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Abstract

One of the recurrent criticisms to the cosmopolitan democracy project has been that it has not highlighted which are the political and social forces that will have an interest to pursue this agenda. This criticism is addressed in this paper, showing that there are a variety of actions that, in its own right, will contribute to more democratic global governance. The paper also identifies the political and social agents that may have an interest and contribute to the pursuit of each of these actions.

Keywords: Global Governance, International Organizations, Social Movements, Global Civil Society

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Cosmopolitan Democracy: Paths and Agents

Twenty years after

When at the end of the cold war and at the beginning of a new wave of democratization we suggested the idea of a cosmopolitan democracy (Archibugi and Held, 1995; Held, 1995), we were aware that we were pouring old wine into new bottles. The attempt to make world politics more transparent, more accountable, more participatory and more respectful of the rule of law had pioneers spanning from Immanuel Kant to Richard Falk. Still, the idea that “democracy” as a concept and a practice could and should be applied beyond nation-states was somehow innovative.

If we read the international relations textbooks prior to 1989, we may be surprised to note that many of them do not even contain the word “democracy”. When the word appears, it is generally in reference to the internal political system of states and certainly not in relation to the possibility of subjugating world politics to democratic rules. Even international organizations were mostly seen as purely inter-governmental bodies and the prospect of making them more democratic was not contemplated. The European Union, the first international organization composed exclusively by democratic regimes and with some germs of democratic norms in its *modus operandi*, was mostly discussed in relation to the limits it imposed on its member countries rather than in terms of its ability to deal publicly with trans-national issues. The state of the art was not very different in the realm of democratic theory. Most of the textbooks dedicated to democracy, including the first edition of the work of one of us (Held, 1987), did not contain any reference to the problem of democracy beyond borders. Many of these textbooks addressed in detail how decision-making within town halls, counties and central governments could foster or hamper democracy. But democratic theory ended at state borders: it had nothing yet to say beyond this level of analysis.

Today the state of the art is substantially different: international relations and democratic theory both take for granted that “democracy beyond borders” is an issue to be discussed. Most of the recent international relations handbooks devote at least a chapter to the question of democracy within international organizations and of the impact of globalization on national democracies. The same applies to handbooks on democracy, which often devote the last chapter to the challenge of expanding democratic values to the international system.

Of course, not everybody is convinced that a cosmopolitan democracy is needed or desirable. Opponents are clearly more numerous than supporters. Robert Dahl, Ralf Dahrendorf, David Miller, Philippe Schmitter and many others have more or less politely declared that the idea of applying the concept of democracy beyond the state is premature or even naïve. However, other scholars, including Jurgen Habermas, Richard Falk, Ulrich Beck, Mary Kaldor, Tony McGrew, Jan-Aart Scholte and Saskia Sassen have contributed to the development of this vision from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds. Moreover, the hope of cosmopolitan democracy has reached the hearts and minds of many young scholars, which are increasingly providing fresh ideas and sophisticated analytical tools.

The aims of the cosmopolitan democracy project have never been limited to academic discourse. On the contrary, the ambition was mostly to provide the intellectual arguments to achieve elements of transformation in the real world. It should be recognized that, while the academic discourse has been unexpectedly successful, the hopes to obtain a democratic transformation of world politics have achieved so far very modest results. In fact, most of the proposals put on the table in the last two decades have not been implemented; a fact that is not entirely surprising, given how long it takes to change and reshape institutions. A change in the rhetoric, at least, is perceivable: since the beginning of the 1990s, statesmen are less likely to justify their actions on the ground of national interests, while international organizations are now keener to be accountable not only to diplomatic circles but also to public opinion at large. It is difficult to foresee now if this change will remain a simple cosmetic coverage or if it might lead to substantial transformations.

In this paper we address an issue that has not yet been satisfactorily discussed in our previous work: who are the agents that might promote cosmopolitan democracy? While we have elsewhere illustrated the reasons that justify the need and the possibility of a cosmopolitan democracy (Held, 1995, 2010; Archibugi, 2008), and others have discussed its possibility (Koenig-Archibugi, 2010), we have not yet discussed the social, economic and political processes that may lead some agents to support the political innovations suggested by the model. We are well aware that political transformations occur because of a combination of idealistic and materialistic motivations and that both top down and bottom up forces do contribute to the development or obstruction of change. In the next section we single out a few areas where changes in line with cosmopolitan democracy have been debated, while the subsequent sections are devoted to identifying the top-down and bottom-up agents that could promote cosmopolitan democracy.

