Cosmopolitanism without Agents? Engaging the Statist Critique

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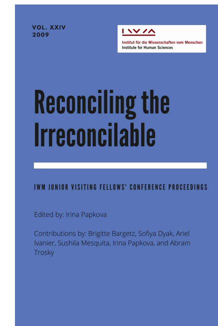

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This paper addresses the debate on global economic distributive justice through the lens of contemporary international relations theory, reviewing works by three renowned cosmopolitan theorists: Charles Beitz, Martha Nussbaum and Thomas Pogge. The paper maps the moral principles that have been proposed by these authors for a discussion of the present international economic order, and critically assesses the consequences that their application could have for the reform of actually existing institutions. The three authors are compared according to their definitions of the hypothetical original conditions of global justice, the rules proposed to satisfy fairness principles in global institutions, the prescriptions to promote a cosmopolitan transformation of the world and the role rich and poor states should perform within these schemes. By and large, all three authors agree on the philosophical premises that justify world economic re-distribution, and acknowledge the necessity of building global authorities with limited powers to promote cosmopolitan transformations. Simultaneously, all three fall short of adequately critiquing the political mechanisms under which existing global economic institutions operate, and of presenting a precise plan that could promote a cosmopolitan agenda in the immediate future. This paper, then, suggests that cosmopolitans lack a theory of the state. Furthermore, critical liberal theory would gain in substance if its defendants took into consideration some empirical findings on political economy and historical analyses in the field of development studies.

Charles Beitz and the Origins of the Global Justice Debate

Debates on the meaning of cosmopolitanism have been at the core of the liberal tradition in international relations theory since the publication of Kant's *Perpetual Peace* in 1795. Initially, theoretical elaborations remained confined to interpretations of Kant's idea of "separate peace" and the prospects for world democratization; over time, the subject has come to include ponderings on global economic inequalities and the duties that exist to ease massive material deprivation in the developing world. When evaluating the world economy, cosmopolitans concerned with global justice interpret rights as they affect

persons independently of their geography of residence, nationality or citizenship. Subscribers to this school of thought condemn external value considerations as attached to traditional, religious or ethnic traits, and tend to evaluate the justice of political arrangements based on the extent to which they enhance individual capacities and liberties. Cosmopolitans of all brands would also agree that universal values become realized in the satisfaction of basic human needs, including "obtaining food, safe drinking water, clothing, shelter, a certain (though, across societies, variable) level of education, and access to basic health care"[1].

The story of how global economic destitution came to motivate academic work can be traced to debates that transpired during the 1970s in the field of philosophy in the United States. That field was revolutionized after Rawls' *Theory of Justice* sparked a revival of normative approaches to social justice.[2] The subject had been overlooked by mainstream social science after the postwar behavioral revolution set aside philosophical reasoning, considering it as mere "speculation." In particular, Rawls's "two principles of justice" initiated an interpretive exchange among theorists that continues today. He famously stated that if people were to choose their political institutions in an initial position of fairness, they would make sure that: "1) each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive total system of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar system of liberty for all and 2) social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both: a) to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged, consistent with the just savings principle (difference principle) and b) attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity".[3]

The release of Rawls's book coincided with the emergence of a new international movement of developing states pressing for substantial reforms in international economic relations. The movement was galvanized in the UN General Assembly –where poor countries had finally gained the majority of seats- through the establishment of the UN Conference on Trade and Development in 1964, and the Declaration for the Establishment of a New International Economic Order (NIEO) in 1974. Both initiatives addressed the problematic of global economic inequalities as a hindrance to the achievement of peace and security.[4] Conventional international relations theorists at the time were reluctant to make sense of the NIEO appeal, which included such demands as economic measures to guarantee price stabilization for raw materials in world markets, technology transfers to developing nations, lowering of trade barriers and agricultural subsidies in advanced countries, and the right of poor states to nationalize industries related to the extraction of natural resources within their borders. NIEO was interpreted by "realist" writers as a mere political strategy by poor states that wanted to shift the balance or power in their favor through leveraging international institutions;[5] else it was deemed irrelevant from a juridical point of view by those in the "international society" tradition who, while more attuned with the argumentations of international law, had a tendency to disregard the global economy as a field for normative considerations. [6] Subsequently, Rawls himself would make explicit his refusal to acknowledge the applicability of his principles of justice beyond the limits of "liberal" societies, while also specifying that the realm of international relations could be properly ruled through the established traditions of international law.[7]

Yet some of Rawls' disciples have presented a different interpretation of his original work; in doing so, they have redefined the limits of what a cosmopolitan consciousness should require in terms of fostering a more egalitarian world economy. Charles Beitz was among the first international relations scholars to propose expanding on Rawls' agenda and to construct cosmopolitan arguments for world economic re-distribution.[8] According to Beitz, notions of state sovereignty could no longer be disassociated from considerations of social justice, both domestic and international. He advocated the discussion of political obligation in global economic affairs and found a way to address his points by taking stock in the then fashionable debate on economic "interdependence".[9] Beitz noticed that increased interconnections in the organization of the world economy implied greater economic vulnerabilities for different persons in different countries, and in consequence, there was no reason to believe that principles of justice that applied to the domestic level should not hold sway above national frontiers. Part three of Beitz's book dealt with distributive justice and explicitly defended the UN's General Assembly NIEO Declaration (1974), suggesting that the text should be interpreted as a sort of obligation that requires wealthy countries to substantially increase their contributions in the form of development assistance to less developed nations.

