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Cosmopolitan Europe? Cosmopolitan justice against EU-centredness

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ABSTRACT

Since the early 2000s, the concept of ‘cosmopolitan Europe’ (CE) has become popular among philosophers and sociologists as a ‘post-nationalist’ way to rethink and reform the European Union (EU) in an age of globalization. Thus, seeking its justification in the European cosmopolitan tradition as an answer to unrestrained nationalism in Europe, CE should make the EU pursue a vigorously cosmopolitan understanding of Europe as well as the world. The present article defends the claim that prevailing, EU-centred CE is morally flawed for uncritically presupposing the fundamental acceptability of the EU as a project that actually clashes with cosmopolitan justice. A threefold argument is developed. First, morally, cosmopolitanism is to be understood as a particularism-critical position that emphasizes global distributive justice. Second, from this moral cosmopolitan perspective, the EU is unjust for epitomizing ‘enlarged particularism’. Third, views of CE are unduly conservative for neglecting – neither acknowledging nor refuting – cosmopolitan justice while taking the EU’s basic defensibility as self-evident. The conclusion suggests that CE could only be a utopian, bottom-up view that advocates EU de-integration in favour of Europe-wide cooperation for a world more just in a cosmopolitan sense.

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1. Introduction

A widespread belief exists that cosmopolitanism, rooted in Europe’s old universalist moral traditions, has been a key antidote to the excesses of nationalism in modern European history (Calhoun 2009). Notably European integration is seen as cosmopolitanism-inspired for its contribution to peace and prosperity on a continent long torn by nationalist warfare and French–German conflict. In the 1990s, with the rise of globalization, cosmopolitanism seemed to become a still more important aspect of European self-understanding. Europe has acquired leadership in theorizing on ‘reflexive modernization’, renewing neo-Kantian moral universalism, developing international law, advocating democracy and human rights, providing global financial aid and humanitarian assistance, and boosting global climate policy. Cosmopolitanism seems

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now also present in an intellectual assessment of the diversity globalization has brought to Europe (Calhoun 2009, 638, 642, 645–647, 650; Eriksen 2006, 62). Since the early 2000s, theorists have come to see the European Union (EU) as a ‘post-national’ upheal to a cosmopolitan world order or to a European continent more radically open to difference (Brown 2014, 671–672; Eriksen 2014, 109; Habermas 2003; Beck and Grande 2007a; Calhoun 2009). Thus, the concept of ‘cosmopolitan Europe’ (CE) has gained academic popularity as a means to analyse Europe, notably the EU.

Does ‘EU-centred Europe’ (Calhoun 2009, 645) have cosmopolitan potential, as CE theorists claim? One argument in favour is that the EU, the most promising post-national organization, is a model for other world regions. Since it accepts the moral authority of the rule of law, democracy, human rights, and multilateralism, the EU could be a hopeful path towards global justice (Eriksen 2006, 260–266). Also, although the current EU is not Kantian-cosmopolitan, considering its inconsistent application of the freedoms of cosmopolitan right and the laws of hospitality to non-EU citizens and its outward human rights policies as distorted by dubious economic behaviour, a ‘truly cosmopolitan EU’ is believed to be possible once ‘these issues are more clearly addressed within the EU debate’ (Brown 2014, 687).

Yet serious grounds for scepticism also exist. Firstly, a cosmopolitan political community has never been a European integration priority (Baban 2013, 220). Also, contemporary cosmopolitans tend to regard Kantian hospitality as ‘a thin requirement of the responsibility we have towards each other as human beings’ (234). Moreover, there are the embarrassing consequences of the common agricultural policy: the EU’s consistently highest item of expenditure by far with high external tariffs, high export subsidies, and internal price support. This policy of food self-sufficiency has distorted the world food market, undermined the ability of poor countries to export their own agricultural products, and seriously contributed to global poverty (Malcolm 1995, 56–58; Blair [2005] 2010, 33–37; Caney 2006, 127–128; Pogge 2010, 206).¹ Overall, the primary EU goal is ‘global peace and security of Europeans in a broad sense’, rather than ‘global distributive justice’ as a conventional cosmopolitan concept (De Beus and Mak 2001, 348; Beitz [1979] 1999). Thus, the EU as a regional polity is at least *prima facie* incompatible with cosmopolitan justice.

In this article, I aim to engage critically with the CE debate by discussing in more detail whether CE can be truly cosmopolitan. What I offer is a *moral* cosmopolitanism-based analysis of EU-centred CE, that is, a normative analysis that employs cosmopolitanism as a perspective on the question of the scope and content of moral obligation. Arguably, such an inquiry fits with the individualist egalitarianism of the (European) Enlightenment culture (Beitz 1999, 518, 529). Specifically, the great inequalities in resources and wealth that characterize our ecologically limited world suggest a closer analysis of the friction between the EU – the centre of dominant CE – and global distributive justice. Thus, an adequate assessment of EU-centred CE accounts calls for an answer to the question whether this tension is merely *prima facie* or actually stronger. To this end, I treat the EU as a project of European unification, understanding it essentially as a historically developed, distinctive politico-economic organization that

¹One could add: the European history of exclusion, persecution, misplaced superiority, and dark colonialism (cf. Pasture 2015).

features core principles to be maintained by a characteristic set of institutions, laws, and policies.

Yet my adoption of a moral perspective requires further clarification, as several scholars involved in CE theorizing have criticized moral cosmopolitanism, its dominance notwithstanding, for being unduly abstract and individualist (Delanty 2006, 28–29; Calhoun 2009, 653). I do submit that the conventional view of the at least ordinarily overriding nature of moral considerations against other (e.g. self-interested, religious, legal) ones in determining how one should act holds for global as well as domestic relations (Stroud 1998; Beitz [1979] 1999, especially 4–5, 179). Still, while my approach assumes the general academic primacy of (moral or political) philosophy, no matter how abstract or individualist its findings, it should not rule out the possibility that CE theorists offer convincing EU-related arguments for relativizing moral cosmopolitanism, since cosmopolitanism is contested (Miller 2007, 23) and morality not always overruling. Then again, it could also be the case that CE theorizing itself shows moral shortcomings in this respect. Either way, the specific arguments of CE theorists must be addressed, too.

