

**DECONSTRUCTING EMMANUEL KANT AND DAVID  
HARVEY'S PERCEPTION OF COSMOPOLITANISM**

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**ABSTRACT**

In this review article, we use secondary literature to examine Emmanuel Kant's visualization of cosmopolitanism and David Harvey's critique of his work on this concept. In so doing, we begin by discussing the origins of cosmopolitanism, examine Kant's cosmopolitan ideas, and conclude by highlighting Harvey's litany of geographical evils that have been advanced in the pursuit of cosmopolitan ideals. Our critical analysis reveals that Kant envisioned a voluntary league of states, spanning the entire globe in which membership would require the participants to renounce coercive military powers. The formation of such a union Kant argued would protect sovereign states from threats by fellow league members as well as the individual liberty of their citizens from the menace of state power. However, as we demonstrate in the essay, Kant's vision has received a scathing critique from David Harvey who doubts his universal ethic proposition in a world in which Kant himself considered some to be immature, full of sloth, and indolent. Harvey argues that if we assume a Kantian topology of the world, then "others" have to reform themselves before they are accepted equally into the cosmopolitan world. This is because, in the Kantian schema, an ideal world is one where all men have reached a level of the "white European male". We conclude the essay by highlighting some of the geographical

evils which have been meted in the pursuit of the Kantian schema of cosmopolitanism including environmental determinism, colonialism, imperialism, and neoliberalism. Environmental determinism for instance proposes that the natural physical environment; climate, resources, and geographic position are the determining causative factors of human and cultural development. We argue that such sweeping generalizations have provided the ideological justification for some of the major geographical “sins” committed in the past and present

## INTRODUCTION

Cosmopolitanism has recently been reactivated by a wide range of social, economic, and political events i.e. discontentment with globalization, resentment towards minorities, immigrants, and most importantly the rise of nationalism. In this paper, we synthesize literature written both from practice-focused and critical academic perspectives and specifically re-examine Emmanuel Kant’s visualization of cosmopolitanism and David Harvey’s critique of his work on this concept. We accomplish this task by employing the purposive sampling technique in putting together information gathered from several sources including academic articles that use qualitative ethnographic studies, case studies, and anthropological methods. Three reasons motivate this paper. First, a study and critique of cosmopolitanism could allow people to cultivate intellectual, moral, and aesthetic capabilities as well as to learn how to respond fairly and humanely to what is taking place around the world with regards to the rise of aggressive domestic anti-foreigner sentiments or toxic national politics. Second, the background provided in this study will allow both academics, students, and international policymakers to begin to think and respond effectively to the constant changes in the modern world i.e. to think more deeply about concepts such as environmental determinism, imperialism, colonialism, and neoliberalism. Most importantly, it will motivate a re-evaluation and understanding of diverse values and customs. In other words, facilitate mutual

understanding. Third, this article provides the much-needed addition to the few of the available studies whose prime foci are on the structural critique of classical cosmopolitanism

The article is organized as follows. First, we look at the historical origins of cosmopolitanism. In the second section, we examine Emmanuel Kant's operationalization and conceptualization of cosmopolitan ideals. In the third section, we discuss Harvey's critique of Kant's work on cosmopolitanism. Finally, we showcase some of the geographical evils which have been advanced in the pursuit of the Kantian schema of cosmopolitanism including environmental determinism, colonialism, imperialism, and neoliberalism.

### **THE HISTORICAL ORIGINS OF COSMOPOLITANISM**

The notion of cosmopolitanism has its Western origins in ancient Greek Cynic and Stoic philosophy (see e.g. Fine, 2011; Breckneridge et al. 2002; Bhambra, 2011; Mencus, 1970). It is first mentioned in literature when the famous Cynic, Diogenes, was asked where he was from and replied, "*I am a citizen of the world.*" Perhaps this statement expresses the purest sense of cosmopolitanism, recognition of our fundamental and common status as world citizens. This expression is remarkable considering that the Greek notion of personal identity and civic duty, until that point, had been established by one's affiliation with their city-state and neighbors (Hansen, 2006). Cosmopolitanism, in this sense, assigns broader identities and duties to the world and humanity as a whole than the previously limited notions of duty to the state. For the Stoics, to be cosmopolitan meant to live harmoniously in two communities: the first, our community of birth, and then the larger community of the world (Sellars, 2007). Stoic philosophy produced a framework that visualized the individual within the context of a broader society. This visualization consisted of a series of concentric circles, explicitly associating the individual at the center of the community; first self, then family, local community, nation, and finally humanity (Nussbaum, 1997). This

framework implies that individuals interact with all of these levels of affiliation, beginning with the self and emanating outward to the last ring so that all of these interactions form our identity. Interestingly, Marx and Harvey use a modification of the Stoic model to frame their respective models of identity concerning humanity (Harvey, 2009).