Beitz resorted to Rawls' theory of justice, claiming that if the two principles of justice were valid at the domestic level, they should be extended at the international level as well; any restrictive interpretation would be unfair to the rights of poor country nationals. A crucial assumption in Rawls' theory was that a "veil of ignorance" excluded from the original position (or contractual moment) all knowledge about signatories' particular identities and interests, place in society, history, level of development and culture. But Rawls assumed that the "boundaries" of justice were self-contained national communities and that his principles applied to single nations understood as a "cooperative ventures for mutual advantage". Rawls accepted –mistakenly, according to Beitz – that there were marginal interactions among states at the international level for which traditional principles of international law –such as the sovereign rights to independence and the principles of non-intervention and self-defense- would suffice to ensure international peace and justice. Beitz argued that this had long ago ceased to be a realistic description of the world[10]. Even in the absence of international cooperation, the question of unequally distributed entitlements to natural resources may give rise to moral concerns when addressing the luck of individuals who were born in resource poor geographies; it is far from evident to pretend they would have accepted that situation in any "initial position"[11]. Possible inequalities resulting from commercial relations make this issue even more pertinent. According to Beitz, the growth of international investment and trade since the end of World War Two had transformed international relations in such a way that cooperation would eventually be required to fulfill everyday economic goals in any place of the world. Capital surpluses were no longer confined to reinvestment in the societies where they were produced, foreign direct investments had expanded through the extraction of monopoly rents, and more importantly, unequal increases in technology efficiency had also contributed to the exacerbation of inequality between rich and poor countries. As a consequence, when addressing justice in international trade, Beitz arrived at the same conclusions that had surfaced after much empirical scholarship by the historical and structuralist approaches in political economy: that the most vulnerable

parties in world trade were those with heavy concentration of exports in a few products and heavy concentration of export markets in few countries; that governments would find problems in controlling their own economies; and that gains from trade and retained profits tend to remain in hands of the upper classes. Practically, Beitz's normative solution to this crisis implied international redistribution through foreign aid –in the name of compensation, not "charity"- to poor states, even when he acknowledged that autonomous governments may not be reliable enough to fulfill the goal of spreading wealth within their territories. International institutions would then be preferred if they were perceived to be more efficient. The policy instruments he suggested where:

> a generalized system of preferential tariffs for poor countries and the removal of non-tariff barriers to trade, or (…) the use of Special Drawing Rights in the International Monetary Fund as a form of development assistance… Perhaps some other mechanisms of redistribution would be preferable from the point of view of economic efficiency –for example, direct transfer payments to poor countries- but, since such mechanisms may well be politically impossible at present, and since they raise the assurance problem more sharply, they seem less preferable from the point of view of distributive justice than the policies suggested above.[12]

Changes in the world economy over the last three decades have made Beitz's framework all the more influential. The creation of an oil cartel and its impact in successive "stagflation" crises in the 1970s marked the limits of NIEO as a political strategy, which only benefited a minority of states at the expense of oil importers. By the early 1980s most parts of the developing world were affected by a debt crisis that would push them to embrace Bretton Woods financial institutions as the main source of policy advice to implement the "structural adjustment" of their economies.[13] After the collapse of the Soviet Union, former communist states also requested membership in multilateral institutions governing the capitalist world. More and more governments promoted the marketization of what where previously perceived as public goods, as a result of which unfettered global markets have been further enhanced. Today the internationalization of production, distribution, finance and management has deepened the degree of integration of the world beyond mere trade relations. The emergence of new sources of authority and power in the hands of private actors and transnational networks in civil society has moved authors to debate whether a functional global economy is being constructed, and what it ultimately implied for the stability of territorial nation states.[14] In the field of development studies, these changes have led scholars and practitioners to substitute the term "globalization" for "dependence/interdependence" and to add the adjective "global" before they refer to each part of the North-South divide. In other words, the two sides have inter-penetrated to the extent that now "winners" and "losers" may be on either side depending on the context, which makes the elucidation of the cosmopolitan ideas all the more pressing.

Martha Nussbaum, Thomas Pogge and the Critique of Today's Global Economic Order

From a cosmopolitan perspective, pessimism about the organization of the world economy remains as pressing today as it did three decades ago. The entire structure of international institutions could be questioned to the extent that it affects the capacity of people to access basic resources and goods that are relevant for the realization of their life trajectories. Much philosophical exchange has taken place since the publication of Beitz's work, and various intellectuals have contributed to emboldening the cosmopolitan paradigm through expounding the ultimate failures of our current world economic order. The rest of this paper discusses two lines of argumentation as embodied in works by Martha Nussbaum and Thomas Pogge, two authors that could be singled out as representative of a larger and more heterogeneous list.

Both Nussbaum and Pogge have sharpened some of Beitz's intuitions through refining and specifying the social and economic rights to be enshrined in global regimes, and through critically identifying continued sources of inequality in the operation of actual international organizations. Nussbaum has gained fame for conceiving a sophisticated model to measure "basic human needs," one that has become a landmark in the field of development studies and is often referred to as the "capabilities" approach. Pogge, on the other hand, has focused on illuminating the relationship that exists between poverty, human rights and the hindrances that global regimes could create to the spread of democracy in the poorest regions of the world.

Still, it will be suggested here that notwithstanding many of their merits, these discussions have only marginally addressed issues of how global economic inequalities could be attenuated, let alone provided a "compass" to activists, or specified what roles states should have in promoting a human rights-based development agenda[15].

