Commentary

Cosmopolitanize the Era of Globalization

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We are now two decades into the 21st century, an era of modernity and globalization rendered unprecedented by the incredibly fast advancement of technology. Two decades unfolded with unprecedented leaps in technology and our ability to navigate the world and beyond; that has connected myriads of economic, political, and cultural dots around the globe. We are now immersed in the tumultuous tide of globalization. Yet, we have become more distant from our fellow human beings as sentiments of xenophobia, racism, and nationalism plague our rational faculty to envision a better, more tolerant, and more humane world. How can we turn the page on the era of modernity and enter the next chapter of globalization that is grounded in a shared global moral culture?

As quixotic as it may sound, I'd like to envision a world where we can embrace a reconfiguration of the meaning of citizenship and a cosmopolitan recalibration of civic obligations to truly capture the zeitgeist of our globalized modernity. To conquer the constant social divide that has hindered global cooperation from being realized in the most productive manner, I envision a reimagination of civic obligation that will be grounded in cosmopolitan ethics modern nation states.

Globalization is one of the distinct characteristics of the era of modernity. Globalization enhances the capabilities of people, but simultaneously provides them with the opportunity to behave in stunningly exploitative manners. The tension of globalization, one of the most urgent problems faced by us today, thus lies in its simultaneous creation of increasing civilization and suffering. The paradox of modern globalization sheds light on the disconnect between globalized material culture and non-globalized moral culture. The material culture of globalization is bustling with rapid international flows of natural, financial, and human capital. The material interconnectedness of the world means not only the sharing of resources, but also the sharing of liability and responsibility. However, the lack of a shared global moral culture, that aligns people **in** the world with a sense of citizenry **of** the world, constantly drives people into a divisive perception of global relations as a zero-sum competition with countries and people of "alien-ness". The material culture of globalization is thus not situated upon individuals' shared moral obligation towards each other as fellow citizens but often a fragmented and antagonistic tribalized moral culture. When Berman commented that globalization has "made the country dependent on the towns, so it has made barbarian countries dependent on civilized ones, nations of peasants on nations of bourgeois, the East on the West",[1] the articulation of global interconnectedness was concomitant to an assumed hierarchical moral culture that divided nations in the globalized world. The constant competition, interaction, and exchange of material resources around the world exacerbates the divisive power of such fragmented moral cultures, further driving the perpetuation

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[1] Berman, Marshall. All That Is Solid Melts into Air: the Experience of Modernity. New York: Penguin, 1988, 39/477

of xenophobia, racism, nationalism, and the sentiment of superiority and malignant competition. When crises arise on a global scale, particularly those manifesting in the shortages, malfunctioning, collapse, and disasters of the materially globalized world, the fragmented non-globalized moral cultures propel us into modes of non-cooperation, hatred, suspicion, and blame-shifting in the name of self-defense. Material disasters consequently escalate into moral disasters, further puncturing the already fragile world with more human suffering. Our bodies inhabit a globalized village, but have our minds transcended the stagnant tribal mentality? This is one of the defining challenges of our modern time; one we can nonetheless address by first aligning our material space with our ethical space in the manifestation of globalization.

Thus in my earnest hope and boldest dream, I envision a future where we can embrace the creation of a global moral culture by reimagining the salience of citizenship in this era of modernity and globalization. Incorporating cosmopolitan ethics into civic imagination could be the first step in solving the misalignment between the material and moral realms of globalization. Citizenship consists of membership of a political community where all citizens can determine the terms of social cooperation on an equal basis,[2] entailing multiple legal, political, and ethical dimensions in its meaning. I construe that the legal and political dimensions of citizenship regarding rights and participation fundamentally serve the ethical dimension of citizenship and obligations---a concern for the common good, a concern for the stability and prosperity of one's nation, fellow citizens, and ultimately oneself. Therefore, as opposed to a discussion of basic obligations of citizens that arise from specific legal and political dimensions of citizenship, I want to discuss the primary obligation that arises from the ethical dimension of citizenship in both national and global contexts that overarch different governmentalities and ideological frameworks. Cosmopolitan ethics, contrary to common belief, is not a concept exclusively applied to the citizenry of the world. On the surface, it seems contradictory to juxtapose national loyalties and local identities with allegiance to a universal community that dissolves national boundaries. However, if we rid the cosmopolitan mindset of its conceptual and geographical technicality, its core lies in people's propensity to recognizing, tolerating, embracing, and emphasizing differences in all their guises and the ability to align our ethical obligations towards the betterment of a world not defined by such differences. In light of the ethical dimension of citizenship and cosmopolitanism, there is great significance in cosmopolitan ethics as an ethical apparatus that citizens around the world could utilize towards the common aspiration of shared stability and prosperity and the pursuit of a solution to the chasm between global material culture and moral culture.

