

A COSMOPOLITAN APPROACH TO THE EUROPEAN CRISIS

Angelopoulou Maria

University of St Andrews

Department of International Relations

Email: ma474@st-andrews.ac.uk

—Abstract—

The paper analyses the political implications of the European crisis from a cosmopolitan perspective. A qualitative approach grounded on cosmopolitanism and cosmopolitan democracy seeks the ways with which the EU could overcome the crisis enhancing its limited a) internal and b) external cosmopolitanism. In the first case the analysis focuses on how the EU could shift away from intergovernmentalism towards cosmopolitanism with new institutional instruments of solidarity, unity and cooperation. In the second case, the argument is that a successful enlargement strategy, especially towards Turkey, can contribute to the cosmopolitanisation of Europe. Overall, the conclusions drawn from the attempt to apply cosmopolitanism to the EU suggest that, indeed, cosmopolitanism, which transforms political and cultural subjectivities in the encounter of the local/national with the global, can potentially be practically feasible, showing that globalisation and European integration can be conceived as processes that may strengthen each other.

Keywords: cosmopolitanism, EU crisis, enlargement

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1. INTRODUCTION

The distinctive feature of the cosmopolitan approach that my analysis draws on is that it aims to be evaluative but also empirically relevant. In normative terms this is significant with respect to the current situation in which globalisation has brought about new challenges, such as the global economic crisis; it is also crucial in terms of cosmopolitanism itself, that is in testing the hypotheses of cosmopolitanism in empirical terms, i.e. in the case of the European Union. My position is that any serious application of cosmopolitanism to social analysis requires moving beyond purely normative considerations to assessing concrete developments. In this sense my analysis differentiates from approaches which

tend to be either exclusively normative without actual empirical examples (cosmopolitan political theory) or concerned with a diffuse notion of transnational movements and cultural hybridity missing any connection with globalisation (most social and historical works) (Delanty, 2008: 330).

The core argument I advance is that the Europeanisation of national societies has established preconditions for cosmopolitanism to emerge and whether or not this happens is an empirical question. My analysis focuses on the EU limited internal dimension of cosmopolitanism within the current crisis in an attempt to find the ways the EU could eliminate its democratic deficits and enhance solidarity. It also addresses the external context of cosmopolitanism in the EU, which is the relation between Europe and the rest of the world. The main thesis is that the enlargement of the EU to include much of central and Eastern Europe can be conceived as setting a precondition of cosmopolitanism; it has led to the emergence of a multi-centred Europe, which can no longer be defined in terms of a narrow western conception of Europe and the European heritage (Delanty, 2003). But it is in the case of Turkey that it could be revealed whether or not this tendential 'post-western Europe' in the making will actually develop in a cosmopolitan direction.

The paper proceeds as follows. In the first section the theoretical framework of cosmopolitanism and cosmopolitan democracy is presented. The subsequent section applies the cosmopolitan perspective to Europe; a limited inner European cosmopolitanism is analysed within the frame of the EU crisis. The paper concludes with the implications of the EU crisis on the enlargement process; a limited external European cosmopolitanism is examined.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Cosmopolitanism

According to the main principles of cosmopolitanism all people are a) members of a single universal, yet not homogeneous community, b) have moral obligations to other human beings beyond the narrow boundaries of ethnic origin, religion, territory or nationality and c) are led to undertake political activity, through social transformations, to handle crucial global issues effectively.

