

The Political Theory of Global Citizenship

April Carter

Routledge Innovations in Political Theory



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London and New York

First published 2001
by Routledge
11 New Fetter Lane, London EC4P 4EE

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada
by Routledge
29 West 35th Street, New York, NY 10001

Transferred to Digital Printing 2002

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group

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Typeset in Baskerville by Taylor & Francis Books Ltd
Printed and bound in Great Britain by Biddles Short Run Books, King's Lynn

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Carter, April

The political theory of global citizenship / April Carter

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. World citizenship. I. Title.

JZ1320.4 .C37 2001

323.6'01-dc21

00-068997

ISBN 0-415-16954-2

The Political Theory of Global Citizenship

In the context of increasing globalization and a shared, endangered environment, global citizenship is now firmly on the political agenda. Activists claim to be global citizens, teachers discuss education for global citizenship and political theorists debate whether the concept is coherent. In international politics, recent developments in international law and the erosion of state sovereignty have made it more plausible to think of a world community of individuals.

This book provides a comprehensive overview of the meaning of cosmopolitanism, and world citizenship, in the history of western political thought, as well as in the evolution of international politics since 1500. April Carter also explores possible interpretations of global citizenship today, examining issues such as global obligations, the theory and practice of universal human rights, migration and refugees, the development of European citizenship, the problems of citizenship beyond the nation state, and conflicts between regionalism and globalism.

The Political Theory of Global Citizenship goes on to consider how cosmopolitanism relates to different ideological and philosophical strands within political thought and international relations theory, and addresses the debate about global governance and cosmopolitan democracy. Finally, April Carter considers the critics of cosmopolitanism, including anti-imperialists, some feminists and postmodern theorists.

Providing an invaluable overview of earlier political thought, recent theoretical literature and current debates, this book also discusses recent developments in international politics and transnational protest. It will be of great interest to those specializing in political theory, international relations, peace/conflict studies and also to those already acting as global citizens.

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Preface and acknowledgements

There is now a rapidly growing literature on globalization, cosmopolitanism, global governance and cosmopolitan democracy. Since my own interest in exploring global citizenship was aroused in the early 1990s, more books and articles specifically on this topic have appeared.

The purpose of this book is to provide an overview of the idea of global citizenship from a number of perspectives. It traces the historical roots and evolution of the concept, and of associated cosmopolitan beliefs, in western thought. It examines how the duties and rights of global citizenship can be interpreted in the context of today's politics, and explores forms of citizenship that fall between national and global citizenship, with particular attention to European citizenship. Thirdly, it offers a theoretical examination of the existing literature on moral and political cosmopolitanism, cosmopolitan democracy and global citizenship, locating key authors within a range of ideological and philosophical positions in both political thought and international relations theory. The final chapter comments on some anti-imperialist, feminist and postmodern criticisms of cosmopolitanism.

This book is directed towards several kinds of reader. It summarizes a lot of material for students; and it engages with the arguments of colleagues. But it also discusses the activities and concerns of activists in global civil society, who are beginning to see themselves as global citizens, and refers to legal and institutional developments important to anyone interested in today's world. I have therefore given some weight to contemporary political events. I have also tried in the theoretical section to convey arguments and ideas – including those often elaborated in arcane language – in comprehensible English.

The terms 'global' and 'cosmopolitan' citizenship are now used interchangeably in the literature. When discussing contemporary politics and theory I have generally opted for 'global citizen', unless discussing theorists who use 'cosmopolitan'. Until recently it was customary to speak of 'world citizens', and in the historical sections I have followed this usage. I have reserved 'planetary citizen' for a specifically ecological interpretation. Other forms of transnational or multinational citizenship are explained in context, and are not the same as global citizenship, though they may sometimes be seen as a stage towards it.