The “Western Way” of understanding the world has emphasized individualism and rationalism since the time of the Renaissance (Hale & Mallet, 1971). Its tendency toward “humanism” resulted in a dynamic, technically innovative, and scientifically-situated culture, which rewarded competitiveness and developed new systems of knowledge. One might argue that the impact of western-humanism has informed the spirit of both cosmopolitanism and capitalism, and has been produced and (re)produced through the foundational political philosophy of John Locke, and the economic theory of Adam Smith (Locke, 1794; Smith, 1776; Wood, 1984; Dunn, 1968). Western philosophy evolved with an emphasis on substance and mind. As a consequence, one of its central issues involves reconciling rationalistic modes of knowledge, which prize pure reason, with the empirical investigation and knowing, which stress observation as the only valid method of knowing (Bacon, 1996; Jardine, 1974; Van Malssen, 2014). Kant’s primary contribution to Western philosophy was his “Copernican Revolution”, which resolved a central knowledge question: how does a person truly know anything about a world that is divided into mind (rationality) and perceptions of external substances (Waxman, 2005; Bonevac, 2003). Kant proposed that the individual’s mind unifies these two factors in its experience of the world, placing the mind at the center as an organizing factor of all experience. The effect of this was to reinforce the primacy of the individual’s observations and reason as the arbiter of reality. Consequently, we as reasonable individuals can be confident that our perceptions of reality are valid, and we can accurately understand the functioning of the world through the application of our reason. Kant takes it as a given that other individuals have

the analogous mental capability, and by applying their reason can arrive at similar conclusions about the functioning of the world. This consolidates the primacy of scientific knowledge. In that respect, reason becomes the basis of individual knowledge, discovery, and also understanding, and negotiation with others.

### KANT'S COSMOPOLITANISM

To begin with, we would posit that the necessity of a cosmopolitan ethic arises from Kant's recognition of what could be considered the very early stages of "globalization", which was evident in the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century. By that time, European culture and capital had penetrated nearly all areas of the globe through mercantilism and colonialism (see e.g. Wallerstein, 2011). The world is a finite place, and people inhabiting the space of our commonly shared globe had come into communication and exchange with each other, either by compulsion or choice. Some basis of accommodation was necessary if people were to avoid conflict. Additionally, Kant perceived that interactions had reached the point where "...*violation of laws in one part of the world is felt everywhere* (Harvey, 2009 page. 17). His essay on "Perpetual Peace" was an attempt to define several parameters outlining the concept of cosmopolitanism (Kant, 1917). First, the earth's surface was presumed to be territorially divided into several nations or states. Second, inhabitants within these states were assumed to possess distinctive rights of citizenship within their respective nations. Third, relations between nations were to be regulated by a growing need for the establishment of perpetual peace. Accordingly, perpetual peace was to be achieved only when states were organized internally according to "republican principles" and externally in a voluntary league (Kant, 1917). Kant envisioned a voluntary league of states, spanning the entire globe and membership would require the participants to renounce coercive military powers. This protected both the sovereign states from threats by fellow league members and the individual liberty of their citizens from the menace of state power. On global migration, Kant raised two overarching ideas: First, travelers going to foreign

states had the right of *sojourn*, or temporary hospitality if they lived by the rule of law in the receiving nation. Second, while foreigners should be protected from harm, they had no right to remain within the host state permanently without consent from the host. Kant's cosmopolitan construction is early recognition of the need for broad principles by which people of different cultures can engage with each other and also attempts to promote a universal framework for the association and cooperation of sovereign states.