My thesis will be that leading, EU-centred CE is morally flawed for uncritically presupposing the fundamental acceptability of the EU as a project that actually clashes with cosmopolitan justice. I will offer a threefold argument for this thesis. First, morally, cosmopolitanism is to be understood as a particularism-critical position that, as a result, includes an emphasis on global distributive justice. Thus, here I explain what, more exactly, I take moral cosmopolitanism to mean. Second, from this moral cosmopolitan perspective, the EU is unjust for epitomizing ‘enlarged particularism’. Thus, turning to the centre of prevailing CE, I argue that the EU is incompatible with cosmopolitan justice as explained in the first argument. Third, the main social-theoretical and political-theoretical views of CE are unduly conservative for neglecting – neither acknowledging nor refuting – cosmopolitan justice while taking the EU’s basic defensibility as obvious. Thus, I complete my CE critique by showing that these views display no awareness of the tension between the EU and cosmopolitan justice, but actually and unconvincingly endorse the former at the expense of the latter. I will conclude by suggesting that CE could only be an ‘idealistically utopian’, radically bottom-up view that advocates EU de-integration in favour of Europe-wide cooperation for a world more just in a cosmopolitan sense. Thus, I propose that CE should abandon its EU-centredness by becoming a cosmopolitan movement ‘from below’. Overall, without offering a full independent defence of moral cosmopolitanism, I argue that cosmopolitans should reject ‘cosmopolitan Europe’ insofar as that is EU-based.

2. Moral cosmopolitanism as cosmopolitan justice

My analysis of CE requires me, firstly, to clarify moral cosmopolitanism. My first argument, then, is that, morally, we should regard cosmopolitanism as an anti-particularist position to which, consequently, global distributive justice is essential (cf. Ulaş 2015, 17; Kodelja 2016).² This is a view motivated, but not justified, by the existence of global poverty and extreme inequality.

²Note that I will ignore the claim that cosmopolitan justice might also require intervention to guarantee the civil liberties and democratic rights of people living under oppressive conditions. This force-reliant requirement is controversial and should thus not be employed to assess CE.

A good starting-point for understanding cosmopolitanism, one also accepted by CE researchers Pichler (2009, 4, 7, 18) and Schlenker (2013, 30–31), is offered by Martha Nussbaum, who argues that it is the world community that is fundamentally the source of our moral obligations, such as those of justice, and which, therefore, should be given our first allegiance. This attitude, she explains, should be cultivated by education that, in teaching us about ourselves and others, denaturalizes borders (Nussbaum 1996). Nussbaum's view finds support in Gerard Delanty's one that cosmopolitanism includes global openness, relativization of one's own identity or culture, recognition of others' identities or cultures, and 'formation of a moral consciousness rooted in emotional responses to global issues, concern with global ethics, putting the non-national interest before the national interest' (Delanty 2012, 336–341, quotation 341). Morally, the suggestion is that cosmopolitanism opposes (relatively) 'closed' forms of particularity, or *particularism*: since, unlike individual persons, national, non-national or multinational states, or all other forms of sectional human grouping, do not possess fundamental value, the scope of moral obligation is basically global. Consequently, a roughly egalitarian principle of distributive justice, targeted at improvement of the position of the worst-off in a single society, should be extended to the whole world (Beitz [1979] 1999, 198–199, 208, 215–216; Pogge 1989, 241–280; Caney 2005; Holtug 2011; Tan 2013, 32–33; Kodelja 2016, 105–107; Ulaş 2015).³ As (non-cosmopolitan) Thomas Nagel explains cosmopolitanism and its political implications:

the demands of justice derive from an equal concern or a duty of fairness that we owe in principle to all our fellow human beings, and the institutions to which standards of justice can be applied are instruments for the fulfillment of that duty (Nagel 2005, 119).

Yet a distinction has been proposed between 'weak' and 'strong' cosmopolitanism – one directly relevant to the scope of and content of moral obligation (Miller 2007, 23–50; Tan 2013, 33–34). Supposedly, whereas the 'weak' version merely requires that equal concern is shown for all human beings and, as such, is acceptable to theorists who defend the 'naturalness' of priority to compatriots (Rawls 1999; Nagel 2005; Miller 1995, 2007), 'strong' cosmopolitanism requires also that all persons receive substantively equal treatment, so that we are bound to apply globally, for instance, a principle of (roughly) equal access to resources or wealth, or a principle of equal opportunity (Miller 2007, 28, 30, 43–44). It is, then, only the 'strong' version that holds that 'as moral agents, we have an equal responsibility to respond' to various claims for aid in cases of bad things (e.g. starvation) happening and that characteristics such as nationality or location ought not to count (28). Thus, the 'weak–strong' distinction denies my earlier claim that the basically global scope of obligation is essential to cosmopolitanism: 'we are all cosmopolitans now' (28).

However, I maintain that only the 'strong' version is truly 'moral cosmopolitan' (cf. Tan 2013, 44). Thus, first, it seems natural to think that 'cosmopolitanism' means that our first allegiance lies with the world community and we put the global interest before the national interest (Nussbaum, Delanty). If cosmopolitanism could also be nationally particularist and

³Examples are Charles Beitz's and Thomas Pogge's arguments for a globalized Rawlsian difference principle and Simon Caney's suggestion of globalizing four principles: (1) persons have a right to subsistence; (2) persons of different nations should have equal opportunities; (3) persons have the right to equal pay for equal work; (4) benefiting persons matters more the worse off they are (Beitz [1979] 1999; Pogge 1989; Caney 2005, 122–124).

