

Cosmopolitan Acceptance: A Model for Understanding Views of Acceptance Towards Asylum Seekers

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Abstract

This article offers a broad overview of how the concept of cosmopolitanism can inform an understanding of the acceptance of asylum seekers by members of settled populations. We begin with a brief history of cosmopolitan thought before summarising how the concept is understood in contemporary social theory. We then propose a theoretical framework which links inclusionary views towards asylum seekers with theories of cosmopolitanism and provides a model that allows 'cosmopolitan acceptance' to be operationalised for the purposes of empirical research.

Keywords: Cosmopolitanism; Asylum seekers; Political refugees; Social acceptance

Introduction

In many Western nations, anti-asylum narratives can incite fear by framing asylum seekers as presenting a threat. Such discourses serve to induce anxieties among settled populations who believe they may become disadvantaged by adopting a benevolent stance. However, while anti-asylum rhetoric is common, there are many individuals who are supportive of asylum seekers. These people speak a different language—a language of acceptance.

In this piece, we explain how the concept of cosmopolitanism can be used to inform an understanding of these accepting views. We commence with a brief historical account of cosmopolitan thought, before considering how the concept might be used to explain an acceptance of asylum seekers in the contemporary world. We then outline a theoretical model for understanding a 'cosmopolitan acceptance' of asylum seekers by members of settled populations.

A History of Cosmopolitan Thought

The right to visit, to associate, belongs to all men by virtue of their common ownership of the earth's surface; for since the earth is a globe, they cannot scatter themselves infinitely, but

must, finally, tolerate living in close proximity, because originally no one had a greater right to any region of the earth than anyone else.¹

Cosmopolitan theory is over two thousand years old. Its source is traced to Cynic philosopher Diogenes (circa 412-323 BC) who, when asked of his origins, responded ‘I am a citizen of the world’. This statement has since been interpreted as meaning that Diogenes perceived himself to have no specific local affiliations, but instead saw himself as a member of a global community. In the third century AD, Greek and Roman Stoic philosophers refined the concept of cosmopolitanism by developing the perspective as a principled ideal, whereby humankind recognised their obligations to one another as members of a single moral community. Stoic philosophy asserted that knowledge and experience of the world was vital and that a sense of collective global identity would reduce factional division and conflict.²

The concept of cosmopolitanism was an important element in the eighteenth century work of philosopher Immanuel Kant. Writing on the topic of international ethics and politics, Kant observed that while nations frequently invoked the concept of ‘right’ within their own territorial boundaries, there had been little engagement as to what entitlements should be afforded to nations and individuals at the global level.³ Reflecting upon the political upheavals and ensuing violence occurring in eighteenth century Europe,⁴ Kant wrote of the need for sustained accord between nations. In his disquisition ‘Perpetual Peace’, Kant proposed that nations adhere to a set of principles presented in three ‘Definitive Articles’. In the first Definitive Article Kant wrote of the need for the state to uphold ‘republican’ principles, which has been interpreted as meaning a combination of ‘moral autonomy, individualism, and social order’.⁵ The second Definitive Article contended that the rights of nations should be predicated on a ‘federation of free states’. Kant believed that a collective goodwill and cooperation should be fostered between states, while still respecting the integrity of an individual state’s sovereign rights. This, he thought, ‘would create the conditions necessary for the realization of cosmopolitan order’.⁶ The third Definitive Article spoke of the ‘cosmopolitan right’—the right of all people to enter another country and not be treated as an enemy. Kant considered this prerogative to be based upon the principles of ‘universal hospitality’, whereby those who are ‘alien’ to a particular territory, nation, or domain should not be met with aggression, but should instead be made welcome. Kant reasoned that if these principles were upheld and protected by international consensus, a global culture of peaceful transnational interaction would ensue.⁷

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, some theorists treated the concept of cosmopolitanism with a degree of caution. By this time the world had become more interconnected and the patterns of production and consumption were globalised. Social theorists commonly asserted that ‘cosmopolitan’ engagement with the global market by the privileged was done at the expense of the less fortunate, who were subject to exploitation. They perceived cosmopolitanism as an elitist ethos used to justify the pursuit of self-interest. Consequently, there was a high degree of scepticism that the supposed freedom, egalitarianism

¹ Immanuel Kant, *Perpetual Peace and Other Essays*, trans. Ted Humphrey (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1983), 358.