More specifically, contemporary cosmopolitan approaches refer to a transformation in self-understanding as a result of the engagement with others over issues of global significance. Difficulties in developing cooperation and dialogue across cultural and civilisational worlds are increased when different national interests arise. Overcoming major political and cultural divisions is one of the most challenging tasks of our times. At this crucial point, cosmopolitanism

suggests a critical attitude as opposed to an exclusively interpretative or descriptive approach to the social world. In this sense it retains the normative stance of traditional notions of cosmopolitanism and it has a political character; it investigates alternatives to purely instrumental economic and security relations between societies (Delanty, 2008: 325). Rather than being preoccupied with exclusively universalistic principles, cosmopolitanism is approached through its empirically relevant applications. It should not be associated only with western moral and political philosophy deriving from the ancient Greek Stoics/Cynics and Kant in modernity, who associated cosmopolitanism with a universalistic orientation towards world community. Instead, there are European and Asian expressions of cosmopolitanism, which are characterised by global principles of justice and the need to take into account the perspective of the Other.

For these reasons, cosmopolitanism has emerged as an important theoretical approach in social sciences in recent years especially as a way to respond to globalisation with transnational movements. With the work of Held (1995) and Archibugi (1995) cosmopolitanism has become influential within normative political theory. Rather than being a utopian projection or a moral postulate, cosmopolitanism is depicted in a wide range of cultural, social and political currents throughout the world.

2.2. Cosmopolitan democracy

Cosmopolitan democracy denotes the effort to politically institutionalise cosmopolitan moral beliefs. The core argument is that many issues that require democratic governance have moved from the national to the international level. However, there are different versions of institutional cosmopolitanism. For instance, Otfried Höffe (2007) is the proponent of a world federal state, in which each of the existing national states is one of the units within the federation, while Jürgen Habermas (2001) and Michael Zürn (2000) support the widening of global production and governance structures (regimes, NGO's, but without a world government).

The paper draws upon David Held (1995), Anthony McGrew (1997) and Daniele Archibugi (1995), who suggest the institutionalisation of cosmopolitan rights based on global civil society and global regulation of the economy. According to their approaches, cosmopolitan democracy explores the application of norms and values of democracy at different levels, ranging from the local to the regional and global level. The cosmopolitan programme intends to democratise the global arenas of decision-making that are dominated by the state and the market forces. It extends the scope of democratisation beyond the state-society relations, stressing

participation, law-making and agenda-setting by the citizens of the world through their representatives. Finally, the cosmopolitan project of democracy places importance primarily on the role of civil society and public sphere; interactions faced by publics generate organisational activities that eventually get transformed into institutionalised control mechanisms.

3. THE EU CRISIS: A LIMITED INNER EUROPEAN COSMOPOLITANISM

3.1. The EU — a cosmopolitan polity?

There are few transnational fields where the dilution of national sovereignty has been so extensive and where normative orientation beyond economic and security issues plays a significant role as in the case of the EU. This post-national Europe has been transformed by cross-national interactions and the move towards a post-sovereign polity operating *between, among* and *above* the nation states. Recent studies have demonstrated that the EU is a polity based on overlapping layers of governance in which the national level is only one tier, modified by a transnationalisation of the nation state (Delanty and Rumford, 2005; Rumford, 2006; Beck and Grande, 2007). A number of supranational institutions monitor the conduct of states while economic and social institutions are promoting a new constitutional order having direct effect upon individuals. From this perspective, the EU is not an international organisation whose legitimacy derives solely from the states, but rather a polity in *its own right* directly connected to its citizens. It sets the conditions for being a regional subset of a larger cosmopolitan order, as its trans- and supra-national level of governance is part of an emerging democratic world order which mediates between the state and the world (Eriksen, 2009: 229-230). European integration as a postnational process is seen as entailing cosmopolitan cultural and political possibilities (Habermas, 2003; Beck and Grande, 2007).

Cosmopolitan tendencies are evident in changing identity patterns too. European identity is not at odds with national, regional or ethnic identities, but co-exists with other kinds of identity in a reflexive way (Herrmann et al, 2004). This dimension of reflexivity is an important indicator of cosmopolitanism in so far as it suggests a problematisation of self-understandings. Further examples of at least partial cosmopolitanism are the growing Europeanisation of public discourse. Although a European demos does not exist as such, the interconnectedness of European public spheres has resulted in multiple forms of interaction between European societies creating instances of cosmopolitan consciousness.