On cosmopolitan law, Kant concluded that a singular world government was not possible. In Kant's view, such a government would, by necessity, suppress national differences to avoid internal conflict (Harvey, 2009). National differences arise because the people comprising a nation are affiliated through common descent, creating a distinct sort of national character. Sovereign states reflect this character and consequently have different and sometimes competing for interests between other states. For Kant, a world government could undermine the territorial configurations of sovereign nations and be forced to suppress different interests. A cosmopolitan world government was unnecessarily repressive and against human nature. Human nature is problematic because we, as a species, are constantly striving against the many tides of our natural desire, from evil to good through the use of our practical reason. Our dissension as individuals achieves a cosmopolitan world government unlikely "... because we cannot expect to reach our goal by the free consent of individuals, but only through progressive organization of the citizens of the earth within and toward the species as a system which is united by cosmopolitan bonds." (In Harvey; 2009 page 23). From Kant's vantage point, the formation of a cosmopolitan system is achievable only through the federation of independent nation-states, which express the national character, and yet are mature enough to realize the common necessity in establishing a coalition.

As narrated above, Harvey vehemently disagrees with this notion of Kant's cosmopolitanism.

## HARVEY'S CRITIQUE

To begin with, Kant's notion of "enlightened" or "enlightenment" bears Harvey's harshest scrutiny (Harvey, 2009). A precondition for attaining enlightenment is sufficient "maturity" of mind and judgment, rationality and reason. The arbiter of this is the particular kind of maturity typified by the "white European male," who has the greatest capability to reason, at least in terms that Kant would understand since they would certainly mirror rationality within his cultural context. Accordingly, Harvey focuses on the absurd notions contained in Kant's *Anthropology and Geography*. Ironically, Kant himself never went far from his birthplace of Königsberg, preventing his full engagement with other cultures. He was dependent on existing literature at the beginning of the scientific age and the unreliable and somewhat fantastic accounts of travelers, mariners, and merchants when constructing his notions of the world beyond this insular city. Harvey demonstrates the internal contradictions of Kant's biased racial views and his theory of the universal law of humanity (Harvey, 2009). He raises questions such as; how can we apply Kant's universal ethic to a world in which, in his own words, he considered some people to be immature or inferior while at the same time others are indolent, smelly, or just plain untrustworthy? If we assume a Kantian topology of the world, then "others" have to reform themselves before they are accepted equally into the cosmopolitan world. In the Kantian schema, an ideal world is one where all men have reached maturity on the level of the "white European male". Yet, for Harvey human differences are an element to celebrate; unique attributes that can be used in a progressively global cosmopolitanism. Therefore, we should not discriminate, but embrace and enjoy the differences found in human culture.

Kant viewed anthropology and geography as the means to properly frame a "science of man." We would portend that, it is quite disturbing, therefore, to examine just what passed for such knowledge in his writings. The radicalized views of other people

show a keen predilection for environmental determinism. Kant observed that men of hot climates matured more quickly but did not attain perfection like men in temperate zones. To him the yellow Indians had less talent than whites; negroes were much inferior to whites, but not as low as Native Americans, who, in Kant's terms, were considered to be on the bottom of the rung in the hierarchy of the human race (was this because they were hunter/gatherers without property?). This sort of ill-informed, anthropological "survey" is presumably scholarly, and becomes essential to the notion that racial and cultural stereotypes constitute a form of knowledge that could be gathered, cataloged, classified, much as a naturalist would do with exotic species, and ultimately promulgated as "scientific knowledge." Kant's cosmopolitanism does not automatically grant the right of *sojourn* to the aforementioned "immature" and hence, undesirable people. The sovereign nation retains the right to bar entry to noncitizens as long as the exercise of that right does not destroy the outsider. Consequently, we would be correct to presume that Kant's cosmopolitanism allows for a framework of immigration regulations and quotas that can be used to evaluate potential foreign entrants based on their perceived maturity level or cultural identification.

Harvey argues that Kant's notion of "maturity" also affects who is granted permanent residency and citizenship by the sovereign state (Harvey, 2009). This is reserved for sufficiently mature individuals and certainly excludes the troublemaking "rabble," even if they are native to the state. Therefore, this is another reason why Kant preserved the sovereign nation as an element of his cosmopolitan league, as a zone of exclusion, whose absolute boundaries serve as a mechanism for cordoning out undesirable, immature individuals. Currently, we can see how deeply rooted these beliefs or views are in most nations' domestic and foreign policies. The United States certainly has qualifications for citizenship loosely resembling Kant's criteria of maturity and lawfulness. "Maturity" is here synonymous with the acceptance of and embrace of "our" way of life consisting of American notions of freedom, democracy,



liberty, human rights, sexual freedom, gender equality, religious freedom, and the famous American dream. As an example, in England, any foreigner who wishes to become a British citizen must forfeit their nationality and pledge allegiance to the Queen of England. Harvey seems to question this logic, by observing that how can we achieve true cosmopolitanism if some cultures are to be diluted or altogether forfeited. In his world, we should accommodate each other and achieve greater cultural interaction, and national boundaries would be abolished.