drop the global scope of our obligations of justice, as in the ‘weak’ version, the concept would lose its critical distinctiveness by indeed turning all morally sensitive people who acknowledge at least some extra-national moral obligations into ‘cosmopolitans’. But a meaningful cosmopolitanism exceeds ‘a universal humanitarian requirement of minimal concern’ (Nagel 2005, 125) and, in considering nationality morally arbitrary (Knight 2011, 19–21), will consistently wish a worldwide ‘common system of institutions that could attempt to realize the same standards of fairness or equal opportunity that one wants for one’s own society’ (Nagel 2005, 119). Second, prominent political theorists who defend the non-derivative significance of priority to compatriots explicitly distinguish their view from ‘cosmopolitanism’ (Rawls 1999, 82–83, 119–120; Nagel 2005), precisely because they see the latter as at odds with attaching basic value to special relationships. Third, then, whereas it makes most sense to regard moral cosmopolitanism as entirely inconsistent with fundamental special obligations (Knight 2011; Holtug 2011), ‘weak cosmopolitanism’, which accepts such obligations, is best understood as in line with ‘internationalism’, or ‘solidarism’: a ‘two-level’ moral position between ‘cosmopolitanism’ and ‘realism’ (Shapcott [1997] 2014; Beitz [1979] 1999; cf. Miller 2007, 20–21). Also, it will be instantly discarded by ‘post-nationalist’ CE theorists: they do not wish to defend the basic value of priority to compatriots, national or European, and want their cosmopolitanism to be more than ‘almost platitudinous’ (Miller 2007, 27).⁴

While moral cosmopolitanism must always view boundaries critically, it is not necessarily ‘cold’ and ‘thin’, opposed to all ‘thick’ and ‘warm’ forms of solidarity or justice (against Calhoun 2012, 115–118 and Delanty 2006, 43). Consistent with its non-particularist emphasis on global standards of distributive justice, moral cosmopolitanism does not simply disqualify special obligations to compatriots (Beitz [1979] 1999), provided that, to use Thomas Pogge’s words, ‘those who are *partial* in favor of their own group’ are, firstly, ‘*impartially* concerned for preserving the fairness of the larger social setting’ (Pogge 2010, 23, emphases in original; cf. Nagel 2005, 120; Tan 2013, 36).⁵ Therefore, to quote Charles Beitz, they should continue to ‘regard the world from the perspective of one person among many ..., and ... choose courses of action, policies, rules, and institutions on grounds that would be acceptable to any agent who was impartial among the competing interests involved’ (Beitz [1979] 1999, 58, cf. 199–200).

For group partiality to be justified, then, either one of the following conditions must be met (Knight 2011, 25–30). First, the ‘condition of instrumentality’ holds that acting on special obligations is demonstrably the most effective or efficient means for realizing cosmopolitan justice as much as possible. In fact, various forms of cosmopolitanism argue that nationally rooted relationships or patriotic loyalties, which demonstrate that

⁴CE theorists will reject the theories of John Rawls and David Miller for their emphasis on the non-derivative value of (normatively) closed peoples or nations. From their side, both Rawls and Miller have criticized the EU for being a threat to nation-level democracy and social justice (Rawls and Van Parijs 2003; Miller 1998). This disagreement illustrates the irrelevance of ‘weak cosmopolitanism’.

⁵Yet Pogge’s more recent stance on global justice does not seem *distinctively* cosmopolitan overall. Criticizing the rich countries for the unjust political-economic world order they have imposed on the global poor, Pogge focuses on defending transnational corrective justice based on the ‘negative’ duty not to harm. However, negative duties to stop harming or to compensate one’s victims can be consistently included in non-cosmopolitan theories, too; internationalists can also accept that such duties are rather insensitive to variations in community and distance (Pogge 2004, 278–279; cf. Kamminga 2006, 27). Indeed, Pogge bases his position largely on the strategic aim to ‘keep my argument widely acceptable’, without speaking of ‘cosmopolitanism’ hereby (Pogge 2010, 28–29, quotation 28).

people can include strangers in their moral purview, are functionally necessary or motivationally stimulating to achieve cosmopolitan moral goals (see Kymlicka and Walker 2013). Second, the ‘condition of constraint’ holds that the special obligations are not followed before cosmopolitan obligations of justice are satisfied and thus are consistent with the requirement of substantively equal treatment worldwide (cf. Tan 2013, 41–43). We should not prioritize helping those compatriots who are (relative to other compatriots) economically needy, when particular non-compatriots are in far greater need and without help (Knight 2011, 29).

Thus, moral cosmopolitanism embraces global pluralism and diversity as long as these do not violate global distributive justice. Insofar as human groups unreasonably disrupt the limits of justice, they are not worthy of protection. I will, then, accept the supremacy of cosmopolitan justice, at least until CE theorists appear to present good reasons for giving it up. In any case, they should be concerned about the EU’s basic justifiability, especially if the *prima facie* incompatibility of the EU with cosmopolitan justice is an actual one indeed.

3. Cosmopolitan justice and the European Union

My second argument is that, from the moral cosmopolitan perspective outlined above, the EU is unjust for embodying ‘enlarged particularism’. Thus, the ‘post-nationalist’ EU is intrinsically un-cosmopolitan for being no direct contribution to cosmopolitan justice, but it also violates the two cosmopolitan requirements for special obligations: those of instrumentality and constraint. The EU may go beyond nation-states, but moral cosmopolitanism treats such a reform – like anything else, including cultural openness and difference, democracy, and economic systems – as instrument for, or additional to, the satisfaction of the just interests of individuals globally. From that perspective, the EU fails (cf. Beitz [1979] 1999, 216; Kamminga 2013, 7–9).

To begin with, the scope of moral obligation that inherently characterizes the EU is primarily particularist. This is constituted by two features without which we could not speak meaningfully of the EU as a historically developed, distinctive organization: ‘integrative communitarianism’ and ‘admission selectiveness’, as I call these features. First, regarding integrative communitarianism, a core principle of European integration is ‘community preference’, which entails a common system of tariff barriers around an internal, non-global market. An economic market liberalism (even if ‘social’) is central in the constitution of the single market of the EU. The EU’s primary competence area involves the establishment of competition rules for the internal market that assumes the existence of a customs union and thus requires a common external tariff as well as an active competition policy (Parker and Rosamond 2013, 236–237; European Union 2012, last-mentioned treaty, article 3). Thus, a large-scale protectionist system has been created in order to protect the economic interests of European countries better than the prewar system did (Blair [2005] 2010, 33). Although the EU aims to transcend national egoisms and sovereignties, it effectively stretches the member states’ particularisms to the boundaries of ‘Europe’ (even if these boundaries are hard to determine) and continues to include and exclude people. Internally, borders between states have been eliminated for free movement; externally, the EU has reinforced boundaries.