Paths toward cosmopolitan democracy

If we ever manage to achieve a form of global governance that embeds some of the values and norms of democracy, it is very unlikely to happen as a result of a single grand plan. It is, on the contrary, more likely that various changes and reforms introduced at the local, national, regional and global levels will together contribute to a progressive transformation of world politics, and that each innovation provides inspiration and encouragement for further changes. The idea of a cosmopolitan democracy was never intended to provide a closed recipe, but as a unifying framework for a battery of proposals and campaigns that, in different ways, aim to develop global governance in a democratic direction.

Many ideas for reforming global governance have been debated by diplomats and activists, governmental authorities and nongovernmental organizations, businessmen and scholars, at the United Nations, the G8 and G20 summits, the World Economic Forum and the World Social Forum. Some suggest reforms to current international organizations and others argue for new ones. Some stress the role of social movements, others the need to give more space to selected groups of stake-holders. There are campaigns that insist on the crucial importance of legal institutions, while other groups suggest giving to the business sector a more prominent role in managing global issues (see Held, 2004). We do not consider this variety of proposals competing against each other. On the contrary, we tend to look at most of them as complementary attempts to move towards a world order that progressively encompasses at least some forms of democracy. We sketch below some of the areas where transformations have been advocated.

States as champions of cosmopolitanism. – States can be champions of cosmopolitanism within their own borders. Most states have to deal with a citizenry with diverse languages, religions, ethnicities and ideologies. Each state has the opportunity to experiment with different forms of

political participation, and with those minority rights that have been advocated by multiculturalists. Many states, especially Western states, are also facing an increasing challenge from migration. Aliens have fewer rights than natives in most states and, with transborder flows of people on the increase, this is making accommodation more problematic and it is generating mounting internal tensions. A state willing to become a champion of cosmopolitanism should make an effort, where possible, to reduce disparities between natives and strangers and offer to aliens the political rights enjoyed by its citizens. The expression “cosmopolitan state” may at first appear an oxymoron, but cosmopolitanism is a set of values and practices that can be implemented by any political institution, including the state (Brown, 2011; Beardsworth, 2011). International institutions can also be a positive stimulus to induce states to introduce more progressive standards in this regard. The UN Human Rights Council, the Council of Europe and the European Union all have monitoring programmes that critically assess respect for minority rights within their member countries.

For a democratic foreign policy. – One of the core demands of cosmopolitan democracy is to obtain a substantial change in national foreign policy priorities, especially those of the liberal and powerful Western states. A democratic state should use its foreign policy instruments to become a good member of the international community even at the expense of short term disadvantages. For example, consolidated democracies should support foreign political parties and activists willing to foster democracy in despotically ruled countries rather than those who might be more congenial to their own national interests. For too long democratic countries have passively accepted or even actively supported dictatorial regimes when this was in their interest. A new foreign policy doctrine based on solidarity among democratic forces is now needed. This does not necessarily mean that democratic countries should create new institutions to exclude other despotic governments, as suggested by the proposal for a League of Democracies (see Carothers, 2008, for an assessment). Such a proposal risks creating a further divide among countries and could have the paradoxical effect of creating international cohesion among despotic countries and the isolation of democratic movements within these countries.

The reform of International Organizations. – International Organizations (IOs) embed some elements of democracy as they are based on treaties and charters, their actions must not violate international law, their operations are transparent to a certain extent and their activities and policies are accountable to their member states to a degree. But many of the core ideas of democracy, such as the principle of equality among citizens, are not applied. Most IOs started as clubs for national governments, but they progressively incorporated, often in a decorative role, larger numbers of stake-holders. As a result of the participation of the business sector and non-governmental organizations, IOs have managed to expand their authority and legitimacy. Yet, while plans to reform the UN and other IOs have emerged from policy debates and academic writings, they have not been implemented. The bulk of these proposals aim to increase the role and functions of IOs and to enlarge participation and accountability. Many of the reform proposals could substantially enhance the independent political role of IOs, making them something other than simple instruments of national governments. This would help make them one of the core institutions of a cosmopolitan democracy. Perhaps surprisingly, opponents of these proposals are not only found among autocratic states, but among democratic ones as well.