² Pauline Kleingeld and Eric Brown, ‘Cosmopolitanism,’ in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (Stanford: Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2014), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2014/entries/cosmopolitanism>.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Kant, *Perpetual Peace*.

⁵ Michael W. Doyle, ‘Liberalism and World Politics,’ *The American Political Science Review* 80, no. 4 (1986): 1157, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1960861>.

⁶ Robert Fine, ‘Cosmopolitanism and Violence: Difficulties of Judgment,’ *The British Journal of Sociology* 57, no. 1 (2006): 49–67, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-4446.2006.00093.x>.

⁷ Kant, *Perpetual Peace*.

and benefit espoused by a cosmopolitan philosophical stance would be of any benefit to broader social interests.⁸ The *Manifesto of the Communist Party* by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels reflects this cynicism:

The bourgeoisie has through its exploitation of the world market given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country. To the great chagrin of Reactionists, it has drawn from under the feet of industry the national ground on which it stood. All old-established national industries have been destroyed or are daily being destroyed. They are dislodged by new industries, whose introduction becomes a life and death question for all civilised nations, by industries that no longer work up indigenous raw material, but raw material drawn from the remotest zones; industries whose products are consumed, not only at home, but in every quarter of the globe.⁹

Notwithstanding these concerns, philosophical thought at this time still reflected a cosmopolitan perspective, and some theorists believed there might be some social benefits in adopting such an outlook. Émile Durkheim, for example, foresaw a time when national loyalties would be complemented by universal connections and spoke of societies being ‘made up of circles of increasing diversity’,¹⁰ where greater connectivity would increase a need for ‘world patriotism’.¹¹

For the better part of the twentieth century, however, interest in cosmopolitanism remained quiescent and it was not until the 1990s that theorists such as Hannerz and Nussbaum revitalised the concept.¹² This was, in part, due to rapid social changes occurring around this time—including the breakdown of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the transition of South Africa from a system of apartheid to one of majority rule, and the reunification of Germany.¹³ Speaking of increased global interconnectivity, Hannerz wrote of the role cosmopolitanism might play in bringing about an understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity. Describing cosmopolitanism as ‘a willingness to engage with the Other’,¹⁴ he hypothesised that cosmopolitan skills would be useful in negotiating a world where people are more likely to be exposed to an array of cultural understandings.

Moving this argument into the political realm, philosopher Martha Nussbaum reasoned that people, particularly young people, should be taught to appreciate that they had obligations to the global community rather than solely to their own state.¹⁵ Responding to an article published by the *New York Times*,¹⁶ which warned against the presence an ‘unpatriotic left’ residing within the halls of American academia teaching the ‘politics of difference’ to youth in the United States, Nussbaum maintained that it was crucial for young people to learn

⁸ Gerard Delanty, ‘The Cosmopolitan Imagination: Critical Cosmopolitanism and Social Theory’, *The British Journal of Sociology* 57, no. 1 (2006): 25–47, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-4446.2006.00092.x>; Kleingeld and Brown, ‘Cosmopolitanism’.

⁹ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, trans. Samuel Moore (1848; Marxists Internet Archive, 1987), 16, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf/Manifesto.pdf>.

¹⁰ Émile Durkheim, *Durkheim on Politics and the State*, ed. Anthony Giddens, trans. W.D. Halls (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986), 195.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 204.

¹² Ulf Hannerz, ‘Cosmopolitans and Locals in World Culture’, *Theory, Culture & Society* 7 (1990): 237–251, <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F026327690007002014>; Martha C. Nussbaum, ‘Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism’, *Boston Review*, October 1, 1994, <http://bostonreview.net/martha-nussbaum-patriotism-and-cosmopolitanism>.

¹³ Gerard Delanty, ‘The Emerging Field of Cosmopolitanism Studies’, in *Routledge Handbook of Cosmopolitanism Studies*, ed. Gerard Delanty (London: Routledge, 2012), 1–8.

¹⁴ Hannerz, ‘Cosmopolitans and Locals’, 230.

¹⁵ Nussbaum, ‘Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism’.

