



Exploratory Workshop Scheme

Scientific Review Group for the Social Sciences

ESF Exploratory Workshop on

The Crisis of European Cosmopolitanism in the Age of Austerity: Multiculturalism and Colonial Legacies

Warwick (UK), 9-11th December 2013

Convened by:

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SCIENTIFIC REPORT

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1. Executive summary

The workshop proceeded over three days and was composed of eight sessions including an introductory and concluding roundtable. Papers were written by delegates and thematically grouped together for presentations. A concluding roundtable drew out key issues and contextual differences across themes. And a final session focused on timetabling after-lives of the project in terms of public dissemination and subsequent academic projects.

Participants numbered seventeen (including the ESF representative) from twelve countries. Delegates stayed at the same on-campus hotel and ate together. This allowed for the extension of discussion and networking in an informal manner that greatly enhanced the collegiality and intellectual content of the workshop.

The workshop interrogated the ways in which - and extent to which - the current fiscal and political crisis of the European Union has threatened to undermine its cosmopolitan project. Commentaries on the crisis have overwhelmingly focused upon the divisions between states in the Eurozone. However, the crisis has also exacerbated a popular politics of ethnic resentment that threatens the multicultural constitution of Europe's cosmopolitan project. The workshop addressed this lacuna by retrieving and exploring alternative visions of the European project wherein a post-colonial ethics is integral to its cosmopolitanism. The key aim of the workshop was to elucidate and substantiate the proposition, in the context of the current crisis, that European cosmopolitanism should remain multicultural in intent.

Over six substantive sessions, four key conclusions emerged:

- a) There is a strong correlation between austerity, the closure of publics, and a regression of values and policies that are generically associated with cosmopolitan i.e. openness, diversity, equality;
- b) Paradoxically, cosmopolitanism is unhelpful as a concept through which to explore the effects of this regression, especially in terms of analysing the shape of "politics from below";
- c) There is a marked commonality across Europe in terms of associated processes and effects, however, particular contexts are embedded in specific historical social networks that exceed Europe in geographical terms.
- d) The European cosmopolitan project, as it stands, has been unable to address – or has perhaps even been complicit in – the negative outcomes of commodification on a European-wide level.

The workshop was extremely productive in consolidating common intellectual projects but also highlighting areas of conceptual or analytical weakness that need to be addressed in further work.

2. Scientific content of the event

Following the introductory comments by the ESF representative, the first session was organized along the lines of group discussions and feedback. The purpose was to place on the agenda the key issues of participants and to begin to open the way for dialogue. Groups explored three broad questions: what have been the most significant effects of the current crisis?; what issues have been silenced in the course of the crisis?; and what issues require retrieval? Despite the geographical diversity of the participants, a broad consensus emerged. In terms of effects, a loss of social solidarity had accompanied cut backs to public goods including a rise of racism and xenophobia not only between majority and minority groups but also within and between minority groups. In terms of the second question, the idea of institutional accountability had almost disappeared from public discourse as had the challenge of social inequality. Accompanying these silences was also a retreat from global to nationalist political discourses including a significant inability or unwillingness within these discourses to consider colonial legacies that still impact upon the present. In terms of what must be retrieved, participants highlighted a public language of ethics that could meaningfully interrogate the meaning and practice of equality and even the notion of liberation, as well as a sense of alternative futures. Some cautions were raised in terms of nostalgia: was it ever the case that this ethical public sphere had existed? Session one provided a solid cognitive baseline upon which the proceeding discussions developed.

Session two was entitled “The Politics of Austerity and the Reshaping of Europe”. The three papers all explored the effect of austerity measures upon cosmopolitan policies and discourses. Case studies were both country specific, i.e. the Czech Republic, and European wide, i.e. the relationship between European elites and national elites, as well as European-wide policy issues, especially the category of “EU migrant”. All papers questioned the success of cosmopolitan discourses and practices in the sense that responses to austerity measures were, at a minimum, unable to bridge national divides and sometimes re-producing national narratives of “historical difference”, while at a maximum, responses were actively re-articulating “others” in the forms of “national minorities” and migrants. In many ways, the papers revealed that the effect of austerity upon European cosmopolitanism has been felt as much in the cultural sphere (in terms of belonging, identity, values) as it has been strictly economic.