Accordingly, since it deepened with Maastricht through monetary and political unification and widened to the east, the EU has strengthened its outer borders by more restrictive immigration policies towards third country nationals. This explains why, while many people experience Europe as protector of human rights and peace, migrants from developing (African) countries and conflict areas encounter the EU as ‘fortress Europe’ (Schlenker 2013, 30, 34–35; Baban 2013, 227–231). In sum, European economic and political integration leads to an increase of scale without making the actual logic of moral obligation more global: as members of a single community, citizens have obligations to each other that they do not have to people outside the borders. From a cosmopolitan perspective, such a limited increase of scale cannot be a direct contribution to justice, since the logic of integration precludes a focus on including the world’s worst-off. And since it is one goal of the EU to promote European ‘domestic justice’, prioritizing cosmopolitan justice would lead to a neglect of ‘domestic injustices’ if not also to EU self-sacrifice (cf. Ulaş 2015, 4).

Second, regarding admission selectiveness, the ‘Copenhagen criteria’ for EU membership demand of candidate countries that they have a viable market economy and feature stable institutions that guarantee democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and respect for and protection of minority rights, and also that they are ‘European’ (Blair [2005] 2010, 142; European Union, 2012, first-mentioned treaty, article 49). Even if we followed prominent CE theorists Ulrich Beck and Edgar Grande who, as will become clearer in the next section, understand ‘Europe’ broadly as a European–American zone of freedom, democracy, and human rights that should welcome Turkey and Russia (Beck and Grande 2007a, 11, 60), we would still end up with a select group of (relatively) rich countries as (potential) EU members. At any rate, for the foreseeable future at least, it is hard to imagine that (Sub-Saharan) Africa will come to fall under ‘Europe’, let alone could become part of the EU if that is to maintain (perhaps somewhat more leniently) its membership criteria as expression of its core values. Surely, the EU upholds a comparatively high aid budget and attention to the United Nations and human rights outside its borders. But from a cosmopolitan perspective, it is dubious, particularly within an inegalitarian capitalist world economy, that rich European countries are directly and strongly solidary with less rich European countries (the example of Greece comes to mind immediately) and, accordingly, at most to a limited extent solidary with the (much) poorer (African) countries in the world (Brown 2002, 181–183). Arguably, this selective solidarity is so forceful because the richer EU member states have a stake in it. Also, dropping the selectiveness when admitting states would probably create EU instability and harm its own economic and security interests.

One may think that the EU, with its transnational character and commitment to human rights and development assistance, could be justified more indirectly: as an example for other regions or a contribution to cosmopolitan justice in the long run. Perhaps the EU can be understood as a ‘regional’, ‘functional’ (Eriksen 2014, 110) step towards a truly cosmopolitan order. Yet I argue that the EU’s internal special obligations, or its ‘integrative communitarianism’ and ‘admission selectiveness’, cannot be justified conditionally from a moral cosmopolitan perspective. Thus, the EU is not the most effective or efficient European contribution to cosmopolitan justice, and it was not created only after European states had already met their

obligations of cosmopolitan justice. I offer four arguments – which together cover both the cosmopolitan conditions of instrumentality and constraint – which explain why a conditionality strategy fails.

First, it would be hard to see the EU – with its multinational, hybrid character – as a regional link towards a (non-centralized) world order that is adequate in a moral cosmopolitan way (cf. Ulaş 2016). Sociologist Amitai Etzioni has defended the serious empirical necessity and possibility of a multi-layered (eventually democratic) global polity with the EU as prominent regional building bloc. For Etzioni, such a system would be better able to tackle the problems of capitalist globalization (such as spread of nuclear weapons, terrorism, starvation, and environmental degradation) than the current system of nation-states, US dominance, international organizations, and transnational movements (Etzioni 2004). However, one problem is that such a world system would probably clash with moral cosmopolitanism, since its characteristic advantage of many checks and balances would go at the cost of (enforcing) global distributive justice. In encouraging the development and strengthening of group loyalties, such a system would also restrict the power of global political bodies to promote justice for individual persons worldwide. Moreover, precisely because of its complex and overlapping structures, it would face a (relatively) high risk of instability and violence (Bull [1977] 2002, 246). Furthermore, even if the EU could help to create a cosmopolitan world order sometime, with such an order as anything but in sight in the absence of other EU-like regional blocs, it would in the interim remain an enlarged particularist organization that perpetuates a basic distinction between members and non-members. From a cosmopolitan perspective, this seems too high a price to pay.

Second, subsequently, the claim that the EU is justified for being an example for other world regions overlooks that, due to poverty, regional hostility, or failing leadership, other regions may be unwilling or incapable to unify as European states have done, which means that the poor elsewhere (not to mention those of the past decades) may have to wait very long, if not endlessly, before their exposure to unequal treatment will have ended. What we can be sure of is that European integration has been mutually self-serving; as we shall see in the next section, CE theorists Beck and Grande acknowledge this. But that the EU could function as a region-based example, and thus as an instrument, of cosmopolitan justice is throwing a hostage to fortune in a world of deep cultural and religious differences, unequal power relations, and various prospects for world order.

Third, even if ‘the EU is ... also a community of people’ and that, therefore, the EU’s ‘cosmopolitan-ness’ is ‘also dependent on the orientations and convictions of the individuals who make up this entity’ (Schlenker 2013, 26), it would be wishful thinking to expect that (something like) a post-national ‘EU patriotism’ will help to motivate people and, subsequently, the EU itself to help achieve cosmopolitan justice. To be sure, empirical research on CE finds positive correlations between emotional ‘European’ identification and ‘cosmopolitan’ identification, and that ‘[e]motionally, a majority of Europeans are cosmopolitans’ rather than ‘partisans of fortress Europe’ (Schlenker 2013, quotation 48; Pichler 2009; Schlenker and Blatter 2014, 1102, 1106, 1108). However, that many Europeans appear to ‘feel emotionally attached’ to the whole world as well as to Europe says little by itself about their actual willingness to be guided by the potentially demanding implications of their ‘cosmopolitan identity’, particularly when these conflict with their ‘European identity’ or, indeed, ‘their’ EU. Not only does

the literature concerned not really discuss this core issue,⁶ but also we should be sceptical about individuals' dispositions and especially their possibilities to meet cosmopolitan obligations and EU ones simultaneously and reorient the EU (without ending it) towards cosmopolitanism this way.