Global judicial authorities. –The rule of law and its enforcement is an essential component of any democratic system. Cosmopolitan democracy supports the development of a more effective global rule of law, while remaining sceptical of the enhancement of coercive supranational powers in general. Several IOs, including the European Union and the United Nations, already have complex legal norms and embryonic judicial power. These bodies have a weak authority in world politics since they lack enforcement capacity. Nevertheless, if international norms and jurisdictions become more sophisticated, it will be increasingly costly for governments to violate them. There are at least

three aspects of the global judicial authority that should be taken into account: the emerging global criminal justice system, the need to reinforce legal solutions to interstate controversies and the need to provide adequate transnational administrative rules for both the public and the business sectors.

Criminal justice. The creation of several *ad hoc* international courts and, above all, the International Criminal Court (ICC) have generated new hopes to hold egregious criminals, including politicians, accountable for their actions. Indeed, the ICC is the most significant institutional innovation introduced in the post cold war era. Much could still be done to make the Court fully operative, and to induce all countries to accept its jurisdiction. But it is already possible to assess its first few years of activities (see Glasius, 2009). To date, the ICC has mostly acted on suspected African culprits, and on insurgents fighting against, and denounced by, incumbent governments (the case opened against the Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir is a significant exception). All investigations undertaken are well documented, but the coverage is still highly selective. There is the danger that the ICC will be perceived as an instrument of incumbent governments against rebels and another burden of the white man over the black man. Those who hoped that the ICC could also be an instrument in defence of the weaker against the most powerful have so far been disappointed. There is the need to balance the action of the Court to cover cases in which the crimes are committed by Western individuals. For these reasons, the operation of the ICC can be stimulated and reinforced by other bottom-up initiatives such as Opinion Tribunals, which may be selective and politically motivated, but are less influenced by diplomatic negotiations and could call the attention of public opinion and of the official criminal courts to cases that have been overlooked.

Lawful conflict resolutions. Interest in the ICC has somewhat overshadowed an equally important problem, namely the need to address interstate controversies through legal instruments. The International Court of Justice (ICJ), the body within the UN system that should address these controversies, is highly underused mostly because it can be activated only when both parties in a dispute are willing to accept its jurisdiction. Unfortunately, this happens very rarely and too often is activated for relatively insignificant controversies. If we read the sentences and the opinions provided by the Court, we will have a much distorted view of the world history of the last 60 years. The Vietnam war, the invasions of Hungary and Czechoslovakia, the Iraq war, the legitimacy of nuclear weapons and many other key international controversies have not received any attention from the Court for the very simple reason that states were not willing to submit core case to its judgement. A major expansion of the global rule of law would require empowering the ICJ with compulsory jurisdiction, making the Court, not just a sort of “referee” among two states but a proper Tribunal (Falk, 1998). This does not necessarily imply that the ICJ would have the power to enforce its own judgements. But even in absence of enforcement, a judgement denouncing the behaviour of some states would have an important impact on international relations. And, again, this is a change that each state could implement individually; several states have already accepted the compulsory jurisdiction of the ICJ.

International administrative courts. One of the most relevant trends in international law is the development of judicial or semi-judicial authorities for administrative purposes and the business sector. Rather than using national courts, both public and private players prefer to activate elements of *lex mercatoria* (the global framework of commercial law) and to use special courts set up for the purpose of hearing such cases. This new network of judicial institutions is in fact replicating, at the global level, the functions of the state: namely, arbitrating in cases of controversy. At the same time, these legal developments show that there are some possibilities to obtain conflict resolutions also in absence of a coercive power of last resort.