This book draws on my long-standing interests in political theory, in aspects of international politics and in social movements. I owe a debt to colleagues and postgraduate students in the Department of Government at the University of Queensland, who in recent years have encouraged me to extend my knowledge of aspects of both socialist and feminist theory. I am very grateful also to Katherine Welton, who enthusiastically chased up references and articles for me for the first part of the book.

I also owe a more formal debt to the Department of Government, which generously allowed me sabbatical leave to start work on the book, and provided me with some funding for research assistance at the same time.

Many people have given me helpful suggestions and information, including the Bradford School of Peace Studies Nonviolent Action Group, who commented on a very early paper, and Pat Arrowsmith, who provided materials on the world government movement and contemporary organizations for global citizenship. Miriam Griffin also gave me the benefit of her expertise on the Stoics. But I owe an especial debt to my former colleague Geoff Stokes, who worked with me on elaborating provisional ideas about global citizenship, helped with many references and commented on earlier articles on this topic.

Warm thanks are due to friends and colleagues who not only drew my attention to books and articles, but also spent time on reading earlier drafts of this book. I am therefore very grateful to Chris Vincenzi and Martin Leet, who gave me invaluable specialist advice on some chapters. Above all I owe an enormous debt to Margaret Canovan and Michael Randle, who read the whole book, and whose comments have greatly improved both the content and argument. Any remaining errors and deficiencies are entirely my responsibility.

April Carter
December 2000

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Introduction

The idea of world citizenship is fashionable again. It is a very old idea, which goes back in western thought to the Greek and Roman Stoics, was revived in the Renaissance and elaborated in the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. It also had some currency in the middle of the twentieth century and immediately after the Second World War. But the term 'world citizenship' was not widely used – except by some dedicated believers in world government – after the consolidation of the cold war in the early 1950s. In the 1990s world citizenship, quite often renamed global or cosmopolitan citizenship, surfaced again.

Evidence of this revival comes from several sources. Individual activists for global causes may identify themselves as global citizens. One of four women who used a police boat to 'inspect' a Trident missile base in Scotland commented: 'Nuclear weapons are immoral and unlawful. It is right and proper that we as global citizens at last put the Ministry of Defence police boats to proper use – upholding the law.'¹ Activists also have a concept of a worldwide political constituency concerned with global issues: for example, Britain's *Guardian* newspaper ran an appeal in December 1999 addressed to the citizens of the world from the Parliament of the Canton of Geneva, supporting the call of 1,800 nongovernmental organizations for a moratorium on any extension of the powers of the World Trade Organization (WTO).² Journalists use the term 'global citizen' as a label for prominent representatives of global causes – for example *The Australian* headlined a report about Professor Ali Mazrui promoting Refugee Week: 'Global citizen seeks compassion for refugees.'³ Education for citizenship in schools is also beginning to extend from national citizenship to global citizenship.⁴ There is also growing political interest in the related ideal of global democracy. Charter 99, launched in the UK on 24 October 1999, called on the United Nations to reform international bodies, including the WTO, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, on democratic lines. The Charter claimed support from individuals in 92 countries and five continents by March 2000 and by organizations with global concerns such as Oxfam and Friends of the Earth.⁵

Moreover, social and political theorists have begun to think about global moral obligations and to debate ideas of world citizenship and global democracy. Since the 1980s debates about justice have not been confined to society within

nation states, and a growing number of philosophers, such as Charles Beitz and Onora O'Neill, have examined obligations across borders and the possibility of transnational justice.⁶ The most eminent theorist of justice, John Rawls, has also recently published his views on 'the law of peoples'.⁷ Derek Heater and Richard Falk have been exploring for some time world citizenship as an extension of citizenship.⁸ Martha Nussbaum has drawn on the Stoics and on Kant to reformulate eloquently an ideal of world citizenship, and Andrew Linklater has examined it from the perspective of international relations.⁹ Approaching the problem of a political and moral response to globalization from a different angle, David Held has given prominence to the ideal of global democracy.¹⁰ Arguments for global citizenship and global democracy have received powerful endorsement from Jürgen Habermas, whose theory of discourse ethics provides inspiration for Linklater and some other advocates of cosmopolitanism.¹¹

This book examines the meaning of global citizenship in some depth in its historical evolution within the western tradition of political thought. It then explores evolving forms of global or transnational citizenship in practice in recent decades, including the development of a form of European citizenship. Thirdly, it surveys the recent literature on cosmopolitanism and global citizenship from a variety of theoretical perspectives, including debates about global governance and global democracy.