Fourth, the very appeal to cosmopolitan instrumentality would be morally inappropriate for missing the historical development of European integration as a project of *enlarged* particularism (towards the core principle of community preference). Since it started around 1950, European integration has constantly been justified to 'insiders' (albeit problematically democratically speaking) but not to 'outsiders'; basically, their (opinions about their) rights and interests have never been taken into account, let alone more or less equally. But by regionally integrating this way, European states have been violating the cosmopolitan demand of global impartiality as defined earlier (Pogge, Beitz). European states have not, and could not have, based their regional unification on such a demand, neither directly nor indirectly. From a moral cosmopolitan perspective, the project of European integration, even if post-nationalist, is to be deplored – at least beyond the point of having achieved basic (postwar) security (cf. Etzioni 2007) – as primarily, and increasingly, a project of *stretched* partiality. During the enlargements, EU member states have consistently been prioritizing admitted Europeans over citizens from excluded countries. This process of selective solidarity-stretching cannot be justified as somehow beneficial to the global poor, but it also violates the cosmopolitan condition of constraint, namely that citizens and states in Europe may support relatively rich Europeans only once they have already met their obligations of worldwide justice (cf. Kamminga 2001, 246–247, 2014, 67). Indeed, from a cosmopolitan viewpoint, European nation-states have violated the impartiality clause by ever more integrating for mutual benefit (stretched partiality) without first (or at least simultaneously) fulfilling their obligations of justice, particularly by safeguarding just global rules of competition (as requirement for permissible partiality) in a context of widespread poverty and inequality between the EU and many parts of the rest of the world. Seen as such, EU member states have been practicing discrimination by widely, and characteristically, opening their borders for each other's citizens only, at least without recompensing others, particularly those who suffer from global injustice, for not being granted membership.⁷ Arguably, EU protectionism has even damaged global competitive fairness.⁸

In sum, to try to justify the EU as consistent with cosmopolitan justice cannot succeed, with the conditionality strategy smacking too much of opportunism. If anything, the EU is a step backwards due to its *extended* particularist nature. To facilitate

⁶This remarkable silence about cosmopolitan moral obligations and justice can also be discerned in political-philosophical analyses. Thus, Kwame Anthony Appiah defends a 'cosmopolitan patriotism' that, in rejecting cultural nationalism and defending attachment to common, basic human rights-respecting institutions, could be compatible with the EU as well as with states. But he does so by treating cosmopolitanism (like patriotism) merely as a 'sentiment', without addressing action-guiding moral implications (Appiah 1998). That, more generally, Appiah's 'rooted cosmopolitanism' lacks moral bite is forcefully argued in Adelman (2013, 187–188, 198–199).

⁷Cosmopolitan justice does not necessarily require fully open borders. As with global redistribution – which seems appropriate in case of poverty-driven migrants and other poor people – it can regard open borders as instrumental and interchangeable (cf. Bauböck 2009, 4–5, 27–28).

⁸Remarkably, the moral cosmopolitan, Pogge, and a non-cosmopolitan internationalist such as Rawls would all three be critical of the common agricultural policy's outward effects and the highly European interest-driven imposition of intellectual property rights on developing countries (cf. Pogge 2010, 20–21, 23, 35, 206; Rawls 1999, 42–43, 115).

cosmopolitan justice, we should ‘transcend’, rather than ‘reform’, the sovereign states system, for cosmopolitan principles would require an entirely different global polity: a world state or federation. While a global ‘avant-garde’ of non-governmental organizations, pressure groups, trade unions, religious groups, and local social movements seems necessary (albeit insufficient) for trying to transform egoistic nation-states into ‘cosmopolitan states’, the EU cannot join such activists due to its typical, non-transformative but re-interpretive, contribution to the maintenance of nation-states (cf. Ulaş 2015; Kamminga 2006). A moral justification for the EU, if it exists, cannot be grounded in cosmopolitan justice. I now confront the EU-centred CE literature with this outcome.

4. Cosmopolitan justice and EU-centred ‘cosmopolitan Europe’

Main views of CE, as developed in various degrees of detail in often frequently cited works, can be classified as social-theoretical or political-theoretical. As I explain below without pretending all-inclusiveness, (three) social-theoretical views understand EU-centred Europe in terms of self-reflexive openness to difference, and (three) political-theoretical perspectives stress the EU’s potential to help realize universal moral ideals. My third argument is that these various CE positions are unduly conservative: they all neglect cosmopolitan justice, without trying to either acknowledge or disprove it, and while treating the EU’s basic justifiability as self-evident. The views show little awareness of the EU’s incompatibility with cosmopolitan justice. Although post-nationalist, they appear morally uncritical about EU particularism.⁹

While affirming the EU yet somehow aiming to go beyond it, social-theoretical CE views give the impression that ‘global justice’ is too abstract to warrant serious consideration. First, observing that European integration as it has emerged is in crisis, Beck and Grande (2007a, 2007b) propose CE as a political vision and concept for further political integration. Migration, transnational flows, and cultural diversification disqualify frameworks of national homogeneity and call for a cosmopolitanism that decentralizes the role of states in Europe. ‘Cosmopolitanism’, then, is the proper way to understand ‘Europe’: it helps social science to abandon its ‘methodological nationalism’ for a ‘methodological cosmopolitanism’ that will make ‘seeing’ Europe possible (Beck and Grande 2007a, 18). While the EU is the institutional heart of their CE (cf. also Van Gerven and Ossewaarde 2012; Baban 2013, 221–223), Beck and Grande stress that “‘Europe’ reaches as far west as Los Angeles and Vancouver and as far east as Vladivostok – and it included Turkey from the beginning, needless to say’ (Beck and Grande 2007a, 11). Europe embodies a transatlantic synthesis of (hegemonic) America and Europe as a sphere of freedom, human rights, and democracy (25–26).