Citizens’ participation in global politics. – Cosmopolitan democracy advocates giving citizens political representation, in parallel and independent assemblies from those of their national political

institutions. There is a wealth of proposals aimed at creating this, but the most straightforward way to achieve it would be to create a World Parliamentary Assembly similar in composition to the European Parliament. Such an institution would be the natural and most effective way to help bring together the peoples of the earth, allowing them to deliberate on common issues (see Falk and Strauss, 2001). It is unlikely that such an organ would have effective powers (at least in the short and medium period), but even if it were simply a forum reflecting and deliberating upon global public opinion it could play an important role in identifying and confronting policies on world issues. This Assembly would not necessarily be involved in every aspect of global political life, but it could concentrate on the most relevant and pressing issues: for example, those with a high impact on global life (e.g. the environment) or those with huge political significance (e.g. major violations of human rights). On some occasions, the World Parliamentary Assembly could provide suggestions on what is the most appropriate constituency to address issues that cut across borders. Such a new institution would complement the UN General Assembly and could work in close connection with it. It could provide political representation in global affairs to individuals and collective groups that are so far deprived of it: ethnic or political minorities within states, stateless groups, immigrants, refugees and, more importantly, peoples who still live under authoritarian regimes. Its usefulness will not just be for groups at the margins of political representation: individuals living in consolidated democracies would also have the advantage of engaging with a new level of governance and representation.¹

Political communities without boundaries. – Deliberative communities are not necessarily based on a territorially contiguous space. There are increasing areas in which political problems are non-territorial or involve stake-holders in very different capacities (Gould, 2004). Professional associations, ethnic communities, groups of citizens linked by common diseases or by strong economic interactions may be willing to address their problems through democratic procedures. Capacity to address these challenges is strongly limited by the current representation of interests in world politics, whereby most foreign affairs issues are addressed by national governments. While many of these specific groups have neither interest in nor the capacity to become a state and claim sovereignty over a given territory, they may nevertheless find it necessary to have a political space to address their problems that it is recognized by states and international organizations (Dryzek, 2006; Terry Macdonald, 2008). The number of transnational actors that are in charge of specific domains is increasing, as is the number of administrative bodies involving both public and business members. Transnational movements for social justice have already experimented with many ways to link players across borders.

Recognizing the importance of non-territorially bounded political communities composed of individuals with common interests raises a crucial question for political theory: who are the legitimate stakeholders? For good or for bad, the organization of political communities based on states provides a straightforward answer: it is the state that decides who the citizens are and how to represent their interests on the international scene. In cases of other forms of political representation, it will be much more difficult to assess who the stakeholders are. Who are the stakeholders of the oil industrial complex? We can name the shareholders of the oil companies, the employees of the industry, the consumers of the industrial society and the citizens of oil-producing countries, among many others. All of them are legitimate stakeholders, but this still leaves open the relative weight that each of these categories should have in the political process. In some cases stakeholders themselves will find the system of representation congenial to their interests, but in more controversial cases it is likely that they will need to rely on an external assignment of competences and electoral weights. A World Parliamentary Assembly may be the instrument that

¹ The Campaign for the Establishment of a United Nations Parliamentary Assembly has even prospected the electoral systems and the number of deputies of such a World Parliament. See <http://en.unpacampaign.org/news/374.php>

could minimize political exclusion providing political representation and also attribute competences and functions to dedicated functional areas where the relative importance of stake-holders is not properly acknowledged.

Top-down and bottom-up agents of cosmopolitan democracy

We have briefly discussed a number of areas and institutions that could make world politics more democratic. It is now important to ask: which political and social agents might have an interest in supporting these reforms? Political change occurs when there are interests at stake and agents willing to mobilise. The question just posed can in part be answered by reflecting on those social groups that are today excluded from political participation, that find the traditional channels to access world politics insufficient or that feel strongly motivated to act in selected domains. These are the players that should have an interest in generating more democratic global political institutions.

The dispossessed. – The first group of agents that could have an interest in minimizing exclusion in world politics and that have access to decision-making are the dispossessed, those that Frantz Fanon (1963) labelled the “wretched of the earth”. These are people concentrated in underdeveloped countries, with very low living standards, and that are more vulnerable to environmental, economic and political crises. A significant part of this grouping has also experienced major political instabilities associated with failed states. This group has also been called “the bottom billion” (Collier, 2007) but perhaps its number is even higher. It is a group of people that rely heavily on the support provided by international agencies and donors. The structural weakness of this group does not allow its voice to be heard directly in world politics, to reach world markets and often even to participate actively in the domestic politics of their own country. If its voice is heard at all in global fora it is because of extreme actions, humanitarian catastrophes or because other players report its needs and its opinions. International relief agencies and nongovernmental organizations call attention to the conditions of these people as they are not sufficiently powerful and organized to obtain it themselves. The dispossessed have even to rely on Western celebrities as their spokespersons.² In principle, this is the group of people that could benefit most from a cosmopolitan democracy: within states the dispossessed obtained substantial advantages when they achieved the franchise, and empowering them with political rights in world institutions could be an important step in improving their bargaining power.