The idea of reinventing a cosmopolitan civic imagination is critically informed by Durkheim's thoughts on social integration. Durkheim raises the notion of collective consciousness, "the totality of beliefs and sentiments common to the average members of a society".[3] He postulates that the collective consciousness is formed through social interactions and in turn "forms a determinate system with a life of its own".[4] In particular, as the population grows in the evolution of society and the advent of modernity, so does the scale of human interactions and ultimately the complexity

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[2] Bellamy, Richard. Citizenship: a Very Short Introduction. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, 17.
[3] Durkheim, Emile. The Division of Labor in Society. New York (N.Y.): The Free press, 1984, 39.
[4] Durkheim, Emile. The Division of Labor in Society. New York (N.Y.): The Free press, 1984, 39.

of society. To contextualize the Durkheimian notion of social integration and collective consciousness against our modern backdrop, I would like to point out the dynamics between individuals and societal forms in the context of globalization. As population growth creates more complex transnational social relations, individuals' social interactions have the capacity to form the "determinate system" of the world. Specifically, while the international climate affects the social, political, economic and ethical functionality of every nation state and the wellbeing of every nation state grounds the obligations of every citizen, every citizen serves as an active agent of social change and a building block of this nation states which in turn collectively determine the international climate. Durkheim's idea of collective consciousness can therefore be elevated to the social condition of our era that necessitates an extension of the bound of civic obligation from a strictly isolated national context to a global one. In Durkheim's appraisal, as people engage in more activities with neighbors, the traditional bonds of solidarity are reinvented.[5] Citizens' interactions with one another now also have a life of their own in shaping the collective moral consciousness that determines the reality of globalized social relations. Considering that "social solidarity arises because a certain number of states of consciousness are common to all members of the same society",[6] a modern form of collective consciousness is thus desperately needed to create a shared global moral culture that will align with the global sharing of the material culture, that can fundamentally transform citizens' tribalized moral mentality into a globalized one.

However, as argued by Durkheim, in modern society, the collective consciousness is diffused, leaving an "open place for a growing multitude of individual differences," but there is one belief that has become strengthened and universalized — the sacredness attributed to the individual.[7] The human person, Durkheim notes, is becoming "the object of a sort of religion".[8] Thus, only through moral individualism can we connect and resolve the paradox of individual freedom and social solidarity. Given the seemingly contradictory need for a collective consciousness and the reality of individual morality, now the question lies in how we can align the two in creating the social solidarity of the world, the answer of which, I believe, lies exactly in allowing individuals to ground their moral codes in the pursuit of shared global moral culture and well-being. If we align our individual moral belief with the end of the betterment of humanity rather than localized supremacy, control, and oppression, we can shift our individual morality that was shaped by the historic landscape of colonialism, neocolonialism, and capitalism that championed individuality and the pursuit of self-interests to one that does not compromise but simply reorients individual interest to one that is fulfilled in accordance with rather than at the expense of society's collective well-being. By doing so, the mechanism of moral individualism, where individual morality enables individuals to maximize the freedom to pursue their happiness, simultaneously maximizes social solidarity and well-being.

With such a mentality, we are also better equipped to achieve both social stability and prosperity in the globalized era. Social stability is founded on the equilibrium of mutual trust, recognition and

[5] Durkheim, Emile. The Division of Labor in Society. New York (N.Y.): The Free press, 1984, 88-104.
[6] Durkheim, Emile. The Division of Labor in Society. New York (N.Y.): The Free press, 1984, 64.
[7] Durkheim, Emile, and George Simpson. The Division of Labor in Society. London: Collier-Macmillan, 1964, 172.
[8] Durkheim, Emile, and George Simpson. The Division of Labor in Society. London: Collier-Macmillan, 1964, 172.