¹⁶ Richard Rorty, ‘The Unpatriotic Academy’, *New York Times*, February 13, 1994, <https://www.nytimes.com/1994/02/13/opinion/the-unpatriotic-academy.html>.

cosmopolitan values. Without needing to disregard their personal ties, she argued that individuals:

[...] must also, and centrally, learn to recognize humanity wherever they encounter it, undeterred by traits that are strange to them, and be eager to understand humanity in all its strange guises. They must learn enough about the different to recognize common aims, aspirations, and values, and enough about these common ends to see how variously they are instantiated in the many cultures and their histories.¹⁷

Theorists who disagreed with Nussbaum's assertions, thought her idealistic and accused her of underestimating the importance of national affiliations. Himmelfarb, for example, considered the cosmopolitan aspiration to be a mere fantasy, and argued that the importance of patriotic allegiances should never be undervalued.¹⁸ Similarly, Glazer expressed doubt that loyalty and obligation could be easily extended beyond national allegiances to the degree Nussbaum had suggested. Although he acknowledged the need for consideration towards others, Glazer also argued 'there is a meaning and significance to boundaries, in personal and in political life, as well as practical utility'.¹⁹ Nevertheless, despite the criticisms and debates, the concept of cosmopolitanism has become an integral part of the contemporary academic repertoire within the social sciences.

Being 'Cosmopolitan'

Cosmopolitanism now has a multitude of meanings. The term may, for example, refer to a philosophical ideal or political agenda.²⁰ It could also mean the demonstration of competencies across the international stage,²¹ or a preparedness to accept ethnic and cultural difference.²² Moreover, contemporary literature comprises both theoretical²³ and empirical²⁴ accounts of cosmopolitan phenomena. As the use of the concept is somewhat broad, in this piece we limit our focus to how this explanatory framework can guide a theoretical explanation of accepting views towards asylum seekers by members of settled populations.

¹⁷ Martha C. Nussbaum, 'Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism', in *For Love of Country?*, ed. Joshua Cohen and Martha C. Nussbaum (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002), 9.

¹⁸ Gertrude Himmelfarb, 'The Illusions of Cosmopolitanism', in *For Love of Country?*, ed. Joshua Cohen and Martha C. Nussbaum (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002), 76.

¹⁹ Nathan Glazer, 'Limits of Loyalty', in *For Love of Country?*, ed. Joshua Cohen and Martha C. Nussbaum (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002), 63.

²⁰ Delanty, 'The Cosmopolitan Imagination'.

²¹ Victor Roudometof, 'Transnationalism, Cosmopolitanism and Globalization', *Current Sociology* 53, no. 1 (2005):113–135, <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0011392105048291>.

²² Kwame Anthony Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006); Michèle Lamont and Sada Aksartova, 'Ordinary Cosmopolitanisms: Strategies for Bridging Racial Boundaries Among Working-Class Men', *Theory, Culture & Society* 19, no. 4 (2002):1–25, https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/lamont/files/lamont_aksartova_2002.pdf.

²³ Kwame Anthony Appiah, 'Cosmopolitan Patriots', *Critical Inquiry* 23, no. 3 (1997): 617–639, <https://doi.org/10.1086/448846>; Ulrich Beck and Natan Sznajder, 'Unpacking Cosmopolitanism for the Social Sciences: A Research Agenda', *The British Journal of Sociology* 61, no. 1 (2010): 381–403, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-4446.2009.01250.x>; Gerard Delanty, 'A Cosmopolitan Approach to the Explanation of Social Change: Social Mechanisms, Processes, Modernity', *The Sociological Review* 60, no. 2 (2012): 333–354, <https://doi.org/10.1111%2Fj.1467-954X.2012.02076.x>; Delanty, 'The Emerging Field'; Delanty, 'The Cosmopolitan Imagination'.

²⁴ Lamont and Aksartova, 'Ordinary Cosmopolitanisms'; Zlatko Skrbiš and Ian Woodward, 'The Ambivalence of Ordinary Cosmopolitanism: Investigating the Limits of Cosmopolitan Openness', *The Sociological Review* 55, no.4 (2007): 730–747, <https://doi.org/10.1111%2Fj.1467-954X.2007.00750.x>.