Migrants. – Migration flows motivated by economic reasons are generating major changes in affluent countries. Most of these migrants move to countries that are not only wealthier but also with democratic regimes. Authorized immigrants are seldom guaranteed the same economic, social and, above all, political rights than the natives, while unauthorized immigrants can have no rights at all. This is creating an increasing discrepancy between the rights and the duties of these citizens. Immigrants are engaging in forms of civil disobedience such as the Great American Boycott on 1st May 2006 in the United States³ or the “Sans-Papiers” movement in France and other European countries.⁴ Immigrants are not isolated and they have often been supported by civil society groups, trade unions and other organizations, creating a social and political coalition supporting their rights (see Cabrera, 2010). The immediate target of these protesters is the government of the host country

² Paradigmatic cases are George Clooney as campaigner for Darfur and Angelina Jolie as Goodwill Ambassador for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

³ On May 1st 2006, immigrants in the United States boycotted businesses, shops and schools to show how important their presence was to the American economy and society.

⁴ The Sans-Papiers (“without documents”) movement started in France in April 2007 when a group of undocumented immigrants occupied the Church Saint Paul in Massy claiming their right to be regularized.

and the principal aim is to get their status recognized. But these protests go far beyond national boundaries: there is a more general claim towards freedom of movement that it does not correspond to the state only (see Benhabib, 2004). Most democratic states are also associated to IOs that monitor their human rights regime, including the treatment of aliens. Individual EU member states, for example, have often been reproached by the EU and the Council of Europe for unfair treatment of immigrants.

Cosmopolitan groups. – There are already some collective groups that are already sociologically “cosmopolitan”. Some rock stars, football players and actors have not only become global icons but they already live in conditions that make national boundaries irrelevant to them. While these icons are the most visible cosmopolitans, they are certainly not alone: cosmopolitans are also made up of many intellectuals, businessmen, public officers and social activists. This group has periodically attracted the hostility of nationalistic and totalitarian leaderships and have often been called derogatorily “rootless cosmopolitans” (Kofman, 2007). It is not easy to identify the size of this cosmopolitan group and even less to what extent they simply belong to privileged elites. It is however possible to distinguish between two relevant analytical factors: that is, between having a personal cosmopolitan lifestyle and holding cosmopolitan values. The cosmopolitan democracy project needs more support from the latter than from the former.

The available empirical evidence shows that as many as 15 per cent of the world’s inhabitants perceive their principal identity as post-national (either regional or cosmopolitan), compared with 38 percent who privilege their national identity and 47 percent their local identity (Norris, 2000). Moreover, identification with the global identity increases among young people and among those with a higher educational level, suggesting that in the near future cosmopolitan identity might become considerably more important. It might be argued that it is the privileged elites who hold these cosmopolitan values, but this assumption is disproved by other empirical evidence which, on the contrary, indicates that the share of cosmopolitan values is spread evenly between elites and the population at large (Furia, 2005). The existence of cosmopolitan values does not, of course, necessarily translate into political mobilization, but if and when it does, it could resonate with a considerable proportion of the world population.

Global stakeholders and global civil society. – Political mobilization in favour of a more progressive world politics rests on two important and often overlapping groups: global stakeholders and the global civil society. Global stakeholders include sectors of governance, networks and social movements, as well as other groups with sectoral interests. In all cases, these groupings do not necessarily overlap with established political communities nor receive a mandate by states. These stakeholders are very active and have considerable mobilizing and lobbying capacity which they can direct at both national authorities and international institutions. Often these global stakeholders are better informed, technically more competent and certainly more motivated to pursue their agenda than their national or international counterparts (Kate Macdonald, 2011). As might be expected, in many areas stakeholders have managed to secure key positions in decision-making and can even act as suppliers of global governance without an explicit delegation. In other areas, stakeholders are dispersed and less organized and their political contributions unheard or heard only in international fora when national governments are willing to support them.