The pre-eminence of reason and maturity for inclusion in Kant's system of cosmopolitanism creates the question "Whose reason and maturity will be the standard?" Kant's answer is overwhelmingly exclusionary and strongly biased to favor people who were just like him: white, European, male, and educated within a specific cultural norm. Kant's whole system establishes different modes of exclusion based on "maturity"; from the absolute boundaries of sovereign states, which are a kind of container for holding people based on their national differences, to the criteria of citizenship, which can be denied to members of lawless groups who do not acquiesce to authority. What becomes of these immature people, with whom we must share this "spatially finite sphere?" Are they stateless? Should they be incarcerated, and if so, whose laws should be applied? Is it the state within whose absolute boundaries they inconveniently reside? Kant sets a standard of maturity and then suggests a system of anthropology that can scientifically examine the "smallest similarity or dissimilarity" of culture. Consequently, anthropology becomes the servant of filtering and discrimination. This tendency within Kant's work can provide the pretext for a kind of scientific racism, though Kant himself proposed that "man makes himself," and that "character" is an individual striving to raise oneself above inherited "temperament." Nonetheless, Kant appeals to scientific anthropology and geography to form the basis of an investigation into human nature which invites generalization and can be cemented in a misleading scientific causality. This provides a basis for environmental determinisms and a host of

“geographical evils.” We now move forward to examine some of these evils cemented in the pursuit of cosmopolitanism.

### **“GEOGRAPHICAL EVILS” AND HARVEY’S CRITIQUE**

The need to bring enlightenment to the ‘dark continent,’ the need to sponsor illegal covert operations in countries resistant to Western capitalism, the need to ally with abusive dictators because they are willing to jump on the neoliberal bandwagon, the justification of using military force to free the world of the ‘Axis of evil’: these and many more are examples ‘of geographic evils’ that have been committed in the name of spreading a universalist neoliberal agenda (see eg. McCarthy, 2004; Varga, 2013; Saad-Filho & Johnston, 2005; Plehwe et al, 2006; Harrison, 2013). Harvey is critical of liberal and neoliberal cosmopolitan world views because of the gross inadequacies they demonstrate in terms of geographical and anthropological knowledge. People ignorant of geography and anthropology are easily manipulated into supporting or believing in policies fed to them by powers that seek *“to hold together the universal principles upon which liberal, neoliberal and some version of the Blairite version of Cosmopolitanism is based”* (Harvey, 2009 page 105). We argue that it is important to acknowledge the importance of geography in terms of politics and economics, and that ignorance has a profound effect on the conduct of policy. Oversimplification and generalization also have their effect, and environmental determinism has done much damage to a comprehensive understanding of issues and has been a source of justification for some ‘geographical evils’ of the past and present (see e.g. Hardin, 2009; Buzbee, 1997; Livingstone, 2011; Frenkel, 1992).

### **ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINISM AND “GEOGRAPHICAL EVILS” PAST AND PRESENT**

As one of the man-land traditions of geographical knowledge, environmental determinism has been around for centuries. Just like the Kantian logic placing the ‘white European male’ at the pinnacle

of human maturity and rationality, environmental determinism is an absolutist viewpoint, but one which stresses the decisive effect of the physical environment, not races as the main condition of cultural development and consequently the development of their local landscapes. Environmental determinism proposes that the natural physical environment; climate, resources, and geographic position and extent are the determining causative factors of human and cultural development (Frenkel, 1994; Peet, 1985; Radcliffe et al. 2010). It became a prominent school of thought in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century when it was adopted as a core geographical theory. Historically, it has some associations with Lamarckism and to a lesser extent, social Darwinism from the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Ellen Churchill Semple is recognized for introducing the theory to the United States after studying the geography of Friedrich Ratzel in Germany. Its lineage can be traced through the climate determinism of Ellsworth Huntington and even to Isaiah Bowman whose studies of Latin America classified cultural differences due to the elevation and type of agriculture performed by different ethnic and racial groups (Smith, 2004, pp. 74-76). In the modern era, Jared Diamond has been criticized by Sluyter and Harvey for engaging in a softer form of environmental determinism.

