

Chapter 2

A Brief Orientation in the Literature

Abstract In this chapter, we position ourselves succinctly in the vast literature on cosmopolitanism, which is recently linked to discussions of globalization, seen as something new, but which has a history of its own, as a concept, a figure, a set of practices, an epithet for places and communities. We acknowledge the practical importance in politics and moral life of continuing the discussions about diversity in a world of new mobilities, connections and coexistences, but for our present purposes take a distance from normative stances and plan to investigate cosmopolitan places as communities believing in a special relationship between themselves and the larger world, a relationship which affects the linkages between past, present and future locally and which in the final analysis is always a local product.

Keywords Globalization · Cosmopolitanism · Mobilities · Social memory · Literature · Image of unity

The academic interest in cosmopolitanism in recent years reflects this complex history. Some authors take sides with one philosopher, other explore the history of the concept (Fine 2007), of cosmopolitan practices, some analyses are normative (e.g. most authors in Brock and Brighouses overview of the philosophy of cosmopolitanism—2005), others not (the rather brilliant Delanty 2009, hovers in between), sometimes there is a very cautious questioning (van Hooft and Vandekerckhove 2010) and in some cases one can speak of attempts to reconstruct the concept of cosmopolitanism and adapt it to new modes of coexistence, mobility and globalization (e.g. Rumford's concept of 'critical cosmopolitanism'—2008). Held (2006) and others remarked that both the narratives and practices of cosmopolitanism expected, respected and possible in communities, are tightly linked with their ideas of the good polity, the desirable model of democracy, the forms and scales of governance and identification (Benhabib et al. 2006).

Indeed, the interest in globalization in the 1990s and early 2000s sparked a re-examination of cosmopolitanism (Held and McGrew 2005 for an excellent overview of debates on the links between the two), as a more positive concept, in most

academic descriptions, than globalization, most often seen in the light of a homogenizing and oppressive cosmopolitanism. We cannot engage with the full scope of this literature here, as it distracts from our own attempt to concisely reconstruct the concept from new basic distinctions. We cannot omit to position ourselves, however, and, as we already indicated, a first position we can stake out is that we take no position in the normative debate on trans-national governance, international law, universal moral obligations, and human rights. We grasp the importance of the debate, but believe it can be framed also in terms of the age old questions regarding the universality of law and the moral nature of humanity. We can only observe that the positions in the debate are re-iterated since ancient Greek times, and do not expect an answer soon. We can also observe that the disappearance of some borders and boundaries brings new ones to life, as people, as individuals and as groups, seem to have the need to define themselves by means of them (Rumford 2008; Calhoun, 2007). The more messianic versions of cosmopolitan theory, involving the abolishing of all difference, of all borders and boundaries, seem therefore a bit overblown.

Indeed, several recent authors bring the discussion of cosmopolitanism to the discussion of unity in diversity, or the acceptance of difference and similarity, or simply the acceptance of difference in a new unity, or new unities with old differences, or the value of hybridity and re-appropriation of what comes from elsewhere (Brock and Brighouse 2005). Some authors focus on mobilities, and describe the potential of people, ideas, goods, moving in new larger networks at higher speeds to de-stabilize existing unities pretending universality, but also to create new conceptual frames enabling coexistence or simply new modes of coexistence (Hall and Tucker 2004). When people move, they change, and their modes of anchoring, in groups, in history, in place. Home changes for them, as it changes for and in all cultures, despite mythologies of family, village, tribe pretending eternal validity. Making a home in a globalized world, in a cosmopolitan fashion, is for some people, and for some authors, a problem, for others not—just as for some writers the act of moving, of resettling, ‘uprooting’ is a problem, not for others (Duyvendak 2011; Craith 2012).

For cosmopolitanism to mean something again in political and cultural theory, we cannot reduce it to a notion of simple diversity, and we cannot reduce it to a utopian version of a smooth and friction-less world society. We acknowledge the liberating potential of modernist descriptions and experiences, present in art and academia (Berman 2001), liberating the individual from traditions, from fixed identities, from small communities with oppressive internal controls, and we acknowledge the romantic idea of the community as a nest, a home, a place of identification and a place of experiment (Thomas 2010). Neither of them is suspicious per se, but, as Romanticism and Enlightenment should be regarded as two sides of the same coin, the cosmopolitan and anti-cosmopolitan imaginations of home and self are similarly to be considered two necessary values in the ongoing conversations and experiments in and on the formation of persons and communities (Wohlgemut 2009). For both perspectives, differences can be a problem. Speaking of an other can be useful in a preliminary stage of theory formation, but brings its own brand of blinding reductionism (cf. Leonard 2005).