Nevertheless, the position taken here is that the EU can be conceived as a catalyst of cosmopolitanism without itself being necessarily cosmopolitan. Opportunities for cosmopolitanism to become more rooted in European societies than in previous times have opened up by the sharing of sovereignty and the undermining of national autonomy. But it is important not to conflate such preconditions with a fully developed cosmopolitan condition, since the EU itself is not cosmopolitan by virtue of being a transnational actor (Delanty, 2008: 334). Rather than arguing that the EU is itself an instance of cosmopolitanism, this paper conceives the EU as a catalyst of cosmopolitan change.

3.2. EU democracy in crisis

The unfolding of the euro crisis has revealed the weaknesses of European politicians, policies and democratic structures. The debt crisis has been so mismanaged since the start of 2010, that the survival of the euro is now in question, together with the survival of the EU itself as a political and economic project. The failure over the years to effectively eliminate the EU's democratic deficits is now in a perilous interaction with its economic inadequacies. As a result, trust in the EU institutions is falling, while nationalism and euroscepticism are growing in many countries.

Although the EU had set from the beginning that the creation of solidarity was fundamental for the achievement of a political union, the economic crisis has caused dramatic erosion in the spirit of solidarity. On the one hand, there is a strong opposition from many EU states in assisting the countries in the Mediterranean South in order to enjoy significant electoral profits in this way. On the other hand, states-in crisis which suffer from economic problems cannot receive the so-called 'rescue packages' as a manifestation of strong solidarity as the current system of economic governance is a system of disciplinary sanctions and penalties. These austerity-only policies are creating downward spirals of lower demand, greater debt and are directly leading to the impending eurozone recession.

Moreover, the current crisis revealed that the missing element of the Union is a supranational and all-inclusive system of governance. Monetary union without adequate financial and especially political union is difficult to be achieved. The intergovernmental–confederal side, which is increasingly dominated by Germany and France, is at odds with the federalist goals of the EU treaty. The European Council has become unbalanced and Germany-dominated, with France influential too. Also, the legitimacy and role of the more transnational European Commission – and to a lesser extent the European Parliament – have come under stronger

challenge in this crisis than ever before, while most initiatives have been passed onto national governments. Multilateralism is at risk of turning into unilateralism, equality into hegemony, sovereignty into the deprivation of sovereignty and recognition into disrespect for the democratic status of other nations. A split is present between the countries that already, or will soon, depend on the rescue funds and the countries financing the rescue funds, while the conflict between the Eurozone countries and the EU countries outside the Eurozone seems to escalate.

In sum, the crisis has revealed that the heart of the EU's democratic problem is preference for elitism, technocracy and partial democratic structures which lack a political understanding of functional democracy in terms of engaged and critical citizens that hold those in power to account. It seems that as more powers have been shifted over the years to the EU level, the practice of using intergovernmental meetings and summits, which are backed up by technocratic monitoring and implementation and are made up of complexity, lack of transparency and accountability, creates a distance from EU citizens.

Therefore, in the face of the current crisis, the question that arises is how can Europe guarantee its citizens security in the risk-storms raging in the globalised world and how can the 'Europe of bureaucracy' become a 'Europe of citizens'. Should Europe become a large nation, a confederation, a federal state, a mere economic community, an informal UN, or something historically new: namely, a cosmopolitan Europe?

3.3. Cosmopolitan Europe as the democratic solution?

If the heart of the crisis lies in the politics – including the politics of economic policy choices being made – then solutions lie in practice, in democratic European politics and not in the creation of an austerity union.

