* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2008).

⁴⁷ Andrew Crane, Dirk Matten, Dirk and Jeremy Moon, *Corporations and Citizenship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

Of course, the various players do not necessarily have an ultimate and coherent agenda for pursuing the democratization of global governance; their agency is often dominated by mixed motives. Table 1 displays the lists, mapping the uneven and combined agency which might pursue cosmopolitan democracy. We have tried to link each agent with specific changes and advocacy. We do not underestimate the strength of the opposition to changes in global governance: many players do not have an interest in increasing accountability, transparency and participation, and inertial forces often tend to prevail. But the table suggests that the vision of a cosmopolitan democracy has roots in current economic, social and political processes, and that the cosmopolitan project has social and political anchors.

This excursus on possible actions to be taken and agents available has also provided the opportunity to qualify the nature of the cosmopolitan democracy project: it aims to analyse current transformations, to identify the areas where institutional innovations are needed and possible, to foster linkages between issues and actors and to understand what the main political players require. Yet it has not presented (nor could it present) a fixed final set of goals, since we are convinced that history will continue to surprise even the most optimistic thinker. And it adjusts routinely to the evolution of politics. It is perhaps this suppleness that is the very essence of democratic thought and practice.

We are well aware that interests concerning an expansion of democracy at the global level are highly fragmented and in many cases contradictory. Nevertheless, the interests *against* more democratic forms of global governance are also fragmented and contradictory. The traditional sites of power controlled by national governments find it more and more difficult to provide satisfactory answers to emerging global problems and this is creating mounting dissatisfaction with traditional political arrangements, and the search for new departures. We also believe that the ideological motivations should not be underestimated. In the XXI century, democracy has become the sole legitimate form of exercising power. Developed in the Western world, democracy is appealing more and more to peoples in the South, as mobilisations in countries as diverse as Burma and Egypt indicate. It will be difficult for Western countries to continue to preach democracy as a legitimate regime in internal affairs if they are not at the same time willing to subjugate global issues to some democratic norms and values.

To what extent can the actions and the players mentioned in Table 1 be labelled “top-down” or “bottom-up”? The very idea of democracy rests on a glorious bottom-up struggle to make political power accountable. But this bottom-up process is not necessarily fostered only by bottom-up pressures. We know that the English, American, French and Russian revolutions, all fought in the hope of empowering the bourgeois, the citizen, and the proletariat, were led by elites. But, as it

has already happened with the end of the cold war, political change also occurs using less imperative levers and that light ties among individuals, associations and unofficial political movements may generate snow-ball effects of unpredictable consequences. The end of the cold war and the re-unification of Europe provide a powerful example that might occur again.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Mary Kaldor, ed., *Europe from Below: An East-West Dialogue* (London: Verso, 1991) reports how bottom-up politics had a crucial role in terminating the Cold War.

Table 1 - Paths and agents of cosmopolitan democracy

Agenda for Cosmopolitan Democracy	Agents of Cosmopolitan Democracy						
	Dispossessed	Immigrants	Cosmopolitan groups	Global stakeholders and global civil society	International political parties	Trade Unions and labour movement	Multinational corporations
Cosmopolitan states		Request of social, economic and political rights for immigrants	Contribute to a public sphere to obtain from states to respect cosmopolitan standards	Social and political actions to guarantee cosmopolitan standards within states	Instruments to secure citizenship within and beyond states	Request social and economic rights for immigrants	Pursuit of integrated markets
Democratic foreign policy	Request donor states to contribute to development aid and policies	Actions to remove the causes of migration	Request to apply consistent principles at home and abroad also to support democratization	Ensure that foreign policy is transparent and accountable	Press national parties to respect democratic standards and to support democratic forces in authoritarian countries		Tension between business interests and business ethics
Reform of International Organizations	Direct participation in relief and other on-field activities of IOs	Guarantee of human rights of immigrants and of the freedom of movement	Pressure for citizens' participation in IOs	Active participation in IOs also to augment transparency and accountability	Urge members of parties in government to support IOs reform	Enlarge IOs stakeholder when labour interests are at stake	Interest in getting effective global governance through IOs
Global criminal justice	Protection against major human rights violations in deprived areas		Ensuring impartiality of official international criminal courts, also through the promotion of Opinion Tribunals	Reinforce global criminal justice also through opinion tribunals	Pressure to obtain adhesion and participation in the ICC of member parties in government		
Lawful inter-state conflict resolution	Minimize international conflicts and aim to peaceful conflict resolution		Public opinion pressure for a global rule of law	Opposition to wars and to other forms of international coercion	Press member parties in governments to accept compulsory jurisdiction of the ICJ		
International administrative courts				Enhance timely and effective arbitration		Promote effective transnational administrative networks	Promote effective and timely contract adjudication
Citizens' participation in global politics	Steps toward political representation at the world level	Activate channels for transnational political participation	Campaigns to develop political rights and electoral franchise also at the regional and global levels	Generate transnational democratic networks in specific areas	Enlarge participation in world politics		
Non-territorial political communities	Request direct participation in relief programmes & development aid	Possibility to connect politically to their home country	Organization of transnational public opinion	Develop and self-organize ad hoc democratic communities		Promote active trans-national links between employees	Participate in trans-border economic and political activities