In collaboration with economist Amartya Sen, Nussbaum has defended the idea that justice requires the protection of certain basic human rights through the expansion of personal "capabilities", which can only be achieved given the availability of both material and immaterial "entitlements," and should be considered fundamental for the realization of any life-worthy human project.[16] The list of central capabilities includes: Life, bodily health, bodily integrity, ability to use senses, imagination and thought, ability to experience emotions, use of practical reason, communal affiliations, concern for other species, play, and concern for the environment[17]. The idea behind the capabilities approach is that people should be free to lead the type of life they have reason to value, and existing social arrangements should allow for the maximization of people's liberties. The achievement of human dignity thus includes both "negative" and "positive" interpretations of liberties and human rights, depending on contextual conditions; "a focus on capabilities (…) informs us that our goal is not merely "negative liberty" or absence of interfering state action –one very common understanding of the notion of rights- but, instead, the full ability of people to be and to choose these very important things. Thus all capabilities have an economic aspect: even the freedom of speech requires education, adequate nutrition, etc."[18]

The capabilities approach also maintains that wealth is only a means towards the fulfillment of different ends (i.e. the realization of human goals), and that the aggregation of economic wealth in society cannot occur to the detriment of basic principles of equality.

Thus the capabilities approach rejects the utilitarian foundations of mainstream positive economics. At the national level, acknowledging this fact necessarily highlights that economic growth is no longer to be considered as the ultimate indicator of human welfare, and that it should be compounded with other aspects of development empirically reflected by indicators of health and education levels.

Sen and Nussbaum's work has had a great impact on development thinking and policy making, especially because they contested the utilitarian tradition's preference-based views on how to measure well being. The views of the authors were echoed by the United Nations Development Program in the 1990s, when it adopted the capabilities approach to the design of its Human Development index.[19]

More recently, Nussbaum has also taken a position in the debate on global justice. She has built on her capabilities approach to construct a framework that is quite distinct from the contractualist models of both Rawls and Beitz.[20] Specifically, she suggests that her capabilities approach could be applied as a standard to judge the morality of global institutions. In agreement with Beitz, she proposes that global justice requires the extension of moral considerations beyond the limits of national borders. In today's world, a global bargain would be the only convincing manner to put the aspirations of individuals –independent of their place of birth- on equal grounds as the subject of justice. For this to happen, it is necessary that all individuals be included as *equal* parties in the constitutional design of a just global structure. Nussbaum's main concerns are with the details of the negotiation: what information would the parties have, how would the bargain be negotiated in our real world, and finally what would the role of states be, if any at all. One central criticism of the works by Rawls and Beitz is that their definition of the original position, to the extent that it is heir to the contractarian tradition of liberal thought, appears to be incomplete. Neither of the authors can account for such differences in wealth and status that could affect an individual's life chances *even before she or he is born* (i.e. differential nutrition, differential cognitive stimuli, exposure to violence and disease). The only way out for Nussbaum is "admitting from the start that the point of the bargain is not, and cannot be, mutual advantage among 'rough equals.' It must be human fellowship and mutual respect in a more expansive sense".[21] She proposes that equality of entitlements – aimed at enhancing human capabilities- be the goal of global justice. Whereas domestic political constitutions should allow for the creation of the necessary institutions, such as legislatures, courts and administrative agencies that would guarantee an efficient system of taxation and welfare, things are less clear when we need to address international duties. Discarding the creation of a world state for both efficiency and moral impediments the author supports an international structure that remains "thin and decentralized," and should consist of the domestic structures of rich states (though reformed to provide assistance to poorer countries) and existing multilateral financial institutions and multinational corporations, together with other international regimes or agreements involving such issues as human rights, labor and environment. Nussbaum's list does not include any assessment of how existing institutions "actually work;" nor does she elaborate on how the global economic order may afflict poor nations' accessibility to entitlements. She argues that existing political instruments are the result of "history," and thus may or may not coincide with the prescriptions of normative reflection, which she

argues, cannot be forcefully imposed. She does, though, present a list of prescriptions that could improve the slow implementation of a capabilities approach of global scale, including: A compelling demand for local governments – if they are economically capable – to guarantee a minimum degree of entitlements independently of international transfers; the need to err on the positive in terms of fulfilling responsibilities by local and global actors; a respect of the principle of sovereignty in the conduct of international affairs; a duty of rich nations to transfer resources to poorer countries; a duty for multinational corporations to provide funds for better education and environmental standards in the countries they operate; more fairness to poorer nations in the organization of global institutions; a concern for people in a situation of dependency; and for gender equality independently of "religious or cultural values".[22]

Even though Nussbaum seems critical of the level of abstraction required to accept Rawls' and Beitz' presentation of the original position, her list is also prey to objections of "unfeasibility." (She herself acknowledges the list needs further thought regarding money transfers).[23] Interestingly, she not only assumes that democratic regimes will necessarily be efficient aid allocators, but ignores the history of Western developmental aid, which at least until the end of the Cold War was affected by a variety of variables other than promoting democracy and economic justice. She also apparently remains agnostic about substantial critical judgment on the political economy of international organizations. While her capabilities-oriented cosmopolitanism may have improved Rawls and Beitz's conceptualization of the original position of justice, she does not present a clear way to enforce it, and is not very argumentative about the impediments the existing global economic order imposes on the global poor[24].

Thomas Pogge is another prominent contributor to the contemporary debate on cosmopolitanism. His main project has also been to argue for a defense of a global economic order respectful of basic human needs. Although he adopts a contractarian scheme where justice principles are held to be universal, he has recently made the claim that severe poverty could be denounced as a violation of human rights from a variety of other normative perspectives.[25] In a landmark book and a series of articles, this liberal egalitarian thinker has argued for substantial reform of the present international economic order. In *World Poverty and Human Rights* (2002), Pogge first addressed the issue of the interrelationship between the global economic order and the prospects of democracy in the developing world. His central argument is based on the premise that in the context of globalization, it is not possible to study the impact of external variables on human well being independently of the domestic structure of states. In other words, "methodological" nationalism should be abandoned if the social sciences are to remain of any use in the twenty-first century. Pogge has built on Beitz's critique of the "autonomy of states" to suggest that the priority of compatriots in the establishment of moral judgments about re-distribution should be compromised when the basic human interests of foreigners are at stake[26]. Pogge maintains that if it can be proved that the existing international economic order causally harms the poor, it should then be denounced and reformed, a question that is independent of the fact that domestic conditions in the developing world may be also influential in perpetuating deprivation. In short, unlike Nussbaum, Pogge chooses to explain the prevalence of deprivation in the developing

world by looking at its international sources[27]. He adequately frames the discussion as one in which the very concepts of nationalism and collective identities need to be bracketed when discussing issues of global justice.