Sessions three and four both explored the notion of “Grounded Euro-Cosmopolitics”. As the presentations and discussions proceeded, it became clear that the category of cosmopolitanism was far more unsettled amongst the participants than that of austerity. Papers focused on how discourses of European cosmopolitanism have tended to re-erect social exclusions based on race, ethnicity and religion at the same time as they have been mobilized to dismantle national borders within Europe. This has especially been the case with regards to the increased presence of post-colonial peoples within Europe as well as the geo-cultural demarcation of Christian and Islamic worlds, the fault-line of which presently falls through Turkey. One paper argued that the genealogy of European liberal cosmopolitanism was hard to detach from military interventions and the implicitly violent relationship between colonial men and post-colonial women. On this point, a number of papers posed the question: if neoliberal policies, that were at one point directed to societies outside of Europe, have now returned to impact upon Europe itself, what forms of cosmopolitan learning might exist between North and

South to retrieve ethical publics? Indeed, one participant argued that historical decolonial struggles provide a seedbed of thought on cosmopolitanism. In contrast, a consensus emerged that present-day European liberal cosmopolitanism acts effectively as the ideology of neoliberalism – i.e. open markets.

The ambivalence regarding “cosmopolitanism” as both a framing device and an ethical project continued into sessions five and six, which both focused upon “Diasporas, Multiculturalism, and European Identity”. Prominent in the first set of presentations and discussion was an assessment of the current erosion of historical gains made against racism and discrimination in European countries. Case studies included a) the British education system and the replacement of an explicitly anti-racist agenda by a “colour-blind” post-multicultural sensibility to curricula design; and b), a policy begun by the Dutch government to attempt to demarcate differences between its own citizens by reference to birth place so that Dutch citizens from the Dutch Caribbean are now set to hold different coloured passports to their ‘Dutch born’ counterparts. Session six moved onto the concept of “decolonizing” frameworks of knowledge production. Discussion of this approach focused upon the concept of “liberation”. Concern was noted over the re-introduction, through this concept, of notions of essentialism with regards to groups and communities. However, the broad consensus was that the concept was still relevant in terms of opening up a vista onto new forms of politics in the present conjuncture. On this note, it was mooted that the idea of a Cosmopolitan Europe might not necessarily need saving, rather, new concepts of inter-cultural and inter-regional relations were needed to address the current context of a back-slide in the anti-racist and equalities agenda.

The closing session, entitled “Ways Forward, Future Projects” witnessed a sustained debate on the need for new frameworks of analysis and political projects. Key to this debate was the question as to whether a return to social democracy was both viable and preferable in terms of its ability to engage sufficiently with multicultural publics and colonial legacies. Participants agreed that one issue that straddled the “old” and the “new” was the commodification of public services and the accompanying effects upon the scope, content, diversity and flexibility of public cultures.

3. Assessment of the results, contribution to the future direction of the field, outcome

The workshop affirmed a strong correlation between austerity, the closure of publics, and a regression of values and policies that are generically associated with cosmopolitan i.e. openness, diversity, equality. A surprising result of the workshop was that most participants found cosmopolitanism an unhelpful analytical concept through which to explore the effects of this regression. Moreover, participants felt that cosmopolitanism mobilized as a political ideology was less than able to defend the values that it promoted due to its analytical inability to engage interpretively with “politics from below”. Finally, the workshop demonstrated a marked commonality across Europe in terms of associated processes and effects. However, it became clear that particular contexts are embedded in specific historical social networks that, exceeding Europe in geographical terms, require close analytical attention .

The following plans for future collaborative projects emerged out of the workshop:

- 1) **Networks:** Participants shared information about their various research projects with the intention to write into future bids activities (e.g. Horizon 2020) that would draw upon the skills and work of the participants present.
- 2) **Public Dissemination:** Plans for a website will be drawn up in the New Year entitled *New Projects for a Free and Equal Europe*. The website will function as an accessible entry point into various intellectual and political projects associated with the broad themes of the workshop and could also be a repository for teaching aids.
- 3) **Publication:** The conveners will pursue the possibility of an edited volume of the papers presented at the workshop, entitled *Decolonising Europe: Challenges to Neoliberal Capitalism and Structures of Racism*. Taylor and Francis have already contacted the conveners and communicated their enthusiasm to publish such a book.

4. Final programme

Monday 9th December 2013

Morning	<i>Arrival and check in at accomodation</i>
12.00-13.30	<i>Lunch, tea/coffee in IAS Seminar Lounge</i>
13.30-13.40	Welcome by Convenors Gurminder K. Bhambra (University of Warwick, UK) Robbie Shilliam (Queen Mary University of London, UK)
13.40-14.00	Presentation of the European Science Foundation (ESF) Scientific Review Group for the Social Sciences
14.00-15.00	Session 1: Opening Roundtable - Framing the Debate Chaired by Gurminder K. Bhambra (University of Warwick, UK)
15.00-15.30	<i>Tea/Coffee</i>
15.30-17.30	Session 2: The Politics of Austerity and the Reshaping of Europe Chaired by Gurminder K. Bhambra (University of Warwick, UK) R Hladik (Academy of Sciences, Prague, Czech Republic), "The New Appeal of State-Socialist Past: The Czech Republic's Post-Socialism in Austere Europe" H Sicakkan (University of Bergen, Norway), "Constructions of Europe and its Others in Times of Crisis: An Analysis of Media Framings in Sixteen Countries" P Hansen (Linköping University), "Immigration without Incorporation? EU Migration Policy in a Post-Social Europe"
19.00	<i>Dinner</i>