From a theoretical standpoint, there are varying levels of contemporary cosmopolitan engagement. Skrbiš and Woodward, for example, describe three main cosmopolitan dispositions.²⁵ The first relates to transnational mobilities, made more common by air travel and increased exposure to other cultures through media and technology. The second cosmopolitan disposition relates to cultural competency and knowledge, which a person can apply when circumstances demand. Finally, these authors describe a third type of cosmopolitan practice, involving an appreciation of foreign others and a ‘conscious attempt to be familiar with people, objects and places that sit outside one’s local or national settings’.²⁶

Developing this model further, Kendall, Skrbiš and Woodward describe what they believe to be three broad ‘styles’ of cosmopolitanism.²⁷ A *sampling* style of cosmopolitanism typically results from temporary encounters with foreign otherness. This may come from engagement with the media, the consumption of ‘foreign’ goods, or as a result of travel to unfamiliar locations. These exposures are often brief, and the purpose of engagement is often personal gratification (e.g. entertainment, recreation, or profit). The *immersive* style of cosmopolitanism shows more active engagement, where people associate cultural interaction with an opportunity for self-growth, but this is still fundamentally self-serving. The contemporary cosmopolitan, however, is not necessarily a person who simply travels or has had a transnational experience. There is a ‘deeper’ level of cosmopolitanism that is more closely aligned to what has been referred to as the *reflexive* style. This is where an individual ‘shows a genuine commitment to living and thinking beyond the local or national’²⁸ and demonstrates what Skrbiš and Woodward refer to as ‘conscious forms of action based on political and ethical reasoning which steps outside the established power categories of the self and the nation in favour of a desire to engage with humanity’.²⁹ Individuals who embrace this style display a more considered engagement with foreign otherness. They deliberately choose to interact with cultural diversity and are receptive to the experience of difference. This ‘reflexive actor’ can therefore play a significant societal role as they have the capacity to ‘act as decision maker and an agent of change, as a voter, an engaged citizen, [and] a contributor to local community initiatives’.³⁰ What creates this deeper cosmopolitan disposition is reflexive capacity. The conscious awareness and deliberate engagement with transcultural experiences differentiates this style of cosmopolitanism from the others. This theoretical focus on deliberate and calculated ‘cosmopolitanism’ is salient, as it frames this style as being a deliberate, rather than latent, inclination. As such, it can be articulated, advocated for, and acted upon.³¹

There is, as Beck and Sznaider argue, ‘a cosmopolitan condition of real people’, brought about from a ‘global awareness’ reached through the consumption of internationally sourced commodities, the media, or personal experience with cultural diversity.³² A person also does not have to be wealthy or well-travelled to possess a cosmopolitan outlook.³³ Furthermore,

²⁵ Skrbiš and Woodward, ‘The Ambivalence’.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 732.

²⁷ Gavin Kendall, Ian Woodward and Zlatko Skrbiš, *The Sociology of Cosmopolitanism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 121.

²⁹ Zlatko Skrbiš and Ian Woodward, *Cosmopolitanism: Uses of the Idea* (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications Ltd., 2013), 104.

³⁰ Kendall, Woodward and Skrbiš, *The Sociology of Cosmopolitanism*, 121.

³¹ Skrbiš and Woodward, *Cosmopolitanism: Uses of the idea*.

³² Beck and Sznaider, ‘Unpacking Cosmopolitanism’, 389.

³³ Lamont and Aksartova, ‘Ordinary Cosmopolitanisms’; Pnina Werbner, ‘Global Pathways: Working Class Cosmopolitans and the Creation of Transnational Ethnic Worlds’, *Social Anthropology* 7, no. 1 (1999):17–35, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-8676.1999.tb00176.x>; Pnina Werbner, ‘The Dialectics of Urban Cosmopolitanism: Between Tolerance and Intolerance in Cities of Stranger’, *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power* 22, no. 5 (2014): 569–587, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1070289X.2014.975712>.

expressions of cosmopolitan openness can vary across different structural and geographical conditions. According to Vertovec and Cohen, migration flows and increased opportunities for travel have resulted in ‘cheek-by-jowl relationships between diverse peoples at work or at street corners, and in markets, neighbourhoods, schools and recreational areas’, and everyday people have responded to these new interactions with openness.³⁴ As such this ‘ordinary’ or ‘everyday’ cosmopolitan outlook, described by Noble ‘as an open-ness to cultural diversity, a practical relation to the plurality of cultures, (and) a willingness and tendency to engage with others’,³⁵ is grounded in the events of people’s everyday experiences.³⁶