The enhancement of solidarity, one of the core principles of cosmopolitanism, is needed for the effective handling of the EU crisis. The challenge for the EU is to extend solidarity from the national to the regional level. At this point, cosmopolitanism which contains an unconfined orientation and moral responsibility towards humanity can act as the framework for the development of solidarity *within*, *between* and *among* the EU member-states. Adopting a cosmopolitan stance offers Europe the possibility to efficiently respond to the challenges of globalisation. This, in turn, will contribute in overcoming differences and finding commonalities that can fulfill moral cohesion at a socio-political level, instead of looking beforehand for specific, unique forms of European identity, culture and belonging.

Therefore, the promotion of European solidarity, communal cohesion and equality can be achieved by: a) giving stronger political emphasis to the fact that collective and individual solidarity is a value encouraged by the treaties and that the member-states should be inspired by it in the conduct of their national policies, b) closely monitoring respect for the European social and economic model, c) rebalancing the dialogue between finance ministers and social affairs ministers to the advantage of the latter, who now have practically no say in the affairs of the EU, d) introducing Eurobonds as new resources to support a fairer and more balanced growth, e) increasing the Union's own resources as part of the new financial framework and directing them towards new active solidarity policies at the EU level, f) taking concrete measures to fight poverty e.g. by setting a minimum European wage and finally, by g) allowing the European Central Bank to buy national bonds.

Hence, without strong ties of solidarity the Union would be dominated by national interests and rivalries. What is required is 'more Europe' which basically means 'more solidarity'. In this way, the EU could become a cosmopolitan political system achieving the 'ever closer union' together with the economic and political deepening of European integration.

Furthermore, the democratisation of the European Union, that is the strengthening of its democratic legitimacy, becomes necessary for the overcoming of the crisis. The fact that the crisis in the EU revealed the inability of the states to confront their problems alone rendered cosmopolitan democracy a current topic of interest. A cosmopolitan vision is capable of relocating existing states within a new overarching democratic framework (Archibugi and Held, 1995:14; Held, 1995: 230). This is because cosmopolitan democracy represents the midway between the state-centred model of democracy which is considered extremely weak promoting only intrastate democracy and the federal model of democracy which is extremely strong coercively imposing democratic orders on lower levels (Archibugi, 1998: 209-219).

In the case of the EU, its further democratisation is recommended here according to cosmopolitan democracy. For example, the European Parliament (EP) could become a fully-fledged parliament and the European Council a second chamber and legislator together with the EP. The European Commission should be considering the pan-European interest, rather than acting as technocratic enforcer of austerity rules irrespective of member-state politics. The weakening of the power of the European Council becomes necessary, i.e. replacing the unanimous vote requirement with simple majority. At the same time, the EP needs to be

reformed by having all its members elected on an EU-wide basis. In this way, local representation would be achieved through the ministers being accountable to the Council, while EU representation would be managed through the generally elected members of Parliament. The president of the European Commission could be directly elected by all the European citizens. Also, the use of referenda would amplify the role and sphere of public deliberation. The vertical organisation of political life, in which the nation state is the primary locus of public power, needs to be replaced with a more horizontal organisation in which a variety of authority spheres impinge on the individual. A cosmopolitan Europe attaches particular importance to transnational opportunities for interventions from below and to governance *with* the people, i.e. pluralist consultation by decision-making with a wide range of governmental and non-governmental bodies.

In short, for the protection of the EU and Eurozone radical changes are required which can be achieved only with the revision of the Lisbon Treaty and not with a new intergovernmental treaty to (re-)impose fiscal discipline. Now it is the chance for the EU to complement the monetary union with an economic, fiscal and political one according to cosmopolitan principles, taking under consideration that democratic politics require political diversity and a range of political choices.

4. THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE EU CRISIS ON THE ENLARGEMENT PROCESS: A LIMITED EXTERNAL EU COSMOPOLITANISM

If the future of European integration is linked to the emergence of a cosmopolitan Europe, then the EU enlargement process becomes one of the key tools for its realisation. This part addresses the problematic aspects of the EU's external context of cosmopolitanism, which are revealed through the enlargement process. The political significance of enlargement lies in the fact that it is the founding of a new political order creating or altering political procedures. Beginning with issues that have been already established high on political agendas, attention will be given to the EU-Turkey relationship. The main research question is how Turkish accession to the EU could help the EU to confront the challenges of globalisation and cultural diversity by adopting a cosmopolitan outlook. Turkey's membership in the EU cannot be evaluated solely with respect to Turkish ability to meet the Copenhagen criteria, because the difficulty in assessing Turkey's place in Europe is tied to the difficulty in defining what Europe is and what Europe we want. This is an importance difference from the previous enlargements of the EU, most notably in Central and Eastern Europe, where the accession negotiations were largely determined by the candidate country's adoption of the *acquis communautaire*.

To begin with, cosmopolitanism is inextricably connected with the enlargement process. A horizontal exchange of socio-cultural practices and a cross-fertilisation of identities have fostered the emergence of cosmopolitanism (Beck and Grande, 2007). The enlargement of the EU has facilitated such processes; ongoing integration and enlargement stand as a testament to the transience of the EU's spatial and cognitive boundaries as opposed to the reification of the nation state. Thus, a self-reflexive cultural and political subjectivity is developed and a social change is created which could be conceived as synonymous with a cosmopolitan outlook (Delanty and Rumford, 2005). Such an outlook is rooted in the normative idea that the scope of ethical concern should not be limited by parochial boundaries. It seeks to think *on* or *at* the border noting its blurred nature (Mignolo, 2000). It does not refer to the creation of a homogeneous EU empire or the overcoming of differences, but it relies on the preservation of diversity in the EU.

However, the dual pressures of deepening/widening brought the EU in front of a crisis. The 2005 rejection of the Constitutional Treaty with the French and Dutch referendums and the 2008 economic crisis illustrated the limits of integration and the lack of a common European identity able to hold European peoples together. In the absence of a common identity and under conditions of crisis, which threaten the national interests of member-states, introversion is provoked together with the tendency to rely on nations (Muftuler-Bac, 2011: 6). This is why a European identity based on cosmopolitanism and cultural diversity is crucial for the EU integration to flourish. Cosmopolitanism emphasises the diverse and discontinuous nature of European history and identity. The very meaning of Europe is defined by discrepant moments and interventions made by marginal identities which have constantly reinterpreted European values. As a result, there is no fixed notion of European identity while European culture is defined by diverse and conflicting cultural traditions (Baban and Keyman, 2006: 14). In this sense, the need to stress the cosmopolitan aspect of European identity is not simply an attempt to overcome the problems of turning European integration into another nation-building project, but it is dictated by the growing transnational linkages between the multicultural and diverse member-states.

In this respect, Turkey's membership in the EU is not an example of Europe losing its identity, but a redefinition of what Europe will come to represent in the global age. Turkish accession to the EU becomes particularly important within the above mentioned context as it is actually a European rather than a Turkish problem. It tests Europe's ability to deal with questions of postnationalism and cultural plurality and it raises questions of what the borders of Europe are, who

the Europeans and the others of Europe are. In deciding about the future of Turkey, Europe is deciding about its future; adopting a vision of European integration limited to the close economic and political cooperation of member-states or a broader vision that eventually transforms these member-states in a cosmopolitan way. This cosmopolitan vision differs from a nationalist outlook, which perceives both European and Turkish identities in zero-sum terms in the fear of heterogeneity and ignores the shared histories between the two or the many differences between and within the current 27 EU member-states (Parker, 2009: 1095). Europe is in a transitional stage, between on the one hand an accelerating transnationalism and cultural diversity and on the other hand a growing introversion due to current crisis. The case of Turkey provides Europe with a unique opportunity to bridge the gap between the 'West' and Muslim countries, proving that the European project is not culturally sealed, isolated and irrelevant in the global state of affairs.