We contend that sweeping generalizations such as those offered by environmental determinism have provided the ideological justification for some of the major geographical “sins” committed in the past. Historical transgressions such as the slave trade and imperialism/colonization were given a makeover under the guise of environmental determinism. Because of this seductive notion that environmental determinism provided the basis of geographical “laws” that could explain cultural development, it took the field on a detour until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when it came under severe criticism from geographers like Carl Sauer (Sauer, 1963; Sauer, 2008; Speth 1977). It was abandoned by academic geographers in the post-war era; however, this was not before certain aspects of it had spread to other disciplines such as anthropology and history.

Harvey is critical of environmental determinism and its simplistic causality (Harvey, 2009). He focuses on neo-environmental determinists such as Diamond who revive environmental determinism as a simple explanation for the disparity of rich and poor regions in the present globalizing world with popular books and theories like those in *Guns, Germs, and Steel* (Diamond & Ordunio, 1999). Diamond condemns Eurocentric and racist views, yet his approach shares some of the same absolutist/categorical defects as Kant's, the only difference being that Diamond proposes environmental and geographical advantages as determinants of the current distribution of relative wealth and power, not genes. Thus, Africa's narrow east to west geographical extent, which stretched across numerous latitudes determined that Africans would be "black" and at the same time poor. Following Diamond's take, we can attribute many of the misfortunes and horrors that prevail in sub-Saharan Africa today to the conditions of terrain and climate in the region (Diamond, 1997, page 203). Harvey criticizes this because it disregards factors like slavery, colonization, and post-colonial dependency, resolving everything into a set of simplistic determinist factors.

We can use Harvey's logic in that Diamond's environmental determinism creates absolute space with no room for different possible constructions of place, space-time, and environment. It ignores the concepts of relative and relational space. Consider the Physioeconomics concept of "Equatorial Paradox" which suggests that the economic development of a country is positively related to the distance from the Equator. Singapore serves as a counterexample. This highly prosperous country occupies the same tropical latitudes and has similar environmental conditions as many of the poorest countries in the world. Its prosperity can be attributed to many factors, like its position as a port at a commercial crossroads, cultural diversity, political stability, and the fact that it has implemented consistent political and economic policies in which government and business have cooperated to coordinate development. Thus we would argue like Harvey that a

complex mix of cultural, economic, and political factors is at work in the success of Singapore, not just the environment.

Despite environmental determinism having been abandoned as a school of thought for several decades, Diamond's book manages to win a Pulitzer Prize meaning people (and probably scholars) are giving serious thought to his 'simplistic' answers to some of the world's problems. This is ominous in itself as such an ideology from an influential individual could be harnessed to harmful policies, continuing the cycle of 'geographical evils' committed in the name of achieving a cosmopolitan world (see e.g. Sluyter, 2003; Blaut, 1999; O'Keefe et al, 2010). Harvey would argue that ignorance of geography and the oversimplification of environmental determinism are two dangers that lead to misjudgments, mistakes, and policy blunders. They delude us into thinking that underdevelopment can be explained by environmental factors like climate, while avoiding any discussion of the effects of imperialism through subjugation and colonization which prevented economic and infrastructural development, except when it was in the best economic interest of the colonial masters (see e.g. Fieldhouse, 1999; Larrain 2013). There is a reason why a significant portion of the poorer countries of the world today is made up of the former colonies of Western powers. The argument that sub-Saharan Africa is poor today because of conditions determined by the environment and not due to imperialist plundering including the slave trade would not hold (see e.g. Rodney, 2018; Nkrumah, 1967). Without colonization, the artificial political boundaries of today would be different, or not exist and development in 'pre-modern states' could have a different picture; one controlled by the people who live there.

### **COLONIALISM AS A "GEOGRAPHICAL EVIL" -**

Colonialism contributed to the promotion of uneven development (Rodney, 2018). In Harvey's terms, this began many years ago, during the "Age of exploration" when particular spaces and peoples were demonized as barbaric and savage. The impacts were extreme in the example of the Americas, which were some