The idea of global citizenship is closely linked to the concept of cosmopolitanism. The Greek Stoics spoke of the *cosmopolis*, the city of the world, and the *cosmopolites*, the world citizens. In the Enlightenment Kant distinguished between international society and international right between nation states (*jus gentium*), and 'cosmopolitan right', which relates to individuals and states coexisting, who may be 'regarded as citizens of a universal state of mankind (*jus cosmopoliticum*)'.¹² (Some commentators therefore prefer the term 'cosmopolitical' to cosmopolitan.)

The word 'cosmopolitan' has acquired a number of sometimes negative social connotations in different periods, but in today's political and international relations theory it is normally used to denote a model of global politics in which relations between individuals transcend state boundaries, and in which an order based on relations between states is giving way to an order based at least partly on universal laws and institutions. Cosmopolitanism also implies, following the Stoics and Kant, a moral position in which each individual should be valued as an autonomous being. Cosmopolitanism is linked to humanitarianism, in the sense that it suggests an active concern for others in need or distress, but differs from humanitarianism in stressing the dignity of those to whom one is offering aid. Cosmopolitanism is even more closely linked to a liberal belief in basic human rights, which all individuals should enjoy, but implies an ideal of a world community uniting in some sense individual bearers of rights. This does not imply all individuals are the same. Cosmopolitanism suggests awareness of cultural diversity, respect for other cultures and a desire for peaceful coexistence.¹³ However, emphasis on tolerance of other cultures and on maintaining peace may at times be in tension with belief in individual rights – possible conflicts are explored in later chapters.

There are a number of reasons for the revival of interest in cosmopolitanism and global citizenship. The most obvious is the perception of increasing globalization – perceptions based in particular on the new technologies of communication, on the global nature of threats posed to the survival of the human race and of the planet by nuclear and chemical weapons and environmental degradation, and on the trend towards a global economy. While the thesis of increasing globalization, and in particular the claim that economic globalization is inevitable, is disputed, there is a general sense that we belong to one world, which has been mirrored in numerous international organizations, conferences and treaties that at least pay lip service to this sense of necessary unity.

There have also been important developments within international politics that have put cosmopolitan concerns back on the agenda. One of course was the end of the cold war, which also ended the division of the world into opposing ideological power blocs and suggested the importance of wider economic and environmental concepts of security. As a result the dominant paradigm in international relations theory ceased to be realism, stressing that the necessarily conflicting interests of nation states constitute the fundamental nature of international politics, and therefore the inevitability of war or military preparations to deter war. Instead there was a greater emphasis on liberal interpretations of world politics and a specific revival of interest in Kant.¹⁴ The promise of 1991 of a more peaceful and cooperative world has been radically undermined by the revival of suppressed national conflicts, and economic and political insecurity has encouraged forms of xenophobia, religious antagonism and racism even in those countries benefiting from the global economy, in Europe and at the end of the 1990s in parts of Asia. Nevertheless, the 1990s saw much broader cooperation by the major states within the context of the United Nations and a number of important arms control and environmental treaties.