acceptance, and such a social equilibrium can be easily disturbed when newly emerged differences fail to reconcile with existing paradigms of beliefs and values, thus damaging the foundation of peace and harmony. The high mobility and speedy transmission of people and information in the globalizing era mean that the predisposition of traditions and ideas that defines a nation state and its previous social equilibrium of mutual acknowledgment are constantly bombarded and challenged by new ideas with outside influence. The rejection of differences and the failure to recognize and understand diversity will undermine the maintenance of friendly social relationships, the disintegration of which will subsequently arouse tension and antagonism, thus destabilizing social congruity and order. Furthermore, a cosmopolitan mindset allows an individual to transcend political and geographical confines to seek cooperation from people based on merits rather than social constructs created to draw boundaries, such as political affiliation and national identity. Financial, cultural, intellectual, and technological prosperities in the 21st century are rarely isolated occurrences. A cosmopolitan mindset is thus essential in driving economic and socio-cultural exchanges that heavily rely on one's openness to new ideas. Citizens' blind nationalist and patriotic fervors that propel an individual to reject and discredit any form of "foreignness" would collectively create a social environment that is hostile to the absorption of new ideas, thus perpetuating the inability of a nation state to keep up with the rapid global advancement. Thus, I earnestly hope that cosmopolitan ethics can be taken into account in realizing our civic obligation in the current era, which will allow the stability and prosperity of a nation as well as the consolidation of individuals' social, political, and cultural rights that are ensured only by a stable social order. We need a shared global moral culture to facilitate an ethical and vibrant expansion of the global material culture, that ultimately benefits the very individuals that embrace such ethics.

   The reinvention of civic imagination nevertheless a laborious and challenging task. It is in no way an easy path to reconciling with the social and moral divides that modern globalization has inflicted upon nation states. Marx's conceptualization in the Communist Manifesto--"the bourgeoisie has through its exploitation of the world market given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country" [9]--could easily be used to accuse my proposed cosmopolitan ethics of merely articulating an appropriate ideology for new liberal managerial class in the globalized world, possibly acting as a new tool of alienation for the powerful over the powerless, where the "domination over the circumstances and conditions in which an individual lives" persists. [10] Given Marx's dialectical proposition that forms of social consciousness correspond to social superstructures that entail such ideologies and moral constructs[11], it is a valid concern that the cosmopolitan ideology could simply be an old form of super-structural power in modern liberal guise. However, cosmopolitan civic relations could in fact mitigate alienation. The estrangement of labor occurs as workers relate to products of their work as an alien and even

[9] Marx, Karl, and Frederick Engels. "Manifesto of the Communist Party." Communist Manifesto (Chapter 1).
[10] Marx, Karl, Friedrich Engels, and Robert C. Tucker. The Marx-Engels Reader, "the German Ideology". New York: W.W. Norton, 1978, 301.
[11] Marx, Karl, Friedrich Engels, and Robert C. Tucker. The Marx-Engels Reader, " Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy ". New
   York: W.W. Norton, 1978.

hostile object to himself.[12] The distribution of products in the material realm of globalization, when coupled with its divided moral realms marked with nationalism and xenophobia, further exacerbates this sense of estrangement and hostile relations as workers' labor could easily be appropriated from them to benefit what they perceive to be a hostile class, nation, or people, which has become extremely palpable during the COVID-19 pandemic. Reversing the rigid mentality of producing for the local good versus the global collective good through the reimagination of a cosmopolitan civic outlook could to thereby mitigate hostile relations of labor to a certain extent by re-orienting the virtue of labor against a particular socio-cultural milieu. Moreover, Marx's concern over the "cosmopolitan character" of production and consumption in fact pertains to the material culture of globalization, and my proposed reinvention of cosmopolitan civic imagination is exactly an attempt to create a cosmopolitan character of a global moral culture that could align with the cosmopolitan character of the material world.

To argue for a shared world moral culture, I must grapple with the alleged incompatibility between nation-bound ideals and cosmopolitan ethics. Weber's theorization of politics, nation states, and rationalization lends me further insight into the necessity of my proposed enterprise. Weber argues that a nation state is "a human community that claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory, and note that 'territory' is one of the characteristics of the state".[13] Building upon this global network of nation states, politics means "striving to influence the distribution of power among states".[14] The constant warfare throughout history testifies to Weber's realistic take on power and the functioning of modern nation states in their propensity towards power struggle. Conflicts and wars manifest in the amplification of civic distrust, the misconception of differences, and the consequent strained social relations on a collective scale, which would require a shared virtue to resolve. Hence, it is exactly Weber's realist concern over the power-centric nature of politics among modern nation states, especially in the globalized era where violence could yield unimaginable loss and suffering, that necessitates efforts to redress the disconnect between global material culture and moral culture in which our citizens participate, where conflicts in the former, coupled with an anti-cosmopolitan ethics, could hinder peaceful social relations in our nation and ultimately the world.