of the first lands colonized and bore the full brunt of European avarice. Many indigenous cultures there were considered so close to nature as to be beyond incorporation into the Western notion of civilization (Frank, 1967, Clark, 1982). Regardless of relative development level; Caribe, Powhatan, or Inca, their land was taken and culture diluted (in some cases like Mexico to form a cultural and religious syncretism) Frank, 1967). To justify these actions and safeguard their arrogation of resources, some colonialists simply seized the land under the justification of *terra nullius*, while others claimed title to land-based on individual rights to the property. Sometimes complex legal mechanisms were established by the various colonial regimes to establish title, cementing the centrality of private property. Harvey calls this the politics of dispossession under the liberal framework of conquering nature and making productive use with nearly complete disregard of its inhabitants (Harvey, 2009). This process of dispossession and exploitation in many cases ravaged the indigenous culture and their land (Wallerstein, 1986). Carl Sauer recognized these damages and in 1938 wrote a blistering attack of the effect of early Spanish colonialism on the Caribbean and Latin America's unique physical and cultural landscape (Sauer, 1963). In their relentless exploitation of resources and imposition of a harsh plantation-based regime, the islands and large areas of the South American continent were depopulated and the landscape was ravaged (Sauer 1963, page 147). The Spanish colonialists threw away much of the rich culture and biological capital of the region. To Sauer, Columbus was a geographical ignoramus, "*an able mariner... but not of the stuff of explorers,*" who not only failed to understand where he was, but lacked a deep understanding of the problems his actions were causing the natives in Latin America. This initial failure laid out a pattern of conquest and settlement to be replicated all over Spanish America, as the unemployed soldiers of the *Reconquista* sought their fortunes in the New World. The record of other colonial regimes, though different, failed to improve much on the Spanish model of enrichment by harsh appropriation. Throughout the colonial era, liberal rationalism failed to rectify

these evils, and instead perpetuated them under new political and economic doctrines.

So the Latin American experience with colonialism was just a carbon copy of what took place in other regions around the world. India for example was colonized by the British, who offered the prospect of a progressive regime of colonial “tutelage.” But Indians were denied democratic rights of representation which was a guiding stick highlighted in Kant’s universal law of ethics (Rahman et al 2018; Sing, 1996). This was justified by assertions that the Indians were like children being trained in the proper modes of administration and governance by Britain so that they could rule themselves. Meanwhile, the colonial system continued its economic exploitation and appropriation (Rahman et al. 2018). The lists of these actions are endless. Theorist like Walter Rodney on the other spectra unearth Africa’s case in his fascinating book *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Rodney, 1972) through colonialism. The effects and patterns set by centuries of colonialism linger in culture and economics. Millions of people across the globe languish in chronic poverty and may not move out of this vacuum anytime soon. The actions of neoliberal policies are perpetuating geographical evils and making a new form of cosmopolitanism being proposed by Harvey difficult to realize.

### **THE POST-COLONIAL ERA**

For Harvey, the so-called postcolonial era did not signal the end of “geographical evils”. Following World War II, the territorial occupation had become an embarrassment to the liberal agenda, and it was more difficult to justify colonial possessions, even based on shepherding politically “immature” societies to independence, while also condemning expansion by the Axis powers. On one hand, direct territorial control by a foreign power was offensive, but on the other, Western imperial nations were not willing to cede power back to indigenous societies. Western imperialists had invested large amounts of capital in their colonies and Western economies were dependent upon colonial resources, land, and labor, especially

in the wake of two ruinous wars within three decades (Ferraro, 2008; Velasco, 2002). There was also the cultural, political, and social imprint of the dominating state upon the colony, which wove substantial ties of association, dependency, domination, and habitation between peoples and cultures. During the war, many colonies had been partially or wholly wrested from their controlling imperial nations, and it would be difficult to reassert the old power structure, since it had been eroded or replaced in many areas, especially Asia. The architects of the post-war world were thoroughly aware of the contradiction of reasserting the old colonial structures and sought to institutionalize control in new ways.

In the post-colonial era, spatial relationships among nations required redefinition along the lines of Harvey's tripartite division of spatial relationships (Harvey, 2009). A new global architecture was constructed using international institutions like the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and United Nations, among others. They were instrumental in establishing, new international rules to govern the post-war world. The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) was critical, as it was designed to govern trade relationships across international markets. Control was no longer predicated upon absolute domination and occupancy of territory rather, a new type of control relied upon imbalanced trade relationships. Absolute space became less important than relational space. For Harvey (2009), imbalanced trade relationships allow certain spaces to develop at a faster rate, relative to spaces of underdevelopment. This process of uneven development acknowledges the dialectic relationship in which particular spaces are privileged to development, but that this can only occur if subaltern spaces are prevented from developing. The world of economic development is not flat, but profoundly "spikey," and the new, post-colonial international structure requires an uneven and shifting pattern of appropriation and consumption.