More significantly, Pogge also questions the predominant view in the social sciences that domestic factors are the primary determinants of economic performance. He argues that even where there are traceable trajectories showing how countries may or may not improve the occurrence of poverty within their national frontiers, it is also clear that "nationalist" explanations must accommodate the fact that the global economic order plays a significant role in shaping and constraining those itineraries, ultimately being inseparable of a poor country's history, culture, and natural environment. It is likely that in the future external variables will affect the development of any country's domestic institutional order, ruling elites, economic growth prospects, and income distribution.

Pogge provides some contemporary examples of the global economic order's effect on national performance, including pervasive participation by multinational corporate actors in corruption deals in poor countries, the acceptance by international law regimes of diplomatic impunity for war criminals, and the acquiescence of transnational banking regulations to such practices as money laundering and capital flight. His foremost point here is that the principle of sovereignty is not in itself a guarantee against corrosive forms of political activities and economic transactions which occur across national borders. Pogge focuses on two types of practices, which he refers to as resulting from the "international resource privilege" and the "international borrowing privilege:"

> The resource privilege we confer upon a group in power is much more than our acquiescence in its effective control over the natural resources of the country in question. This privilege includes the power to effect legally valid transfers of ownership rights in such resources. (…) The international resource privilege provides powerful incentives toward coup attempts and civil wars in the resource rich countries (…) Similar points can be made about the international borrowing privilege, according to which any group holding governmental power in a national territory (…) is entitled to borrow funds in the name of the whole society, thereby imposing internationally valid legal obligations upon the country at large.[28]

Independently of the internal factors that could contribute to the perpetuation of poverty, what is central to Pogge's argumentation is that such symptoms as corruption, capital flight and natural resource depletion are both "internal" and "external" variables at the same time -even more so in the context of globalization. The deleterious impact that these activities have on development indicators would not be such if, say, oil or other raw materials were not traded globally, creating profits for banks and companies in advanced industrialized countries in a way that is legally binding from the point of view of international law. But this is often overlooked by what the author labels "explanatory nationalism:"

> Explanatory nationalism (…) makes us look at poverty and oppression as problems whose root cause and possible solutions are domestic to the foreign countries in which they occur (…) But, since we see no causal link between global factors and the incidence of oppression, corruption, and poverty, we do not even ask whether those who shape global institutions and, more generally, the global context in which the poorer countries are placed have a negative moral responsibility for world poverty. Some quick reflection may show the importance of such causal links.[29]

Thus, Pogge's cosmopolitanism basically sustains that nationalist concerns must be compromised when they endanger the basic rights of foreigners, a view he argues is still to captivate the minds of policy makers in the advanced world.

The consistency of Pogge's argument is sustained in the acceptability of only one basic premise – that the duty to comply with the basic negative right "not to harm" should be applied globally. Pogge thus avoids taking sides on the question of whether "positive" or "negative" rights should take priority in particular contexts: if the global economic order harms the poor by preventing the satisfaction of basic human needs, then we are actually exceeding our exercise of negative freedoms by either not reforming the system or finding a way of compensating its victims. Pogge's proposed solution would be a reform of international law in the direction of protecting the "no harm" negative right independent of geography. Treaties could be signed denouncing the international selling of a country's resources when *de facto* rulers usurped governments of their legitimate constitutional authorities; altering incentives to engage in predatory behavior would improve poverty and other human development indicators. Like Kant and other liberal international relations theorists, Pogge privileges the spread of democracy as the best antidote to corruption and the perpetuation of poverty. He presents a series of reforms for the domestic constitutions of developing countries and the international regimes governing the export of national resources and financial markets that would alter the incentives of would-be dictators to seize power violently.[30] Pogge also suggests some caveats to the likelihood of success, namely, the fact that the rich democracies rely on cheap access to natural resources whose price is maintained artificially low by dictators; that despotic governments would not be interested in raising world prices of these goods to build the necessary infrastructure that would eradicate massive deprivation. Pogge is also skeptical that democratization will likely expand unhindered, noting the pervasiveness of the international resource privilege that ensures the flow of cheap resources to rich consumers."[31]

But even when Pogge refers to the insidious impact of the global order on development, he does not dwell on the many other implications that his own analysis has for the reform of *actually existing* international institutions. He also does not contemplate the possibility that inequalities and poverty may persist even in the absence of "Dutch diseases" and tyrannies. A clear example is Brazil, which Pogge utilizes as an example of unjust polity to contrast the degree of inequalities the advanced industrialized world would not be willing to tolerate in its own domestic realm, yet acquiesces to globally[32]. He does not comment on the fact that political democracy has not been enough to eradicate Brazil's massive poverty. Only in a footnote does Pogge note the vested interests

multinational corporations and consumers in the advanced world may have in perpetuating cheap prices for natural resources that would not reflect their "real value" from a human based needs perspective. In a critique of what he refers as "standard broadly Marxist accounts of global inequality," Pogge writes,