It is sometimes assumed that a person who embraces a cosmopolitan ethic and recognises their role and responsibilities within the global community must somehow divorce themselves from their national roots. The argument against adopting a cosmopolitan outlook was a conviction that a loyalty to national ties must take precedence over global considerations.³⁷ Cosmopolitanism and nationalism, however, need not be seen as diametrically opposed. Contrary to any belief that cosmopolitan and national affiliations are mutually exclusive, the argument has been made that a cosmopolitan awareness can co-exist alongside national loyalty and attachment. Appiah, for example, speaks of ‘cosmopolitan patriots’—people ‘rooted’ in their own place of belonging, and yet demonstrating a capacity to appreciate and negotiate places of difference.³⁸ Similarly, Beck describes a ‘dialectical process’ occurring between attachments to local and attachments to global. He believes ‘the global and the local are to be conceived not as cultural polarities, but as interconnected and reciprocally interpenetrating principles’.³⁹ Also, Beck and Levy argue ‘that meaningful identifications express particular attachments: one’s identity, one’s biography of belonging, is always embedded in a more general narrative and memories of a group’.⁴⁰ They go on to argue that without such meaningful connections it is difficult for one to develop a cosmopolitan outlook. From this perspective, a cosmopolitan outlook grows from a local imaginary, and national connectedness informs global connectedness. As they put it, ‘Cosmopolitanism does not negate nationalism; national attachments are potential mediators between the individual and cosmopolitan horizons along which new identifications unfold’.⁴¹

Not everyone, however, is willing to be so open. As Beck warns, ‘even the most positive development imaginable, an opening of cultural horizons and a growing sensitivity to other unfamiliar, legitimate geographies of living and coexistence, need not necessarily stimulate a feeling of cosmopolitan responsibility’.⁴² Despite increased transnational interactions, other allegiances prevail. If an individual is in a situation where they must make a choice, they may favour those they know over strangers. Close attachments and vested interests remain the priority, and as Vertovec and Cohen put it, ‘family and neighbourhood come first, humanity as

³⁴ Steven Vertovec and Robin Cohen, ‘Introduction: Conceiving Cosmopolitanism’, in *Conceiving Cosmopolitanism: Theory, Context and Practice*, ed. Steven Vertovec and Robin Cohen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 5.

³⁵ Greg Noble, ‘Everyday Cosmopolitanism and the Labour of Intercultural Community’, in *Everyday Multiculturalism*, ed. Amanda Wise and Selvaraj Velayutham (London: Palgrave, 2009), 47.

³⁶ Lamont and Aksartova, ‘Ordinary Cosmopolitanisms’; Noble, ‘Everyday Cosmopolitanisms’; Skrbiš and Woodward, *Cosmopolitanism: Uses of the idea*.

³⁷ Judith Brett and Anthony Moran, ‘Cosmopolitan Nationalism: Ordinary People Making Sense of Diversity’, *Nations and Nationalism* 17, no. 1 (2011): 188–206, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-8129.2010.00451.x>.

³⁸ Appiah, ‘Cosmopolitan Patriots’.

³⁹ Ulrich Beck, *Cosmopolitan Vision* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006), 72–73.

⁴⁰ Ulrich Beck and Daniel Levy, ‘Cosmopolitanized Nations: Reimagining Collectivity in World Risk Society’, *Theory, Culture & Society* 30, no. 2 (2013): 8, <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0263276412457223>.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Ulrich Beck, ‘The Cosmopolitan Society and its Enemies’, *Theory, Culture & Society* 19, no. 1–2 (2002): 29, <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F026327640201900101>.

a whole comes second'.⁴³ Moreover, though people show cosmopolitan openness towards some foreigners, they may not show it towards others.⁴⁴

Cosmopolitanism and Issues of Asylum Seeking

Globalisation has brought about significant transformations in human connectivity. While people have always travelled and interacted, the 'intensification of worldwide relations', as Giddens describes it,⁴⁵ has changed how people from different corners of the globe relate to one another. Increased transnational encounters mean that boundaries are more porous and people are more closely linked than ever before. Whether it is due to tourism, business, or migration, an encounter with others from outside of one's own country is, at some level, within the realm of most people's everyday experience. Previous assumptions about what might constitute distance and separation have changed and many people can now imagine themselves as belonging to an expansive and mutually interconnected global community.⁴⁶