One way of conceptualizing international politics, used in this book, distinguishes between three possible models: anarchy between nation states, in which pursuit of conflicting national interest is paramount; an international society between states, in which conflict is moderated by a degree of cooperation to pursue common interests; and a cosmopolitan order transcending state boundaries and focusing on the rights of individuals. These models are associated with the theories of Hobbes, Grotius and Kant respectively (though it is arguable that Grotian interpretations of international law contained elements of cosmopolitanism).¹⁵ The models can, however, overlap, both in theory and in actuality. Realist theorists who see international politics as anarchy can also note a degree of cooperation and law between states. More importantly for our purposes, a strengthening of international society between states may begin to undermine the sovereignty of states on which this model is based. Therefore international society may begin to shade off into a Kantian model of cosmopolitan community between individuals. This process is beginning to take place.

There has been growing international cooperation between states since the nineteenth century, and in the twentieth century there was an expansion of

international institutions and international law. Therefore the framework for an international society has been in existence, but realists have questioned whether this framework has constrained states in pursuing what they see as their central interests. It has, moreover, not prevented major wars. It is also arguable that the way in which international bodies have been constructed and international agreements drafted ensures continuing freedom of action for states. Nevertheless, a growing number of international obligations and forums for continuous cooperation can be seen as strengthening the bonds of international society and gradually eroding state sovereignty. It is also possible to discern elements of an emerging cosmopolitan order.

This developing cosmopolitanism has been particularly striking in the area of international law. International law in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries focused on obligations between states and upheld national sovereignty. In the twentieth century international conventions on individual human rights, and the principles of individual responsibility enunciated by the Nuremberg Tribunal at the end of the Second World War, indicated the emergence of a cosmopolitan spirit in international law, which could indeed be found in the writings of the early theorists of laws between nations, but most international law maintained the primacy of states. However, significant developments in international law during the 1990s indicated the extent to which international law is influencing decisions by national courts. For example, four women who damaged a Hawk aircraft due to be sold to Indonesia, on the grounds that it could promote genocide in East Timor, were acquitted by a jury at Liverpool Crown Court in August 1996. The judge allowed the women to ground their defence in international law and call witnesses representing the East Timorese opposition.¹⁶ Moreover, individuals are becoming answerable to a global moral community. This assertion of cosmopolitanism strengthens the case for thinking in terms of global citizenship.

Perhaps the most significant indication of the cosmopolitan tendency in international law was the agreement by 120 states (out of 160) in July 1998 to a treaty to set up an International Criminal Court to try those who have committed genocide and aggression, war crimes and crimes against humanity.¹⁷ The negotiations evolved out of the experience of the International Criminal Tribunals for the Former Yugoslavia and for Rwanda created earlier in the decade. A second development was the decision (affirmed twice in late 1998 and in March 1999) by the British House of Lords that the former Chilean military dictator Augusto Pinochet could not claim immunity based on the principle of national sovereignty and diplomatic immunity as a member of the Chilean Senate, and could be extradited to Spain to answer charges. The Lords based their ruling on the fact that torture had become an extraditable crime under international law in 1988.¹⁸ General Pinochet was eventually allowed by the British Government to return to Chile on grounds of ill health and mental incapacity. But the Spanish judge who sought Pinochet's extradition had already taken up the cases of former dictators and generals in Guatemala accused of genocide, torture and state terrorism with the aim of demanding extradition to

Spain. The judge argues that Spanish law allows prosecution of genocide outside Spanish frontiers.¹⁹

The extent to which the world is moving beyond the principle of pure state sovereignty was clear by the early 1990s, when 'humanitarian intervention' within states to prevent genocide or other extreme abuses of human rights gained support, despite frequent criticisms from those holding a more traditional view of international politics. Advocates of cosmopolitanism may also be divided over military action for humanitarian purposes. The arguments for and against this approach were posed especially sharply by the war over Kosovo in 1999, because NATO acted militarily without UN authority and because of the strategy and weapons used.

A quite different reason for current interest in global citizenship within western political thought is the revived focus on citizenship since the 1980s.²⁰ There are a number of social and political concerns influencing this revival: a sense that pure liberal individualism needs to be supplemented by some awareness of social interconnectedness and political responsibility; a reaction even within the New Right to the idea of individuals solely as consumers;²¹ and a regroupment on the left seeking to reinterpret ideals of equality, democracy and a public realm in a republican rather than a socialist language. Feminist critiques of mainstream political practice and theory have also focused on the inadequacies of earlier concepts of citizenship.