While the stated purposes of the international institutions



broadly met the liberal agenda; from protecting human rights to encouraging education, and providing capital loans and financial assistance, many geography scholars have explored the destructive processes wrought by the IMF, World Bank, UN, GATT, and its successor the World Trade Organization (see e.g. Wood, 2014; Peet, 2009; Biersteller, 1990, Easterly, 2003). We argue that far from realizing the imaginative geography of cosmopolitanism, the term *globalization*, which defines the network of economic interactions across spaces, has become a pejorative term synonymous with economic decline, political control, cultural appropriation, and territorial exploitation.

As an international institution, the role of IMF is to manage and ensure the functionality of the global economic network, thereby allowing capital to circulate across borders (Bird, 2007; Masson & Mussa, 1996). The roles of both state and economic actors coalesce to create the conditions for capital to circulate with fluidity. To establish a multi-dimensional process, the IMF removes spatial and temporal barriers, thereby minimizing risk, so that foreign investors can finance operations across space, but primarily in peripheral regions. In theory, foreign direct investment is a neutral activity. Financiers provide investment capital for businesses, while businesses return the capital to financiers along with interest in the form of dividends. Yet, in reality, capital flows to regions with the best comparative advantage in terms of productivity. Capital could flow to China, whose vast labor reserve army means laborers work for a few dollars per day; or the capital could flow to Mexico, where the lack of environmental regulation means that dirty industries pollute the air, causing respiratory problems; or the capital could flow to nations in north-Saharan Africa, where the already-fertile land is cultivated excessively, leaving it barren soon after.

State actors are implicated in the globalization of finance, as government policies create the conditions for comparative production advantages. Despite the pervasive stereotype, Chinese

people are not inherently better at producing consumer goods than Americans; urban residents in Mexico D.F. are by and large discontent breathing dirty air and drinking dirty water, and Malian agricultural land cannot be harvested several times per year without harming the soil. For many peripheral nations, which have been integrated into the global economic system without the benefit of having any previous experience with capitalism, the development path is paved with foreign capital. Convinced that following the blueprint of the West will liberate the periphery from poverty, state actors intentionally draft policies, which promote industrialization and attract foreign capital. In an ironic twist, industrialization is assumed to be good for the nation as it generates wealth, but attracting investment frequently entails drafting social policies, which are harmful for the nation. For Harvey (2009), the elimination of territorial boundaries would moderate the evil of comparative advantages and their associated externalities. Without national boundaries, the effectiveness of socially produced advantages would be severely limited. For producers and financiers, without the ability to scour the globe for a nation willing to accept harmful conditions of production, localized production may be the result.

While Harvey (2009) might argue that a local, rather than global production and manufacturing economy would be a significant step toward true cosmopolitanism. It is the WTO that enforces trade agreements and ensures that societies, near and far, produce goods and participate in trade for the benefit of a global society. However, for underdeveloped nations, trade-diplomacy means that entire national economies are dedicated to producing goods for consumption in the West. The term “specialization” describes national and regional economies that focus on producing a single good, due to agglomeration, scalar, or scope advantages. But for critics, specialization does not improve trade relations; it simply bounds the specialized economy to produce one good. Reflecting on the psychology of specialization and the following trade relations, one must recognize that underdeveloped nations are only cherished for their ability to produce commodities and wealth

for others. Extending this idea to its logical conclusion, it becomes clear that the global economy does not assume an inherent cultural value apart from productive capacity.

Local production has the potential to reduce global forces, acting from above, thereby changing local cultures. Without the burden of producing goods for a Western society that is hidden from sight, the periphery will be able to produce goods to be consumed internally, responding to the demands of their communities. Consequently, we suggest that local societies would be free to choose how their economies will develop, having the freedom to engage with materialism at the levels acceptable by their cultural standards.

### **NEOLIBERALISM**

Up until the 1970s, policies of embedded liberalism typified the industrialized Western democracies (Ganti, 2014; Gledhill, 2018; Harvey, 2007). Under this policy, the state served as the guarantor of relatively full employment, steady economic growth, and social welfare for its citizens (Harvey, 2007). This was achieved by the intervention of government power in market processes and the pursuit of Keynesian fiscal policies. The government also presided over a class compromise between capital and labor, ensuring high wages and moderate profits for the industry. In the 1970s these policies began to unravel in an era of “stagflation,” with low or declining economic growth and escalating rates of inflation (Harvey, 2007). The neoliberal agenda, a combination of monetarist, neoclassical and libertarian economic policies and typified by economists of the “Chicago School” radically adjusted this arrangement. Under neoliberalism, the power of the government to regulate financial markets and industry is drastically reduced in an effort to remove all constraints from the accumulation and flow of capital. Public goods and services are privatized using the logic that businesses are invariably more efficient than government-managed services. Free trade, open markets, and economic integration are emphasized in this

economic form of globalization. It has become the prevailing ideology of economists and underpins many of the assumptions of cosmopolitan thinkers who Harvey critiques.