Rejecting cosmopolitan pursuits of universality that eliminate difference, Beck and Grande defend a plurality-governed cosmopolitanism: ‘diversity is not the problem but the solution’ (Beck and Grande 2007a, 242, 2007b, 73). Thus, ‘[c]osmopolitanism combines appreciation for difference and alterity with attempts to conceive of new democratic forms of political rule beyond the nation-state’ and ‘affirms ... perceiving others as different *and* at the same time as

⁹To avoid misunderstanding, I do not aim to completely dismiss all these views. Still, my goal is to demonstrate that, notwithstanding their complexities and differences, as purportedly ‘cosmopolitan’ perspectives on Europe they all suffer from a similar moral defect, related to exactly how EU-centred they each are.

equal' (Beck and Grande 2007a, 12, 13, emphasis in original). CE, then, is 'a *Europe of difference*', although regulated by 'the universal validity of norms and rights' (14, 15, emphasis in original). Also, CE 'cannot simply abolish national Europe but must cosmopolitanize it from within [and so is] a nationally rooted cosmopolitanism' (16, cf. 82). Now 'the European process of integration involved a *cosmopolitan momentum* from the beginning [in transcending] the nation and [transforming] national sovereignty' (19, emphasis in original). Still, the EU is not cosmopolitan enough, because its top-down, uniform policy approach suggests that it opposes difference and cultural distinctiveness. CE, then, will create a less institutionalist-bureaucratic, more difference-sensitive integration and enrich the EU with multiple, nation-transcending governance levels (62–72). For Beck and Grande, CE is a bottom-up vision to be realized by 'the citizens of Europe' and civil society movements rather than the EU member states and governments (Beck and Grande 2007b, 81).

Beck and Grande insist that their proposal is realistic:

Why should the nation-states accept European cosmopolitanism [and] renounce a substantial portion of their power and sovereignty? Our response ... is the theory of *cosmopolitan realism* ... [I]n the past, the member states of the EC/EU ... acted on purely realistic motives (in the sense of realism in international relations theory), [knowing] that they can only ... realize their [own] interests ... by recognizing the legitimate interests of others and integrating them into their own rational calculations. In this way, it was possible to achieve both national and European goals ... [CE] assumes that this will remain the case in the future (Beck and Grande 2007a, 20–21, emphasis in original, cf. 39, 78, 82, 144–145, 219).

However, morally, we encounter an unsatisfactorily defended CE vision, despite its broadly post-national emphasis on difference, pluralism, transnationalism, crisscrossing loyalties, universal values, transcendence of national egoisms, and civil responsibility. Firstly, Beck and Grande fail to scrutinize the regular cosmopolitan stress on worldwide justice (albeit see Beck and Grande 2007a, 159–160). While this seems related to their (counter-intuitive) insistence on 'formulating ... cosmopolitanism in such a way that it is not tied to the "cosmos" or the "globe"' (Beck and Grande 2007b, 67), it lacks argumentation. Secondly, their insistence that CE is consistent with realist theory turns their cosmopolitanism into a fortunate by-product of realism, at the expense of its critical force. If indeed the EU is realist this way (and European integration mutually self-serving), it would surely lack the capacity to help realize cosmopolitan justice, as I argued earlier. Thirdly, the 'cosmopolitan-ness' of Beck and Grande's CE is further compromised by their treatment of it as a 'solution' to an EU 'crisis'. In so doing, and notwithstanding their (controversial) extension of Europe beyond the EU to include North America, Russia, and Turkey, they accept the basic moral value of the EU as obviously beyond cosmopolitan critique. Fourthly, although the authors underline the cosmopolitan agency of citizens within CE, they overlook that European citizens could have different – more straightforwardly global – moral obligations than trying to realize CE by 'cosmopolitanizing' the EU. In short, Beck and Grande's CE is morally underdeveloped regarding both cosmopolitanism and the EU. Indeed, their CE suggests a relatively soft 'methodological realism' rather than 'methodological cosmopolitanism'.¹⁰

¹⁰Remarkably, Beck and Grande hold that CE is concerned with Turkey's EU membership and the Soviet successor states to protect its security and economic self-interests ('the principle of proximity'), and that in accentuating environmental, economic, and terrorist threats it acts 'egoistically' (Beck and Grande 2007a, 257, cf. 65).

Second, Delanty proposes to see cosmopolitanism as ‘a cultural medium of societal transformation that is based on the principle of world openness [with] moments of world openness created out of the encounter of the local with the global’ (Delanty 2006, 27, cf. 42–43). He observes a globalization-induced process of ‘Europeanization’, of which ‘the cultural significance ... lies in a certain cosmopolitanism’ characterized by ‘a pervasive and ongoing cross-fertilization of identities and discourses to which can be related a new imaginary ... in which the very idea of Europe itself becomes a reality’ (Delanty 2005, 406). As ‘not an exclusively ... EU-led project’, cosmopolitan ‘Europeanization entails [that] horizontal links exist between European societies, vertical between European societies and EU, and transversal between European societies and the global, as well as between the EU and the global’ (Delanty 2005, 407, 2006, 41). Delanty defends his CE against “national Europe”, that is, a Europe of nations’ and “global Europe” where [a] EU-led Europe plays a major role in the world’ (Delanty 2005, 406). CE captures better how Europeanization is ‘a mediated and emergent reality of the national and the global’ driven by ‘a dynamic of self-transformation’ (406). CE embodies a post-national self-understanding that expresses itself within as well as beyond national identities (411–418).