> Thanks to high-tech production methods, the corporations of the developed world are becoming much less dependent on appropriating the cheap labor power of poor populations (which is not to deny that they do so, and do so profitably). Thanks to the enormous concentration of global buying power in the high-income economies, the corporations of the developed world are becoming much less dependent on opening the developing world's markets for their products, services, and lending (though they and their governments are working quite hard to achieve such "penetration" while protecting their own markets against "unfairly cheap" imports from the developing countries). The dependence of the developed world on the developing countries has shifted to their natural resources, crude oil first and foremost. This trend entails a shift in its interest in their people: The developed world need not be concerned about their being healthy enough to reproduce their labor power or affluent enough to buy its products. The fewer and the poorer they are, the less they will interfere with foreign appropriation of their resources." [33]

This somewhat simplistic elaboration is open to criticism from a number of angles - particularly concerning the relationship between states, markets and long term economic planning – but it is sufficient to mention that here Pogge has since been contradicted by facts: if the present trend of high prices for oil, foodstuffs and other commodities continues over time, it may create a scenario not unlike the one that aroused so much debate and expectations at the time of NIEO in the 1970s. In any event, Pogge's skepticism seems to be biased by a "static" understanding of the global economy that fails to acknowledge the plausibility of state interventionism in determining prices and affecting both trade and financial relations in the global economy[34].

Cosmopolitanism and the State: Possible Compromise?

Cosmopolitanism has myriad detractors that cannot be addressed in detail here. Still, we must respond to at least those critiques that are relevant for the design of world economic organizations. Most criticisms of cosmopolitan perspectives are not ultimately different from the ones received by the contractualist liberal school; they come from intellectual traditions such as republicanism, multi-culturalism and communitarianism. Opponents accuse cosmopolitans of focusing on an understanding of human identity that is awkwardly unrealistic. Human beings, they claim, are not abstract individuals who can decide with unbounded rationality about the best institutions and practices to govern life without due attention to their immediate environments. Individuals are strongly limited by other commitments that have much to do with their histories and traditions, local loyalties and solidarities. In particular, communitarians and multi-culturalists will question most individualist core premises of liberalism; for them the debate is reduced to the ultimate answer to such ontological issues as the existence of universal reason, or the definition of non-oppressive conditions for inter-cultural dialogue.[35] Within international relations theory, authors in the English school have also contested the idea

that the Westphalia system of states is any close to losing ground under the threat of "globalism." Some authors in this tradition see the principle of sovereignty as a guarantee, not a hindrance, to the defense of human rights through the spread of a plurality of human values, cultures and lifestyles.[36] Since our focus is on problems that arise out of global economic inequalities and the ways in which these often give rise to "more or less" types of conflict that equally affect populations independently of their group identities, we will assume that value pluralists will be mostly unaltered by our conclusions.

But there is another criticism, akin to the republicanist or "statist" traditions that appears to be more directly relevant for our discussion of international economic organizations. It is the question related to the role nation-states have played in shaping the modern world. Craig Calhoun has presented one of the common critiques of globalizing processes from a statist point of view:

> States bolstered by nationalist passions –and nationalists eager to gain state power- were behind many of the twentieth century's bloody wars. Surely this was –and remains- a good prima facie case for hating abuses of state authority merged with ancient resentments of state power. But it is one thing to seek limits to the exercise of state power and another to contemplate transcending it. It is one thing to encourage a cosmopolitan pluralism of perspectives and another to regard nationalism as merely a fading inheritance and not a recurrently renewed source of solidarity. It is one thing to seek to advance global civil society and another to imagine democracy thrive without effective states.[37]

While rescuing the history of nationalism for the democratic tradition, Calhoun synthesizes some core ideas of both republicanism and patriotism and introduces social solidarity as a key variable in the creation of necessary cohesion for modern forms of life, which could not easily be left aside in the name of abstract universalism. Calhoun also surveys the problems that so-called "failed states" can create in terms of global disease, crime and human rights abuses. Examples in the post-Cold war period are plenty that can witness to these quandaries. On the same vein, Timothy Brennan has suggested that internationalism should be defended before any cosmopolitan ideal can be realized. For him that means acknowledging that the principle of national sovereignty is the only one under modern conditions that was successful in gaining respect for weaker societies or peoples. By disparaging the material importance of the state, cosmopolitans may do a disservice to their constituencies who are most dependent on local loyalties for the delivery of basic services:

> We are repeatedly made to imagine that ordinary people have the same access to education, funding, and travel that intellectuals and businessmen do, and that they can exploit the same global networks of communication in a variety of foreign languages. Such mistaken assumptions are the product of the comospolitanism of cultural politicians who actually do live transnationally, and whose humanist/ethical outlook enlivens and, in some ways, softens their policy suggestions in the public sphere. Among the issues forgotten here are those key advantages that nations provide global subalterns they wish to free from the tyranny of the national state –advantages that are particularly condemned by the humanists who are hostile to the myth of national belonging.[38]

But do cosmopolitans truly advocate for the transcending of the state and the dissolution of local authority? Most of them are indifferent about that particular issue. If the tradition is traced back to Kant's writings on *Perpetual Peace,* the states were still a cornerstone that would sustain his separate democratic peace project. In contemporary theorizations, cosmopolitan democrats only advocate for the creation of a new layer of authority to address global concerns, but if anything most defendants would see the state as a necessary partner in the new structures of governance. Even the most radically libertarian versions –such as Richard Falk's theorization on new world orders and globalization from below- only contemplate the dissolution of the state in the very long term.[39]

A tempting suggestion would be that these arguments are the result of a sleight of hand that confuses "cosmopolitan ends" with the means that are necessary to achieve them; a confusion for which cosmopolitans are also to blame the moment they most likely played their part in what seems to be a spiraling process of "conceptual stretching." Where does the misnomer come from? It is one thing whether individuals should be considered the ultimate source of moral concern, and a very different one to deny whether, under certain circumstances, it is through the enhancement of state capacities that those goals could be served. In other words, no true "cosmopolitan" will question that states, as instruments, may have played important roles in the realization of humanistic purposes.