Tuesday 10th December 2013

09.30-10.30	Session 3: Grounded Euro-Cosmopolitics Chaired by Robbie Shilliam (Queen Mary University of London, UK) J Suárez-Krabbe (Roskilde University, Denmark), "European Colonial Subjects, Racism and Resistance. Decolonising Social, Economic and Cultural Rights in Europe" M Yeğenoğlu (Istanbul Bilgi University, Turkey), "Colonial Memory, Postcolonial Migrancy and the New Europe-to-Come"
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10.30-11.00	<i>Tea/Coffee</i>
11.00-12.30	<p>Session 4: Grounded Euro-Cosmopolitics Chaired by Robbie Shilliam (Queen Mary University of London, UK) T Teivainen (University of Helsinki, Finland), "Latin Americanization of Europe & Possibilities for Democratic Cosmopolitanism" S Jonsson (Linköping University, Sweden), "Military Cosmopolitanism" J Narayan (University of Warwick, UK), "Europe and Austerity: Peculiar Eurocentrism and Potential Cosmopolitanism"</p>
12.30-14.00	<i>Lunch</i>
14.00-15.30	<p>Session 5: Diasporas, Multiculturalism, and European Identity Chaired by Ipek Demir (University of Leicester, UK) T Sordé Martí (University of Barcelona, Spain), "The Roma Contribution to EU Construction" C Gomis (European University Institute, Italy), "Before Multiculturalism: Educational Policies towards 'Immigrant' Children in the UK (1950-70)" Q Gario (Independent Artist/Scholar, The Netherlands), "We're all Latina': King Willem Alexander of the Netherlands and the Dutch Caribbean"</p>
15.30-16.00	<i>Tea/Coffee</i>
16.00-17.30	<p>Session 6: Diasporas, Multiculturalism, and European Identity Chaired by Ipek Demir (University of Leicester, UK) O Tichindeleanu (IDEA arts + society, Romania), "New East European Internationalisms and the Decolonization of Global Europe" A Lockward (Art Labour Archives, Germany), "Black Europe Body Politics. Towards an Afropean Decolonial Aesthetics"</p>
19.00	<i>Dinner</i>

Wednesday 11th December 2013

10.00-11.00	<p>Summary Roundtable: Crises and Cosmopolitanisms Chaired by Ipek Demir (Leicester University, UK)</p>
11.00-11.30	<i>Tea/Coffee</i>
11.30-13.00	<p>Closing Session: Ways Forward, Future Projects Chaired by Gurminder K. Bhambra (University of Warwick, UK)</p>
13.00-14.00	<i>Lunch</i>
Afternoon	<i>Departures</i>

5. Final list of participants (name and affiliation is sufficient; the detailed list should be updated on-line directly)

1. **Gurminder K. BHAMBRA**
Department of Sociology
University of Warwick
2. **Robbie SHILLIAM**
School of Politics and International Studies
Queen Mary University of London
3. **Ipek DEMIR**
Department of Sociology
University of Leicester
4. **Quinsy GARIO**
Department of Gender Studies

Utrecht University Organisation

5. **Christelle GOMIS**
Department of History and Civilizations
European University Institute
6. **Peo HANSEN**
Department of Social and Welfare Studies
Linköpings universitet
7. **Radim HLADIK**
Institute of Philosophy,
Czech Academy of Social Sciences
8. **Stefan JONSSON**
Department of Social and Welfare Studies
Linköpings universitet
9. **Alanna LOCKWARD**
Art Labour Archives
10. **John NARAYAN**
Department of Sociology
University of Warwick
11. **Hakan SICAKKAN**
Department of Comparative Politics
University of Bergen
12. **Teresa SORDÉ MARTÍ**
Department of Sociology
Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona
13. **Julia SUÁREZ KRABBE**
Department of Culture and Identity
Roskilde University
14. **Teivo TEIVAINEN**
Department of Political and Economic Studies
UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI
15. **Ovidiu TICHINDELEANU**
IDEA arts + society (www.ideamagazine.ro)
IDEA design & print (www.ideaeditura.ro)
16. **Meyda YEĞENOĞLU**
Cultural Studies and Institute of Social Sciences
Bilgi University Istanbul

6. Statistical information on participants

Gender: 7 females / 9 males

Age: no information available

Countries of origin: United Kingdom, The Netherlands, Italy, Sweden, Czech Republic, Germany, Norway, Spain, Denmark, Finland, Romania, Turkey