However, regardless of its analytical potential, Delanty’s CE view is inattentive to cosmopolitan justice and tacitly accepts the moral standing of the EU as playing an important, even if not exclusive, role in Europeanization. Since he highlights the impact of globalization, it is especially unfortunate that Delanty focuses on plurality, interconnectedness, openness, and self-transformation without examining, let alone incorporating, justice-related issues such as global poverty and inequality (Delanty 2005, 2006). Although, as noted earlier, he has broadened his own cosmopolitanism into a more ethical direction, Delanty gives the moral cosmopolitan insufficient reason for coming to endorse his CE.

Third, Owen Parker offers a ‘critical-constructivist’ CE for assessing the EU (Parker 2009, quotation 1089). Rather than ‘cosmopolitanism’ he defends a ‘cosmopolitan outlook’ rooted in the idea that ‘the scope of ethical concern should not be limited by parochial boundaries’ (1088, cf. 1090). Its universality, Parker stresses, depends on the preservation of diversity, albeit a conditional one. A cosmopolitan outlook is critical of both universalizing practices and methodological nationalism, but is also self-critical in order to avoid reintroducing nationalism itself. Parker, then, criticizes the EU for its ‘essentialist view of identity’ (1085) towards a Turkish candidature. Yet he localizes cosmopolitan ‘footholds’ in the main EU institutional discourses, such as its motto of unity in diversity and its transnational self-definition in terms of a set of foundational principles that privilege human rights, democracy and the rule of law; this offers hope that CE will eventually come to include ‘cosmopolitan Turkey’ (1087–1099, quotations 1089, 1092). Therefore, CE does not ‘refer to an ideal which a European “we” might achieve if only we adhered to a particular set of reasonable normative principles, such as human rights or some theoretical conception of justice’ (1087–1088). That would be to restore cosmopolitanism: an essentialism Parker wants to avoid (1088).

Unfortunately, Parker’s CE view, although post-national in its defence of a non-parochial scope of moral concern, suffers morally from an unduly quick dismissal of cosmopolitan justice. His basic mistake is to employ CE in order to reflect on (something like) the ‘EU–Turkey question’, which cannot but result in a rather limited ‘cosmopolitan’ view that, no matter how self-critical and critical of the present EU,

rules out beforehand the possibility of fundamental EU critique. The moral implications of excluding an actually demanding ideal such as cosmopolitan justice out of anti-essentialism are serious: preservation of diversity and consideration of Turkish EU membership are simply valued higher than, say, (European) attention for the equal treatment of Sub-Sahara Africans. Indeed, in treating ‘essentialisms’ (nationalist, European, cosmopolitan) alike (Parker 2009, 1099), Parker suggests that cosmopolitan justice is as questionable as nationalism, which seems implausible from any reasonable cosmopolitan perspective. Thus, his replacement of ‘cosmopolitanism’ by a ‘cosmopolitan outlook’ is dubious and even misleading: for the EU to cherish diversity and be open to Turkish (and perhaps Moroccan¹¹) membership does not require it to become truly ‘cosmopolitan’ rather than merely moderately particularist.¹²

Political-theoretical views of CE consider universal ideals for the EU to pursue, yet fail to scrutinize the EU–cosmopolitan justice relationship. First, Jürgen Habermas, who sees serious EU potential for realizing CE, claims that ‘cosmopolitans’ – unlike ‘Eurosceptics’, ‘market Europeans’, and even ‘Eurofederalists’ – ‘see a federal European state as a point of departure for the development of a transnational network of regimes that together could pursue a world domestic policy’ (Habermas 2003, quotation 96). Next, he argues:

Given its expanded economic basis, a European Federal Republic would ... aim at ... advantages in global competition. But if the federalist project only pursues the goal of bringing a new global player of the magnitude of the United States onto the field, it will remain particularistic and only add a further, economic dimension to the ‘Fortress Europe’ attitude now evident in asylum policies (98).

This, Habermas realizes, raises the question of how the EU could overcome its particularism, thus whether ‘the small set of globally influential political actors can construct a reformed world organization from a loosely connected network of transnational regimes’ so that ‘a change of course, toward a global domestic policy without a global state, is possible’ (98–99). What Habermas proposes is a more unified yet open world polity, of which ‘[t]he long-term goal [is] the steady overcoming of social division and stratification within a global society, but without damaging cultural distinctiveness’ (99).

However, although Habermas’s global outlook and his concern about the possibility for the EU to remain particularistic match with moral cosmopolitanism, his CE vision is inadequately defended. Firstly, Habermas does not discuss, favourably or critically, global distributive justice as central to moral cosmopolitanism (Habermas 2003).¹³ Presumably, this is because, actually, ‘he is not ... a thoroughgoing cosmopolitan’

¹¹Cf. Parker (2009, 1094). In 1987, Morocco was denied membership for not being a ‘European’ country.

¹²This problem also plagues the EU-critical anti-CE view of Baban (2013). Using a ‘cosmopolitanism’ that celebrates difference and plurality but omits (distributive) justice, Baban portrays ‘Europe’ as ‘eclectic culture’ in which ‘Turkey’s membership of the EU or Muslims’ presence in Europe or claims of recognition by other cultural minorities’ are fearlessly ‘welcome[d] as part of the remaking of European culture’ (234). However, even a particularist EU – albeit only within the limits of freedom, human rights, and democracy – could honour Baban’s call for (cultural and religious) openness, without contributing to cosmopolitan justice for the world’s poor. Remarkably, Baban stresses (the debate about) Turkey’s EU membership heavily (and uncritically) (221, 224–226, 230–231, 234–235), while, from a cosmopolitan perspective, Sub-Saharan Africa seems the ‘other’ most entitled to European (redistributive) ‘openness’.

¹³Elsewhere, Habermas proposes a ‘universalistic ... morality of equal respect and solidaristic responsibility for everyone’, but without linking it to the EU or to CE (Habermas 1998, 28).

(Sangiovanni 2012, 397). Secondly, the strong effort Habermas's 'reformed' global polity should put in maintaining cultural distinctiveness may well go at the expense of (distributive) justice in the global society. Thirdly, his critique of a particularistic EU notwithstanding, Habermas too simply assumes that the EU possesses the capacity to overcome particularism to such an extent that it will become consistent with cosmopolitan standards. Indeed, it is due to his neglect of cosmopolitan justice that he can take the basic cosmopolitan-ness of the EU for granted.