Global interconnectivity also means the problems of others may more easily become the problems of all. Events on distant shores can now instigate a ripple effect that spreads across the globe. Issues such as financial crises, environmental disasters, terrorism and human displacement cannot always be contained within the borders of individual nations. International collaboration and cooperation are therefore necessary to address such matters.⁴⁷

People do not always share the same values, priorities, or belief systems. Globalisation has brought this truth to the fore, highlighting dissimilarities and posing challenges as to how those who have different cultural understandings might effectively coexist and address global issues. What is needed are agents who have the capacity to appreciate the implications of global interconnectedness and who possess an outlook of open and active engagement with the global community. Beck argues that the cosmopolitan outlook allows us to comprehend these new social and political realities and to appreciate our broader international obligations.⁴⁸ Similarly, Held believes that those who endorse such a viewpoint are 'better equipped to resolve, and resolve fairly, the challenging trans-boundary issues that create overlapping communities of fate'.⁴⁹

A contemporary notion of cosmopolitanism is predicated upon some fundamental human rights principles. First is the belief that all people are entitled to certain considerations, regardless of who they are and where they live. These include certain freedoms and having access to the basic necessities of life and safety.⁵⁰ Cosmopolitan ideology also takes the position that all people and nations, with the material capacity to do so, have an obligation towards ensuring human rights are both respected and protected. This responsibility is not

⁴³ Vertovec and Cohen, 'Introduction', 10.

⁴⁴ Michael Skey, 'We Need to Talk About Cosmopolitanism: The Challenge of Studying Openness Towards Other People', *Cultural Sociology* 2, no. 4 (2012): 471–487, <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1749975512445434>.

⁴⁵ Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), 64.

⁴⁶ Kwame Anthony Appiah, 'Education for Global Citizenship', *Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education* 107, no. 1 (2008): 83–99, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-7984.2008.00133.x>; Kendall, Woodward and Skrbiš, *The Sociology of Cosmopolitanism*.

⁴⁷ David Held, 'Principles of Cosmopolitan Order', in *The Cosmopolitan Reader*, ed. Garrett W. Brown and David Held (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010), 229–247.

⁴⁸ Beck, *Cosmopolitan Vision*.

⁴⁹ David Held, 'Culture, and Political Community: National, Global, and Cosmopolitan', in *Conceiving Cosmopolitanism: Theory, Context and Practice*, ed. Steven Vertovec and Robin Cohen (Oxford: Oxford University, 2002), 58.

⁵⁰ Held, 'Principles'; Bhikhu Parekh, 'Cosmopolitanism and Global Citizenship', *Review of International Studies* 29, no. 1 (2003): 3–17, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210503000019>.

limited by national boundaries, but extends into the global domain.⁵¹ Additionally, from the cosmopolitan perspective, there is a duty to help others in need if there is the ability to do so.⁵² As Parekh states, the ‘basis of the duty in each case is the same, to relieve human suffering and to help others secure those primary goods without which no good life is possible’.⁵³

Various international laws and covenants are currently in place to protect the interests of the displaced. As Colic-Peisker explains, after the atrocities carried out ‘in the name of nation’ in World War II, there was ‘an acute political need to acknowledge human rights and human solidarity beyond national borders’.⁵⁴ Given that agreements such as The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees are underwritten by the principles of universal human rights, they are essentially ‘cosmopolitan’ in design.⁵⁵ There is, however, debate regarding the extent to which human rights laws, such as those related to the protection of asylum seekers, are effective in safeguarding the rights of vulnerable individuals against countries who ultimately seek to run their own agendas and protect their own self-interest. For example, Benhabib argues that the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees ‘can be brazenly disregarded by non-signatories, and, at times, even by signatory states themselves’.⁵⁶ Many nations also have domestic policies that treat asylum seekers in a manner inconsistent with cosmopolitan ideals. For example, by actively deterring asylum seekers, subjecting them to mandatory detention, or enforcing policies of deprivation, nations put their own sovereign interests ahead of any universal right to seek asylum and are not respecting cosmopolitan principles.⁵⁷