Moreover, Weber's verdict on rationalization and modern social actions gives me great confidence in the prospect of a cosmopolitan-infused civic outlook. Even though Weber posits that rationalization has led to the disenchantment of the world, where the world has become "rationalized and intellectualized" and "sublime values retreat from public life either into the transcendental realm of mystic life",[15] and the consequent pluralization and fragmentation of value systems, he also believes that modern social actions are more dynamic. Because of the

[12] Marx, Karl, Friedrich Engels, and Robert C. Tucker. The Marx-Engels Reader, "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts ". New York: W.W. Norton,
   1978.
[13] Weber, Max, H. H. Gerth, and C. Wright Mills. From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology, "Politics as a Vocation." Oxford: Oxford University Press, 78
[14] Weber, Max, H. H. Gerth, and C. Wright Mills. From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology, "Politics as a Vocation." Oxford: Oxford University Press, 78
[15] Weber, Max, H. H. Gerth, and C. Wright Mills. From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology, "Science as a Vocation." Oxford: Oxford University Press, 155

rationalization of action, one becomes capable of "deliberate adaptation to situations in terms of self-interest". [16] Thus, even though rationalization and disenchantment could destruct an old unified worldview and moral foundation as modern specialization promotes distinct rationalities and justifies conflicting value systems, which seems to undermine Durkheim's idea of collective consciousness, the ultimate protection of and alignment with citizens' individual happiness and self-interests, facilitated by global social stability and prosperity, could unite the rationalization of individual social actions in pursuing such civic obligations with cosmopolitan ethics. In short, rationalization indeed makes an imposed ideology vulnerable to fragmentation, but it also harbors tremendous power in strengthening ideas that individuals can actively and independently rationalize to serve with their own interest. The establishment of a global moral culture through the reinvention of civic imagination, I believe, could stand the test of individual rationalization when properly expounded, and could thus provide a viable solution to unifying the materially globalized but morally tribalized world.

Lastly, I'd like to utilize Foucault's discourse of discipline and power to present a final evaluation of my thoughts. Foucault emphasizes the discipline of individuals' soul in creating social order. Such discipline entails not only a set of knowledge and methods that define individual identity but also the manner in which individuals exercise control over themselves. Redefining the fundamental moral undertone of civic obligation creates a set of values and knowledge that could reshape citizens' identity and moral orientation, from which they derive the standard of their action and self-control. As Foucault suggests, "discipline is no longer simply an art of distributing bodies, of extracting time from them and accumulating it, but of composing forces in order to obtain an efficient machine", [17] the paradigm shift towards cosmopolitan moral values thus engenders a regulative and directive force on the soul that serves to create a global moral culture, a self-perpetuating system of moral discipline, to facilitate more efficient, cooperative, and tolerant material globalization. Furthermore, in Foucault's deliberation of power, power "defines innumerable points of confrontation, focuses of instability, each of which has its own risks of conflict."[18] The disciplining power of incorporating cosmopolitanism into the understanding of citizenship, a traditionally localized concept, will undoubtedly require us to confront tension, contradiction, and risks of conflicts. To overcome such conflicts, the promotion and perpetuation of cosmopolitan ethics would demand good education, that could endow people with the cognitive faculty for critical thinking and the independent capability of arriving at values of right and wrong, which in turn also facilitates Weber's modern dynamism of social action through individual rationalization, a means for individuals to resolve the conflicts that any form of power could exact upon them. Thus, I firmly believe that cosmopolitanizing the moral dimension of our era of globalization, albeit challenging, could eventually be realized.

If I may quote Berman's eloquent expression of the crux of our era, "to be modern is to live a life of paradox and contradiction. It is to be overpowered and yet to be undeterred in our

[16] Weber, Max. The Theory of Social and Economic Organizations, ed. T. Parsons. Free Press, 1966, 123
[17] Foucault, Michel. Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prision. New York: Vintage Books, 1977, 164
[18] Foucault, Michel. Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prision. New York: Vintage Books, 1977, 27.

determination to face these forces, to fight to change their world and make it our own."[19] Globalization in our era of modernity has unleashed a simultaneously unifying and divisive force that we must brave. The material dimension of globalization cannot fulfill its utmost constructive capacity if the moral dimension functions without us pledging our moral allegiance to the betterment of a shared global existence. The intrinsic connection between today's global and national crises gives rise to the need for citizens of nations states to embrace a cosmopolitan mindset so as to achieve their ethical obligation to create stability and prosperity for their communities as both fellow citizens and human beings. I hope I have articulated well my imperfect but passionate desire for the establishment of a global moral culture through a cosmopolitan reinvention of civic obligations.

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[19] Berman, Marshall. *All That Is Solid Melts into Air: the Experience of Modernity*. New York: Penguin, 1988, 13.