Second, Ian Manners foresees a CE through the EU's 'cosmopolitical' potential to 'combine communitarianism with cosmopolitanism' (Manners 2008, quotations 47, 2013). Thus, the 'EU principle of the rule of law' – which includes building trans-European partnerships and promoting multilateral solutions to shared problems – has a cosmopolitan dimension: it 'advances the development and participation of the EU and its member states in humanitarian law and rights applicable to individuals' (51). Manners regards the EU as a 'normative power towards the achievement of a more just, cosmopolitical world which empowers people in the actual conditions of their lives' if this vision will be 'based on more universally accepted values and principles that can be explained to both Europeans and non-Europeans alike' (60). The EU's cosmopolitanism should be more 'critical' than 'liberal': deliberative, gender, and difference politics should replace 'proximity to neo-liberal globalization' (480–481).

However, as an EU enthusiast who speaks of '[t]he normative ethics of the European Union' (Manners 2008, article title, emphasis added), Manners fails to be clear about, or critically examine, cosmopolitan justice and its troubling relationship with the EU. In suggesting that cosmopolitan justice is unduly close to neo-liberalism, he fails to acknowledge that moral cosmopolitans generally treat globalization merely as an important situation in which obligations of justice acquire special force. Manners, then, accepts too easily that, basically, cosmopolitanism cannot be problematic for the communitarian EU to uphold. Thus, his CE, while global, is uncritically thin as a cosmopolitan view.

Third, CE theorist Espen Olsen starts from the belief that democracy beyond the nation-state will become a future possibility (Olsen 2014). Linked to the EU, the cosmopolitan idea entails 'the promise of a non-state entity based on cosmopolitan principles, universal human rights, and rule of law', that is, 'a regional subset of a cosmopolitan global order' (345). Required, then, is the 'de-linking of democratic decision-making and individual rights' from the nation-state's 'institutional "grip"' (346, 355). This does not entail the disappearance of governmental institutions, Olsen stresses, since 'some hierarchical attributes are necessary to enforce compliance with cosmopolitan norms' (346). Thus, the institutional goal is a 'pyramidal ... structure' of three levels: global, European, and EU member states (346). Herewith, cosmopolitanism offers a democratic system in which citizenship rights can flourish without the typically modern 'trinity' of nation, state, and territory, and in which democratic legitimacy is grounded in 'adherence to universal rights and higher-order laws' (346). Citizenship, then, is 'genuinely post-national in the cosmopolitan conception of the EU', since 'rights are inherently individual and universal' rather than restricted by nation-state membership (346, emphasis omitted).

However, while treating cosmopolitanism as basically a moral position, Olsen is silent about the global scope of obligations of cosmopolitan justice and the incompatibility of the EU with such obligations. Thus, Olsen overlooks that a defence of the EU

as a non-national, post-national or transnational entity, even if a democratic one rooted in individual and universal human rights, does not suffice to show that such a regional subset of a global polity will be acceptable from a moral cosmopolitan perspective. Again, the EU is seen from the outset as beyond basic critique.

In sum, the CE views discussed fail morally as ‘cosmopolitan’ ones. With their easy EU approval, they deprive cosmopolitanism of its critical moral edge, so that they can see a basic fit between cosmopolitanism and the EU. Considering this CE apathy to cosmopolitan justice, cosmopolitans should not now abandon their moral ideal for EU-centredness. The earlier established incompatibility of CE’s EU core with cosmopolitan justice retains full force.

5. Conclusion

Morally, EU-centred CE displays a lack of cosmopolitan capacity. Thus, unwilling to question the justifiability of the EU, prevailing CE views fail for assuming without serious examination that cosmopolitanism means little more than post-nationalism or self-reflexive pluralism – as if it is not also, or even primarily, a radical view of global justice. From a moral cosmopolitan perspective, the EU – understood dynamically as a historical project of European unification – does not carry potential for further development towards cosmopolitan justice but rather entails a worsening of the particularist problem in Europe. Moreover, if moral cosmopolitanism is correct, or superior to internationalism and realism, the academic study of European integration as worthwhile in its own right would lack moral justification. If, conversely, the EU were right and moral cosmopolitanism wrong – a possibility this article must leave open – a morally friendlier form of ‘methodological realism’ would seem a better way to study the EU than methodological cosmopolitanism (cf. Hyde-Price 2008; Shapcott [1997] 2014, 202), and the very CE idea would make no moral sense whatsoever.

Perhaps the argument for EU-centred CE could be morally rescued, or repaired, by still establishing the cosmopolitan superiority of the EU over justice, or by surprisingly refuting my argument of EU–cosmopolitan justice incompatibility, but the prospects do not look good. Meanwhile, if CE should have a future as a morally coherent concept, it seems most plausible to reinterpret it as a radically bottom-up view that advocates EU de-integration in favour of Europe-wide cooperation for a world more just in a cosmopolitan sense. Let me explain this briefly. A truly cosmopolitan Europe straightforwardly relativizes outside boundaries as well as inside ones. Revitalizing Europe’s cosmopolitan intellectual traditions and the view that, ultimately, individual human beings are the possessors of moral rights and obligations, citizens and their movements (Beck and Grande’s agents, but aware of their primarily global obligations) should take the lead by creating a European ‘avant-garde’, countering the leadership that has led to the EU as self-serving, enlarged particularism, and paving the way towards cosmopolitan justice. CE should be a cosmopolitanism from below that ensures that Europe both does not relapse into continent-wide nationalism and, perhaps by keeping moderate national loyalties, moves forward by contributing to a more just world. Thus reconstructed, CE is highly demanding and far less realistic than Beck and Grande’s proposal. It would be an ‘idealistic utopia’ for being beyond the scope of institutional politics.¹⁴

¹⁴Compare Rawls’s political-philosophical defence of his Law of Peoples as a ‘realistic utopia’ (Rawls 1999).

But criticism, not realism, is the essence of cosmopolitanism. Ultimately, CE could represent the moral price-tag attached to the contemporary European order.

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