What interests us more than these highly relevant discussions, yet for us more relevant in the practice of politics than in academic endeavors, is the idea of cosmopolitan places, which we will try to de-couple from discourses on big cities and others striving to be big and bold and asking the help of place branding experts and starchitects to secure a place in the Real world order (Binnie et al. 2006). Small places can be cosmopolitan. Lousy architects can contribute to this. Or no architects might be involved. We want to de-couple our analysis equally from analyses of architecture, planning, place branding which relegate those to the terrain of inherently alienating practices riding the horse of the apocalypse of globalization (Cronin and Hetherington 2008). Places have had a brand for ages, and worked on branding for many centuries, and no reference to neo-liberalism is required. Places remembered and forgot, selectively, and in waves, with modernist ideologies of forgetting and replacing creating many resistant memories and not simply causing actual forgetting (Crinson 2005; Staiger et al. 2009). Place brands were always associated with narratives which included and excluded, which worked for a while, and then not, which invoked praise, and provoked resistance. Any story draws boundaries and each boundary includes and excludes (Keith 2005). One can manage boundaries, and one can invoke several competing or mutually softening boundaries. Cosmopolitanism and parochialism can coexist, and when versions of cosmopolitanism arrive on a local scene, they can induce new parochialisms (Hemelryk Donald et al. 2009).

We cannot take position in all these debates, and we believe it is utterly non-necessary, since what interests us is something different: how places, small and large, can envision themselves in a special relation with a larger whole, a unity understood as a desirable world order, in which and for which one means something. Cosmopolitanism in its broadest sense, and for us the sense most worthwhile investigating, is a relation, between a part and a whole, based on images of the whole in the part, a special relation, special because of... Empirically, one can fill in different things, and we will discuss several places, communities, where different reasons are given or implied. Memory, imagination and visions of a new future can blend easily in such narrative atmosphere of exceptionalism; the stories can drive, propel, inspire, and they can blind, veil, oppress, thwart, and make a city stumble (Nowicka and Rovisco 2009). Past, present and future enter into a different relation to each other. A cosmopolitan past is seen as worthwhile reviving, and traces of it are quickly discerned in the present, while a cosmopolitan future in line with the past, is seen as the way forward, since what was cosmopolitan then, is perceived to have a universal value (Huysen 2003)-usually not the substance of what was universal or ahead of its time in the past, but the way of relating to a larger whole, to the world, and the capacity to navigate it, to pick its fruits and prosper in it.

A cosmopolitan past easily becomes a cosmopolitan future. A cosmopolitan present allows for other observations: the relation is often not one of centrality, but of fore-shadowing, of anticipation of an order to come (cf. Leonard 2005). That is, it might not come, but it is possible, exist in potentiality and ought to come into existence. The place participates in a world order which does not exist yet, but, barring contingent troubles, will arise, follows logically out of the patterns

in the contemporary world. No individual visionaries required. The community created its own path, its internal organization and narratives allowed for a mode of functioning anticipating what is possible, and sometimes reaping the benefits. The anticipated order can be far in the future, or it can be close; it can be very different from what is known to others, or similar. It is not utopian, as cosmopolitan places are practical ones, since forced to develop in networks requiring very pragmatic adaptations (Held 2010; Nowicka and Rovisco 2009). Awareness of a special relation to the world brings often an awareness of the contingency of the world, of the fragility of the special place, often together with hybris and arrogance. Yes, this is the most wonderful and advanced place, yes, here you can really understand how the world works, but, alas, there are X and Y, empires, blind forces, conservative forces, there is ignorance and fear, and competition over power and resources. As self-awareness came with a new awareness of the world, cosmopolitan places are often more aware and self-aware. When the stories of cosmopolitanism survive, but the practices disappeared, the risks of cosmopolitanism become greater, because self-awareness can be diminished.

What this book further aims to contribute, is that cosmopolitanism is always local. This positions us further vis a vis the literature, since it is not a common assertion. Communities reproduce themselves through governance, in which narratives play various roles. Knowledge of the world, how to navigate it, of what's coming, what's important, what's universal, stories of diversity, in the world as a whole, can help to accommodate diversity internally, which can help to navigate and possibly change larger parts of the world (Delanty 2009). Success can be blinding, and motivating. A version of cosmopolitanism can become reified and ossified, can become less adaptive hence successful in the longer run. Whatever images of the whole circulate in the whole, whatever knowledge of the world is acquired by navigating it, by encountering it at home, whatever vision of the world present and future is produced at home, it will always bear the marks of home, of the community, the ways it identifies itself, its environment, its constituent parts, processes, values (Kendall et al. 2009). What cannot be understood, what cannot be valued, what cannot be decided upon, based on existing patterns of meaning, value, of decision-making, cannot transform these patterns (cf. Monterescu and Rabinowitz 2007). An expanded theory of governance sensitive to both narratives and structures of decision-making, can help to make sense of local cosmopolitanism. Later in this book, we will reframe local cosmopolitanism, and develop it, through the lens of what we call evolutionary governance theory.

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