Despite international laws acknowledging the importance of human rights, the sovereign power of nations often takes priority. The United Nations is charged with enforcing these laws, but the organisation is a conglomeration of independent nations. Under this arrangement each nation will ultimately act to protect their own interests and those of their allies.⁵⁸ The argument has also been posed that because international human rights agreements are merely a demonstration of power by some dominant nations, this does not mean they themselves are prepared to succumb to this international control. To quote Anderson-Gold:

Human rights declarations represent a kind of international code and can be useful tools to criticize and induce public embarrassment for one’s enemies. Coercive implementation procedures do not exist to ensure the realization of individual human rights because from this perspective states do not intend to allow international regulation of their interests.⁵⁹

Although human rights norms are espoused at the international level, it is ultimately the responsibility of individual nations to implement these standards. This arrangement creates disjuncture between the intention behind laws designed to protect asylum seekers and the enforcement of these laws. If there is inconsistency between the principles that nations have

⁵¹ Parekh, ‘Cosmopolitanism’.

⁵² Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*; Parekh, ‘Cosmopolitanism’.

⁵³ Parekh, ‘Cosmopolitanism’, 9.

⁵⁴ Val Colic-Peisker, ‘Cosmopolitanism as a Civilizing Project’, in *Ocean to Outback: Cosmopolitanism in Contemporary Australia*, ed. Keith Jacobs and Jeff Malpas (Crawley: UWA Publishing, 2011), 21.

⁵⁵ Seyla Benhabib, ‘Philosophical Foundation’, in *Another Cosmopolitanism*, ed. Seyla Benhabib and Robert Post (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 13–44; Colic-Peisker, ‘Cosmopolitanism’; Robert Fine, ‘Taking the “Ism” Out of Cosmopolitanism: An Essay in Reconstruction’, *European Journal of Social Theory* 6 (2003): 451–470, <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F13684310030064005>.

⁵⁶ Benhabib, ‘Philosophical Foundation’, p. 30.

⁵⁷ Jacques Derrida, *Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness* (New York: Routledge, 3rd edition, 2001); Marguerite La Caze, ‘Not Just Visitors: Cosmopolitanism, Hospitality and Refugees’, *Philosophy Today* 48, no. 3 (2004): 313–324, https://www.pdcnet.org/philtoday/content/philtoday_2004_0048_0003_0313_0324.

⁵⁸ Stan van Hooff, *Cosmopolitanism: A Philosophy for Global Ethics* (Stocksfield: Acumen, 2009).

⁵⁹ Sharon Anderson-Gold, *Cosmopolitanism and Human Rights* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2001), 4.

agreed to at an international level, and how they are being carried out in practice, then it is the citizens of those nations who can hold their governments to account by ensuring they honour the human rights imperative and that such considerations are protected.⁶⁰ A citizen with a deep cosmopolitan consciousness therefore occupies a critical position in transforming the cosmopolitan ethos into national political policy.

A Model of Cosmopolitan Acceptance

Given that there is such wide usage of the cosmopolitanism framework, calls have been made for greater effort to be put into defining and describing what being 'cosmopolitan' means in certain situations.⁶¹ Consistent with this argument, there are many cosmopolitan practices, but not all relate to a preparedness to be accepting of asylum seekers. Being accepting of people who are searching for asylum (e.g. offering them hospitality, providing them with material support, and sharing resources with them) requires a particular type of cosmopolitan outlook. If applying the concept of cosmopolitanism to the acceptance of asylum seekers by members of an established population, it is therefore important to be specific about which cosmopolitan principles and practices are relevant, and what a 'cosmopolitan acceptance' of asylum seekers actually looks like in practice.

By drawing on the broader rubric of cosmopolitanism, we propose a model of cosmopolitan acceptance that can be observed empirically. Put simply, this model, comprises four analytical dimensions:

1. An acknowledgement that the *responsibility* of the individual (or their nation) extends beyond national boundaries and into the global sphere.
2. *Openness*, whereby a person demonstrates attitudes of inclusiveness towards asylum seekers.
3. *Compassion* for the problems experienced by asylum seekers.
4. *Commitment to act* in support of asylum seekers.