Current neoliberal cosmopolitans and economists like Thomas Friedman, Hernando de Soto, and Jeffrey Sachs receive a sharp rebuke from Harvey (Friedman, 2000; De Soto, 2000; Sachs et al. 2005). By flattening space and culture Friedman (2000) suggest that only a sort of homogenized global society warrants the application of the same rights and privileges to all people. Sachs et al. (2005) and De Soto (2000) assume as universal, the values of private property and attempt to impose them everywhere and by the most direct means; whether they be “economic shock therapy” in post-communist Russia (Sachs), or individual title to land in Peru (de Soto). The results of more generalized opportunity and wealth are not what neoliberal economists expected. Instead, the extremes of poverty and wealth diverge and intensify; further cementing deep inequities within nations and politically institutionalizing the power of wealth. Harvey (2007; 2009) uses the phenomenon of “microcredit” as an example of how a seemingly beneficent tool could be used for the ‘development of underdevelopment,’ and not as a tool for poverty alleviation. Instead of greater wealth, all forms of “social solidarity” are eroded and the state provision of services is destroyed in a wave of “privatization” of public goods. It is by these means that the neoliberal agenda acts to restore and intensify the class power of the wealthy at the expense of everyone else.

“New Cosmopolitanism,” whether by Ulrich Beck (2002) or Martha Nussbaum (2003), more or less takes the neoliberal agenda for granted instead of attempting to cure its defects and develop a more equitable form. For instance, Harvey considers their admiration for the model of the European Union as misplaced because it perpetuates economic patterns between itself and developing regions. Trade barriers, particularly for agriculture, protect European farmers and selectively bar competition.

Likewise, the “military humanism” of the EU is selectively applied for hegemonic purposes under the guise of human rights. Furthermore, Harvey considers their theories to be impractical, as they still buy into the “flat space” of neoliberals. For instance, David Held (1997) is criticized for superficially proposing a ‘layered cosmopolitanism’ which reflects “*local, national, and regional affiliations,*” without making any attempt at understanding “*how this layering is produced and at what scales*”

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

Taken together, we conclude that by deconstructing Kant’s cosmopolitanism and highlighting Harvey’s critique we suggest that new cosmopolitans need to incorporate a critical discourse of space into their theories. Despite assertions to the contrary, it is indeed still a “spikey world” of regional inequality and local differences, made all the more so by neoliberal policies that have stripped and privatized public goods expanding the gap between poverty and wealth. What summarizes Harvey’s criticism of existing cosmopolitanism is that the lack of geographical awareness prevents a sufficiently critical conceptualization of it and that existing theories have been anemic and unable to escape the confines of a Kantian liberal framework. As cemented by Harvey, geographical awareness has historically been central to the cosmopolitan theory, from Kant to Nussbaum, but we must re-evaluate the type of geography that has been used throughout the evolution of cosmopolitanism. Central to this is how cosmopolitan thought has engaged with theories of space. For Harvey he proposes to expand the scope of their geography beyond absolute, fixed, Newtonian spaces to a tri-partite arrangement of space adding relative and relational spaces along with the absolute (Harvey, 2009, page 134). According to Harvey, this will lead to a reconsideration of neoliberalism, which underpins contemporary cosmopolitanism. Instead of promoting individual economic empowerment, neoliberalism creates conditions where dispossession is assumed to promote economic equity, rather than social/state intervention. The fact that neoliberalism has been

embedded in an ideology of individual and human rights creates an irresolvable contradiction: favoring enrichment and empowerment of the few under the guise of a liberal, humanitarian agenda. In short, Harvey proposes a critical examination of this social agenda and how best to separate it from a hegemonic political-economic agenda. A new cosmopolitanism should examine and accommodate differences in a world, which, contrary to Friedman, is not flat. Critically examining a new cosmopolitanism will allow us to elevate concepts such as economic justice, cultural equality and true political empowerment above and beyond concepts of unqualified privacy, self-interest, and competitiveness.

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