Furthermore, the case of Turkey helps a multicultural society, such as the EU, to strengthen democracy at the supranational level. Cosmopolitanism reveals that a mere recognition and co-existence of multiple cultures is not sufficient. New tools of empowerment and institutional reforms need to develop offering the EU the opportunity to deal with the dual challenges of enlargement, i.e. cultural diversity and all-inclusive democracy. Turkey's accession would enable increased dialogue between different cultures in Europe. Also, its possible voting weight (based on its population) would be reflected in the Council voting system and would significantly affect the allocation of European Parliament seats of current member-states, in particular the medium sized and large countries. This accordingly would have a radical impact on the EU decision-making process enabling the adoption of supranational policies; for it would modify the current institutional equilibrium between the so-called "north-west core" which is less reliably integrationist or federalist than in the past and Mediterranean countries, which call for relocation of sovereignty to supranational institutions. So, Turkey's accession could lead to the introduction of new more symmetrical institutional reforms to improve the functioning of the Union. In this respect, the reform of the EU institutional system towards an increased cosmopolitanisation of EU policies could provide a guarantee against the risk of the EU to drift towards being a "free-trade zone" in the wake of successive rounds of enlargements.

In order to be legitimate in the future and to overcome its current democratic deficits, the ongoing creation of the EU through the enlargement process should reflect interests of both member-states and candidate member-states. This represents a sound principle on the basis of normative democratic theory, but also

a useful tool for designing effective political institutions. The question that arises then is how political processes might be institutionalised in order to enhance democratic legitimacy of enlargement decisions. First, applicant countries should have the same right to participate in the proceedings of institutions as present members have and to be offered similar institutional resources (including uniform practices by all the member-states, i.e. mobility rights to migrant populations of the applicant countries, political and cultural rights to residents and increased democratic participation of minority groups). Second, to the extent that the state institutions of the applicant country do not provide equal representation to everyone who lives in that country, the EU should mediate and provide institutional access for these less than equally represented groups. By reforming political institutions according to these directions and by reflecting a concept of democracy which does not discriminate against outsiders, EU policies could gain legitimacy and become cosmopolitan (Agne, 2011: 15-19). This accordingly could impact positively on the problem-solving capacity of the Union once enlarged, as willingness to cooperate for the solution of joint problems, such as the current crisis, could be facilitated through the deepening of European integration.

Finally, the challenge for the EU is not to let its current sovereign debt crisis to potentially slow future rounds of enlargement. The future of European integration and Turkish membership depend upon the emergence of a cosmopolitan Europe and the resolution of the ongoing identity struggles in both the EU and Turkey. In this sense, Turkey's accession on transforming the EU into a cosmopolitan union has a symbolic value. For these reasons, the cosmopolitan principles of fairness, objectivity, universality and impartiality (avoiding higher, lower or double standards and rules) should guide the EU's treatment of Turkey.

5. Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to address the problem of the European crisis and its implications on the enlargement process. A major question it tried to answer is whether positive political forms of regional cooperation at the EU level and institutional reforms will develop along cosmopolitan lines, i.e. going beyond intergovernmentalism and narrow economic and security concerns, so as to enhance the Union's limited inner cosmopolitanism which is affected by the crisis. This question is also a cultural question and concerns the capacities of the EU to transform itself in light of the perspective of the Other. This opportunity can be given to EU through the enlargement process especially towards Turkey, which is able to enhance the Union's limited external context of cosmopolitanism.

A truly cosmopolitan Europe needs to engage with Turkey in a self-critical manner; and a cosmopolitan engagement with Turkey will feed back into the development of a critical cosmopolitanism in Europe.

Optimism of this paper about cosmopolitanism in the EU should not be taken to be utopian, visionary or hoping for it to work. Rather, my approach was critical about bases for cosmopolitanism, yet also open to possibilities for it, but in ways that go beyond utopianism, by looking for a material basis, in the case of the European Union.

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