Mary Kaldor (2003) and her collaborators have also described and mapped another important player: global civil society.⁵ Global civil society is often the most vocal supporters of progressive changes in world politics, including the democratization of global governance and IOs reform. Non-

⁵ See the *Global Civil Society Yearbook* produced by LSE Global Governance since the year 2000 has produced a wide range of analyses on the significance and activities of global civil society.

governmental organizations and other players have become increasingly important in drafting the agenda of global politics and often also in delivering public goods in areas of crisis. Global civil society is, according to Kaldor and her colleagues, also transforming the canons of international politics, providing often more effective solutions to local problems than national governments or even international organizations and acting as a powerful counter-weight to traditional power politics (Kaldor et al., 2003a). This “politics from below” carried out by the global civil society is often pushing for a different organization of interest at the various levels of policy actions, local, national but also global.

International political parties. – Several political parties have also a transnational affiliation. As is widely known, the loyalty to this affiliation is low and the political priorities of parties are largely dictated by national interests rather than by the parties’ international ideologies. Within the European Union, parties have a greater international coordination and this is associated with the powers and functions of the EU as well as with the existence of the only directly elected international Assembly: the European Parliament. In fact, in the European Parliament national parties are organized within European groups. This is far from reflecting a genuine Westminster-style majority and opposition (see Hix, 2008), but it still provides a sense that, certainly at the European level, there are different options. The European example indicates that institutions do shape the ways in which interests are organized. It is therefore possible that international political parties could act as promoters of democratic reforms in the United Nations and other international organizations. The Socialist International (2005), for example, has already published a far-reaching document on UN Reform which urged member parties in government to actively support the proposals made.

Trade unions and labour movements. – The labour movement is seriously challenged by economic globalization. The labour movement built its political power at the national level, when in alliance with leftwing political parties it managed to guarantee labour rights, labour standards and the welfare protection of the lower and middle classes. Ideologically, however, the labour movement always had an internationalist standpoint, as shown by its mobilization against many wars and colonialism. One of the most important challenges of the labour movement in the twenty-first century is to guarantee to the working classes adequate standards of living and economic and social rights in a global economy dominated by multinational corporations and the high mobility of capital (see Munck and Waterman, 1999). The labour movement’s mandate to defend wages and jobs at the national level is now in tension with notions of the transnational solidarity of the working class. This tension is reflected in the ambivalent attitude of labour movements towards trade liberalization and migration. Most trade unions have been actively involved in defending the labour rights of immigrants, but some of them have been hostile to uncontrolled trade liberalization and inflows of labour when these risk reducing employment and wage levels.

How could the labour movement face a much better equipped transnational business sector? The differences in labour costs and labour rights at the world level are still so high that it is difficult to create an effective alliance linking labour interests in countries as different as Sweden and China, the United States and India. This issue has been addressed in the attempt to standardize and upgrade labour standards through the International Labour Organization and to prevent unfair trade practices through the World Trade Organization. Expanding from labour rights to other social and economic rights, and ultimately to political rights, might allow the labour movement to become a powerful agent in democratizing global governance.

Multinational corporations. – Multinational corporations (MNCs) are formidable players and drivers of the global economy. A few hundred MNCs account for a very large share of world income, employment and technology generation and are also very efficient in lobbying to protect

their interests. To secure materials, to organize their production and to reach markets, MNCs need to overcome institutional barriers, including barriers to trade, capital movements and migrations. MNCs have also shown their capacity to shape global governance in line with their interests, as they have done with national governments.

Some scholars believe that MNCs will always act against the democratization of global governance since can satisfy their agenda with lobbying or functional networking, rather than with transparent and accountable policy-making. This is certainly part of the story, but not all MNCs interests are convergent and often their agenda also needs effective and accountable global governance. In some core areas, such as telecommunications, transports, standards, crime prevention and law enforcement, MNCs require more effective, transparent global governance. In the area of business law and property rights, the lack of appropriate transnational jurisdiction often makes transactions less certain and more risky. In such cases, MNCs push for transnational legislation and law enforcement (see Crane et al., 2008). They are also making increased use of international arbitration and public or semi-public judicial powers.