Those who demonstrate cosmopolitan acceptance would appreciate the consequences of increased global interdependencies and recognise a responsibility to the broader global community. On matters of global displacement, they would recognise it as a collective problem that requires a collective solution. Responsibility would be taken for helping create solutions to issues of asylum that are both humane and fair. They would also believe they should accept responsibility for assisting asylum seekers because to do so is commensurate with their material ability to provide this assistance.

In the cosmopolitan sense, openness involves intercultural mastery and symbolic competencies associated with cultural bridging and understanding. Those demonstrating a cosmopolitan acceptance of asylum seekers would be open to the prospect of having asylum seekers enter and join their communities and society. Instead of expressing fear or concern that asylum seekers pose a threat, they would see them as potential contributors to their nation.

Those displaying a cosmopolitan acceptance of asylum seekers also compassionately reflect upon the lives of displaced persons and appreciate the hardships that others endure.

⁶⁰ Lydia Morris, *Asylum, Welfare and the Cosmopolitan Ideal: A Sociology of Rights* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010).

⁶¹ Michael Skey, 'What Does it Mean to be Cosmopolitan? An Examination of the Varying Meaningfulness and Commensurability of Everyday "Cosmopolitan" Practices', *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power* 20, no. 3 (2013): 235–252, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1070289X.2013.799476>.

Rather than being inclined to blame the asylum seeker, they place themselves in the position of those seeking asylum and are motivated to help alleviate any suffering.

Importantly, however, this acceptance must also be palpable. A person who espouses acceptance should also demonstrate commitment to those attitudes through tangible action. After all, as Nussbaum cautions:

We should be on our guard lest the invitation to weep over the distress of others should motivate self-indulgent and self-congratulatory behavior, rather than real helpfulness. People can all-too-easily feel that they have done something morally good because they have had an experience of compassion—without having to take any steps to change the world that might involve them in real difficulty and sacrifice.⁶²

It is through action that a person shows they are not just ‘talking the talk’, but also ‘walking the walk’. Commitment to a belief is demonstrated when a person’s interests and actions are aligned. A problem raised in the literature on cosmopolitanism is that some people might think and speak in a manner consistent with a cosmopolitan framework of understanding, but they will not necessarily commit to those beliefs in a tangible manner.⁶³ Also the cosmopolitan outlook can be rather fickle. While it offers social actors a perspective with which they might interact with difference and negotiate an increasingly globalised world, this does not mean that people will be cosmopolitan in their outlook ‘at all times, and on all issues’.⁶⁴ It is, therefore, all very well to speak of responsibility, openness and compassion towards asylum seekers, but a person’s commitment to those principles must be demonstrated through action. This might be achieved through making the choice to vote for a certain political candidate or party that promises to adopt a more accepting stance towards asylum seekers; it might also be through action such as participation in social advocacy groups, or through regular engagement with asylum seekers. Through such actions, members of a settled population show they are committed to their views and committed to ensuring asylum seekers are provided with care and consideration.

Conclusion

If social theorists are to fully understand how settled populations respond to pressures surrounding asylum seekers who wish to enter their borders, they require a full complement of theoretical and analytical tools to observe and empirically measure attitudes and reactions towards asylum seekers. Furthermore, if researchers wish to make practical suggestions for fostering an accepting culture, it is imperative they have the tools to recognise, understand and, when necessary, problematise acceptance in this context. To achieve this, greater attention must be paid to understanding individuals who demonstrate an accepting outlook. We would argue that people who show ‘cosmopolitan acceptance’ have the potential to challenge the construction and maintenance of physical, social and symbolic boundaries against asylum seekers. While we have proposed how acceptance in this context might be operationalised for the purposes of empirical research, the challenge now is to test this model by identifying people who meet these ‘criteria’ and then by exploring the factors that have helped them arrive at their position. This way we will continue to learn from those who have demonstrated a capacity to look beyond the confines of their own national borders and practice the cosmopolitan principles of responsibility, openness, compassion and, most importantly, commitment towards those who have been displaced and are in search of a new home.

⁶² Martha C. Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 399.

⁶³ Vertovec and Cohe, ‘Introduction’.

⁶⁴ Skrbiš and Woodward, ‘The Ambivalence’, 735.

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