Calhoun also associates defendants of cosmopolitan democracy as theorists akin to neo-liberalism: "mostly produced from the political center or the soft left they [cosmopolitans] shared with neo-liberals from the harder right a contempt for the states which they understood as mainly authoritarian and dangerous".[40] This is again, not a necessary conclusion; as it was discussed above, the origins of cosmopolitanism in international relations theory can be associated to works by writers sympathetic to the 1974 UN General Assembly Declaration for a New International Economic Order of 1974 and the 1980 UN report by the Brandt commission, hardly neo-liberal documents.

Brennan goes to the extreme of arguing that the modern nation state should be justified *de facto*, without normative judgment over its legitimacy "For viewed organizationally, nations may be as much a matter of practical default as of ideal enchantment, or manipulation. For a long historical epoch there has been no alternative to them, because no coercive hegemonic apparatus of rule –notwithstanding imperial efforts by Egyptians, Macedonians, Turks, Mongols, Mughals, Romans, Britons, Germans and latterly North Americans- was capable of managing the entire earth".[41] Thus, Brennan seems to accept the premises of ontological "statism" even after having acknowledged that often times the fortification of modern nation states in Europe was needed for purposes of colonial expansion.

The "statist" critique is also perhaps the result of the unhappy misunderstanding between philosophers and empirically oriented social scientists. Because cosmopolitans have raised their voice against skeptic "realism" and the implications that could follow out of "reifying" the juridical value of states, it does not mean that cosmopolitans will un-conditionally oppose state interventionism, though the subject has so far remained under-developed. Yet a whole literature of political science has paid due attention to the state to the point that it is no longer the case that it needs to be "brought back in". The historical-

institutionalist school that studied the "varieties of capitalism" has also found empirical evidence on the resilience of state institutions in many different contexts from the promotion of economic development to the expansion of welfare institutions. At the moment, what a cosmopolitan perspective could add to this literature is a moral assessment of their success or failure, an instrumental appraisal of whether the states have expanded or limited the fulfillment of humanistic goals and a sensible judgment over the circumstances where this is more or less likely to happen. This is apparent in a definition by Charles Beitz:

> For one thing, cosmopolitan liberalism is not a view about the best institutional structure for international politics. It does not necessarily hold, for example, that states should be subordinated to a global political authority or a world government; it is agnostic, so to speak, about the proper political constitution of international relations […] Cosmopolitan liberalism, as I conceive it, is a doctrine about the basis on which institutions and practices should be justified or criticized. It applies to the world the maxim that choices about what policies we should prefer, what constitutions we should establish, should be based on an impartial consideration for the claims of each person who would be affected. […] It aims to identify principles that are acceptable when each person's prospects, rather than the prospects of each society or people, are taken fairly into account.[42]

In other words, Beitz suggests that whether cosmopolitans are for or against the "states" cannot be answered in the abstract. The ultimate goal of political authorities is to ensure the enjoyment of freedoms and liberties by individuals, and the state may be considered a second best solution to the insecurities of an anarchical world or an efficient re-distributive instrument to ensure the fairness of economic relations; nothing less but nothing more. The cosmopolitan limited insight is that states should have no "added" value, be it in terms of emphasizing cultural norms, ethnic identities, nationalities, languages, gender, or religious affiliations.

On the same vein, Martha Nussbaum suggests that "globalizing" her capabilities approach should not imply doing away with national and cultural differences: "although the approach remains focused on the person as goal, and is committed to securing the basic goods and life for each, it is respectful of cultural difference in several ways: in the role carved out for nations in implementing and more concretely specifying the list; in the prominence, on this list, of the major liberties of speech and conscience, and in the idea that capability, not functioning, is the appropriate political goal –once an opportunity is given to people, they may choose what to do with it."[43] State institutions emerge, so to speak, to resolve collective actions problems that individuals are unable to cope with, even when it is human beings that remain the basic units of moral concern: "institutions impose on all, in a fair way, the duty to support the capabilities of all, up to a minimum threshold. Beyond that, people are free to use their money, time, and other resources as their own conception of the good dictates. Ethical norms internal to each religious or ethical comprehensive doctrine will determine how far each person is ethically responsible for doing more than what is institutionally required. But the political task of supporting the capabilities threshold itself is delegated to institutions."[44]

In the case of Thomas Pogge, the role of the state needs to be apprehended from what he defines as “institutional cosmopolitanism” or the idea that we should think of state institutions as ultimate tools to promote the fulfillment of basic human rights: “one ought not to cooperate in the imposition of a coercive institutional order that avoidably leaves human rights unfulfilled without making reasonable efforts to aid its victims and to promote institutional reform.”[45] Pogge promotes a cosmopolitan world order that is decentralized, but that increasingly should incorporate the possibility of individuals being represented *directly* in the workings of international organizations: if we forget this, we ran the risk that their interests will be overlooked by powerful states:

> As persons become ever more heavily affected by the structure of the global economic order, they have an ever stronger moral claim to an equal opportunity for political participation in shaping this order. This claim is not fulfilled when its design is determined by free bargaining among states. For such negotiations do not satisfy the equal-opportunity principle so long as many people are excluded from effective political participation within their state, and many states are much too weak significantly to affect the outcome of such negotiations [46]

Perhaps it may well be the case that not only can cosmopolitans accommodate statist concerns, but also that an engagement with local political authorities will be a necessary step in the fulfillment of global justice, particularly in the absence of better re-distributive institutions at the global level. The key issue then is to be able to separate two different types of questions. 1) From a moral point of view, are individuals to be considered of equal moral value independently of their geography of residence? 2) What are the best institutional devices to achieve this end? While most cosmopolitans agree on a positive answer to the first question, they may disagree on alternative answers to the second. If “global governance” debates have become ubiquitous, this does not lead to the wishful conclusion that all problems will be solved by extending power to global authorities; answers must be given on a case by case basis. Cosmopolitans should be in consensus that the government – or some form of official global authority- intervenes to ensure an equal standard for everybody.