Effective combination of top-down and bottom-up politics

The two sections above have presented two lists, neither of which pretends to be comprehensive. The first is a list of actions that can be taken to advance cosmopolitan democracy. The second is a list of the political and social players that may have interests in or ideological motivations to introduce greater transparency, accountability and participation in global governance. Of course, the various players do not necessarily have an ultimate and coherent agenda for pursuing the democratization of global governance; their agency is often dominated by mixed motives. Table 1 displays the list, mapping the uneven and combined agency which might pursue cosmopolitan democracy. It indicates that the vision of a more transparent, accountable and participatory global governance has roots in current economic, social and political processes, and that the cosmopolitan project has social and political anchors.

To what extent can the actions and the players mentioned in Table 1 be labelled “top-down” or “bottom-up”? The very idea of democracy rests on a glorious bottom-up struggle to make political power accountable. But this bottom-up process is not necessarily fostered only by bottom-up pressures. We know that the English, American, French and Russian revolutions, all fought in the hope of empowering the bourgeois, the citizen, and the proletariat, were led by elites. But, as Mary Kaldor has shown, political change also occurs using less imperative levers and that light ties among individuals, associations and unofficial political movements may generate snow-ball effects of unpredictable consequences. The end of the cold war and the re-unification of Europe provide a powerful example of this (see Kaldor, 1991).

The cosmopolitan democracy project is shaped by this hope: it aims to analyse the current transformations, to identify the areas where institutional innovations are needed and possible, to foster linkages and to understand what the main political players require. It has not a fixed final goal since we are convinced that history will continue to surprise even the most optimistic thinker. And it adjusts routinely to the evolution of politics. It is perhaps this suppleness that is the very essence of democratic thought and practice. Today this needs to confront a globalizing society.

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Table 1 - Paths and agents of cosmopolitan democracy

Agenda for Cosmopolitan Democracy	Agents of Cosmopolitan Democracy						
	Dispossessed	Immigrants	Cosmopolitan groups	Global stakeholders and global civil society	International political parties	Trade Unions and labour movement	Multinational corporations
Cosmopolitan states		Request of social, economic and political rights for immigrants	Contribute to a public sphere to obtain from states to respect cosmopolitan standards	Social and political actions to guarantee cosmopolitan standards within states	Instruments to secure citizenship within and beyond states	Request social and economic rights for immigrants	Pursuit of integrated markets
Democratic foreign policy	Request donor states to contribute to development aid and policies	Actions to remove the causes of migration	Request to apply consistent principles at home and abroad also to support democratization	Ensure that foreign policy is transparent and accountable	Press national parties to respect democratic standards and to support democratic forces in authoritarian countries		Tension between business interests and business ethics
Reform of International Organizations	Direct participation in relief and other on-field activities of IOs	Guarantee of human rights of immigrants and of the freedom of movement	Pressure for citizens' participation in IOs	Active participation in IOs also to augment transparency and accountability	Urge members of parties in government to support IOs reform	Enlarge IOs stakeholder when labour interests are at stake	Interest in getting effective global governance through IOs
Global criminal justice	Protection against major human rights violations in deprived areas		Ensuring impartiality of official international criminal courts, also through the promotion of Opinion Tribunals	Reinforce global criminal justice also through opinion tribunals	Pressure to obtain adhesion and participation in the ICC of member parties in government		
Lawful interstate conflict resolution	Minimize international conflicts and aim to peaceful conflict resolution		Public opinion pressure for a global rule of law	Opposition to wars and to other forms of international coercion	Press member parties in governments to accept compulsory jurisdiction of the ICJ		
International administrative courts				Enhance timely and effective arbitration		Promote effective transnational administrative networks	Promote effective and timely contract adjudication
Citizens' participation in global politics	Steps toward political representation at the world level	Activate channels for transnational political participation	Campaigns to develop political rights and electoral franchise also at the regional and global levels	Generate transnational democratic networks in specific areas	Enlarge participation in world politics		
Non-territorial political communities	Request direct participation in relief programmes & development aid	Possibility to connect politically to their home country	Organization of transnational public opinion	Develop and self-organize ad hoc democratic communities		Promote active trans-national links between employees	Participate in trans-border economic and political activities