The other problem lies on how to put the principles into practice. In this paper answers to this question were discussed as presented by three philosophers through a temporal span of three decades. It was argued that, while they all seem to be on common grounds to denounce our present world economic order as unjust, they tend to remain un-programmatic about how to build alternative institutions, let alone discuss the political reform of actually existing ones. Arguably, an encompassing theory that incorporates these concerns could better accommodate many of the “statist” concerns addressed here, while remaining loyal to a basic human needs morality.

Notes:

[1] Jones, C. (1999): *Global Justice: Defending Cosmopolitanism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[2] Rawls, J. (1971): *A Theory of Justice*. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

[3] Rawls, J. (1971): *A Theory of Justice*. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 7.

[4] Murphy, C. (1984): *The Emergence of the NIEO Ideology*. Boulder: Westview Press.

[5] Krasner, S. D. (1985): *Structural Conflict: The Third World against Global Liberalism*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

[6] Hoffmann, S. (1981): Duties Beyond Borders: On the Limits and Possibilities of Ethical International Politics. Syracuse , N.Y.: Syracuse University Press. – Bull, H. (1977): *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics*. London: Macmillan.

Rawls, J. (1999): The Law of Peoples; with the Idea of Public Reason Revisited. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

[8] Beitz, C. R. (1979): *Political Theory and International Relations*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

[9] Keohane, R. O., and J. S. Nye (1977): *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition*. Boston: Little, Brown.

[10] Over time Beitz became less restrictive in his interpretation of Rawls' conditions for distributive justice –or rather, more radical in his cosmopolitanism-, relinquishing the "mutual advantage" justification; which brings his view closer to that of contemporary liberal egalitarians.

[11] The analogy here is with the treatment of individual natural talents. According to Beitz, Rawls' theory required for justice to correct differences of talent. Beitz claimed this was debatable, but that even if differences in talents could be justified –against Rawls- there is no case to be made for defending inequality in natural entitlements, since they are not naturally attached to persons (Beitz 1979, 140).

[12] Beitz, C. R. (1979): *Political Theory and International Relations*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 174-175.

[13] Babb, S. (2005): "The Social Consequences of Structural Adjustment: Recent Evidence and Current Debates," *Annual Review of Sociology* , 31, 199-222.

[14] Brenner, N. (2004): *New State Spaces: Urban Governance and the Rescaling of Statehood*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Rosenau, J. N., and E. O. Czempiel (1992): *Governancewithout Government: Order and Change in World Politics* . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Strange, S. (1996): *The Retreat of the State: The Diffusion of Power in the WorldEconomy*. New York: Cambridge University Press; Held, D., and A. G. McGrew (2000): *The Global Transformations Reader: An Introduction to the Globalization Debate*. Malden: Polity Press; Scholte, J. A. (2005): *Globalization: A Critical Introduction*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

[15] Charles Beitz has acknowledged this deficit in a reply to critics on the twenty fifth anniversary of the publication of his original book: "reflection about reform of global governance is well advanced in other venues, both academic and political, almost never with the benefit of the moral clarity might be contributed by an articulate philosophical conception of global political justice. That is too bad, not so much because moral clarity is a virtue (though it is), as because there is some chance, when ideas are in the flux, that the intervention of political philosophers could make a difference for the better" (Beitz 2005, 26)

[16] Crocker, D. A. (1992): "Functioning and Capability: The Foundation's of Sen's and Nussbaum's Development Ethic," *Political Theory*, 20, 584-612; Crocker (1995): "Functioning and Capability: The Foundation of Sen's and Nussbaum's Development Ethic, Part 2," in *Women, Culture and Development: A Study of Human Capability*, ed.By M. Nussbaum, and J. Glover. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 153-199; Nussbaum, M. C., and A. K. Sen (1993): *The Quality of Life* . New York: Oxford University Press; Nussbaum, M. C. (2000): *Women and Human Development: The Capabilities Approach* . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; — (2005): "Beyond the Social Contract: Capabilities and Social Justice," in *The Political Philosophy of Cosmopolitanism*, ed. by G. Briock, and H. Brighouse. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 196-218.

[17] Nussbaum, M. C. (2000): *Women and Human Development: The Capabilities Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 78-80. Nussbaum's definition of capabilities differs slightly in both content and philosophical underpinning from that of Sen (Nussbaum 2000, 70; Crocker 1992)

[18] Nussbaum (2005): *Frontiers of Justice: Disability, Nationality, Species, Membership*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 211.

[19] Murphy (2006): *The United Nations Development Program: A Better Way?* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[20] Nussbaum, M. C. (2005): "Beyond the Social Contract: Capabilities and Social Justice," in *The Political Philosophy of Cosmopolitanism* , ed. by G. Briock, and H. Brighouse. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 196-218. – (2005): *Frontiers of Justice: Disability, Nationality,Species, Membership*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press; – (2006): "Reply: In Defense of Global Political Liberalism," *Development and Change*, 37, 1313-1328.

[21] Nussbaum, M.C. (2005): *Frontiers of Justice: Disability, Nationality,Species, Membership*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 209.

[22] Nussbaum, M.C. (2005): *Frontiers of Justice: Disability, Nationality,Species, Membership*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 214-218.

[23] Nussbaum, M.C. (2005): *Frontiers of Justice: Disability, Nationality,Species, Membership*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 215.

[24] In a reply to critics, Nussbaum explains her emphasis on the primacy of the ethical over the political on the fact that the international sphere lacks a determinate governance structure, but remains undecided as to where the limits should actually be drawn: "In the international realm, we are not going to have a full-fledged political approach, because we do not have a world sate or a world constitution. In that sense, then, any approach to universal human rights is ethical as opposed to political. Mine, however, is not ethical in the comprehensive sense (...) it is a 'partial moral conception' that can be endorsed by people with many different views, as the basis for practical political action." (Nussbaum 2006, 1317)

[25] Pogge, T. (2005): "A Cosmopolitan Perspective on the Global Economic Order," in *The Political Philosophy of Cosmopolitanism* , ed. by G. Brock, and H. Brighouse. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 92-109.

[26] The analogy Pogge presents refers to the relationship between family attachments and the public good at the domestic level: if nepotism or other forms of undue attention to relatives in matters of public affairs would be considered unjust, then the same standards should be applied globally when deliberating on international regimes that could unduly affect the well-being of foreigners. (Pogge, 2002, Ch 5).

[27] Pogge argues that although there is no particular reason why global economic factors should not be given normative priority over local ones, philosophers in the advanced industrialized world should emphasize the global factors for pragmatic reasons: it is where actions of residents of rich countries could have a most immediate impact.

[28] Pogge, T. W. M. (2002): *World Poverty and Human Rights: Cosmopolitan Responsibilities and Reforms*. Cambridge : Polity, 112-114.

[29] Pogge, T. W. M. (2002): *World Poverty and Human Rights: Cosmopolitan Responsibilities and Reforms*. Cambridge : Polity, 141-142.

[30] Pogge, T. W. M. (2002): *World Poverty and Human Rights: Cosmopolitan Responsibilities and Reforms*. Cambridge : Polity, Ch. 6

[31] Pogge, T. W. M. (2002): *World Poverty and Human Rights: Cosmopolitan Responsibilities and Reforms*. Cambridge : Polity, 164

[32] Branko Milanovic has recently built the only available global index of inequality based on national statistics collected by the World Bank. He finds that the Gini coefficient that measures inequality globally (i.e. that is adjusted for world population as a whole unit comprising individuals) has increased over the last three decades (2005). This statistic is obfuscated in most other studies of inter-country inequalities when they account for the impact of recent industrialization of China and India. For a critical perspective on how to adequately measure national income see also Arrighi, Silver and Brewer (2003)

[33] Pogge, T. W. M. (2002): *World Poverty and Human Rights: Cosmopolitan Responsibilities and Reforms*. Cambridge : Polity, 265.

[34] That developing countries could be able to alter world prices for commodities is not a new phenomenon, neither is it the fact that at least the narrow interests of the oil and energy corporate sectors in the advanced industrialized countries have usually managed to reap enormous benefits in times of crises. What does constitute a novelty at the present times is the fact that even in the context of globalization, at least some developing states have managed to create state controlled "sovereign funds" that could create "distortions" in financial markets "bringing the state yet again back in;" changes that have been referred by a commentator as yet another expression of "the cunning of history" (Halliday, 2008).

[35] Barry, B. M. (2001): *Culture and Equality: An Egalitarian Critique of Multiculturalism*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press; Carter, A. (2001): *The Political Theory of Global Citizenship*. London: Routledge.

[36] Brown, C. (2002): *Sovereignty, Rights, and Justice: International Political Theory Today*. Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers; Jackson, R. H. (2000): *The Global Covenant: Human Conduct in a World of States*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.— (2005): *Classical and Modern Thought on International Relations: From Anarchy to Cosmopolis* . New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

[37] Calhoun, C. J. (2007): *Nations Matter: Citizenship, Solidarity, and the Cosmopolitan Dream*. New York: Routledge, 4.

[38] Brennan, T. (2006): *Wars of Position: The Cultural Politics of Left and Right*. New York: Columbia University Press, 219.

[39] Archibugi, D. (2004): "Cosmopolitan Democracy and Its Critics: A Review," *European Journal of International Relations*, 10, 437-473; Falk, R., and A. Strauss (2003): "The Deeper Challenges of Global Terrorism: A Democratizing Response," in *Debating Cosmopolitics*, ed. by D. Archibugi. London: Verso.

[40] Calhoun, C. J. (2007): Nations Matter: Citizenship, Solidarity, and the Cosmopolitan Dream. New York: Routledge, 13.

[41] Brennan, T. (2003): "Cosmopolitanism and Internationalism," in *Debating Cosmopolitics*, ed. by D. Archibugi. London: Verso, 47.

[42] (1999): "Social and Cosmopolitan Liberalism," *International Affairs*, 75, 75.

[43] Nussbaum, M.C. (2005): "Beyond the Social Contract: Capabilities and Social Justice," in *The Political Philosophy of Cosmopolitanism*, ed. by G. Briock, and H. Brighouse. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 210.

[44] Nussbaum, M.C. (2005): "Beyond the Social Contract: Capabilities and Social Justice," in *The Political Philosophy of Cosmopolitanism*, ed. by G. Briock, and H. Brighouse. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 213.

[45] Pogge, T. W. M. (2002): *World Poverty and Human Rights: Cosmopolitan Responsibilities and Reforms*. Cambridge: Polity, 170.

[46] Pogge, T. W. M. (2002): *World Poverty and Human Rights: Cosmopolitan Responsibilities and Reforms*. Cambridge: Polity, 187.

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