Political revolutions in the former Soviet bloc and the challenge of mass migration into the more affluent West also raised urgent questions about the basis of citizenship, especially in a re-united Germany. This is the context of Jürgen Habermas's reflections in the early 1990s on citizenship and the possibility of European and global citizenship.²² The development of the European Union has made European citizenship a legal reality (for example the common European passport and right to free movement within the EU and rights to vote in all local and European Parliamentary elections in any EU country), although its political implications have still to be fully clarified. Green politics have also challenged traditional approaches to citizenship by stressing that environmental problems need international decisions. Fred Steward has argued for a concept of planetary citizenship: 'Citizenship of planet earth, then, embodies a new sense of the universal political subject beyond the context of the traditional nation state, and a refreshed awareness of equality in terms of our shared dependence on nature.'²³

The concept of global citizenship has, however, also met with a good deal of scepticism. One basic objection to the concept of global citizenship is that the global conditions for citizenship do not exist and that the term is therefore at best metaphorical. David Miller argues that 'those who aspire to create transnational or global forms of citizenship ... either ... are simply utopian, or else what they aspire to is not properly described as citizenship'.²⁴ This is a cogent objection. There is still a lively debate whether there are in any real sense citizens of the European Union, despite the fact that this status was created by the Maastricht Treaty. This issue is debated later in this book. Since, however, there are very

specific legal, institutional, political and economic bonds between EU peoples, and membership of the Union involves surrendering significant elements of national sovereignty, the EU is very much closer to creating conditions for citizenship than international bodies that cover the whole world. A rigorous definition of citizenship also raises the question whether it makes sense to talk about global citizenship except in the context of a fully established federal world government. If it does not, then the concept of global citizenship might well be described as 'utopian'. Whether it is really appropriate to speak in terms of 'global citizenship' is a question explored in depth in Part III.

Discussion of global citizenship presupposes a model of citizenship in the nation state. At a minimum, citizenship implies a legally and politically defined status, involving both rights (guaranteed by custom or law) and corresponding responsibilities. Historically, minimum rights have included personal freedoms and minimum obligations included the payment of taxes. The concept of being a citizen, as opposed to being the subject of a ruler, has also historically been linked to the right to participate in politics and belief in a fundamental legal and political equality between citizens. Until recently it has also of course been a privileged status, generally excluding the propertyless, women and indigenous peoples. During the twentieth century, as citizenship rights were extended, the nature of citizen rights also changed. The development of the welfare state led T.H. Marshall to his famous formulation of three kinds of citizen rights: civil, political and social. Marshall had in mind a historical progression from basic civil liberties to a widening franchise and evolving social welfare.²⁵ His formulation is still the starting point for many discussions of citizenship and is, for example, useful in examining the idea of European citizenship, which has given weight to social rights. But his 1944 essay did not envisage the claims of the second wave feminist movements or the movements of indigenous peoples in North America, Australia and New Zealand and other parts of the world, which have thrown up claims for new types of rights.

Apart from changes in the understanding of citizenship arising out of historical developments, there are also competing models of citizenship. There is a long-standing distinction between republican and liberal ideas of citizenship, the former implying a much stronger commitment to the political community and the latter allowing more scope for individual pursuit of private goals and with a more limited sense of necessary citizen obligations.²⁶ Socialist movements incorporated in principle republican rather than liberal ideals of democracy and citizenship, though with important differences of emphasis. Feminism has also engaged with the ideal of citizenship and promoted a number of differing interpretations of citizenship that would give women genuine equality.²⁷ These approaches to citizenship, and the extent to which they can incorporate the idea of a global citizen, are explored in the last part of the book.

One of the crucial elements in the definition of citizenship has been that it denotes membership of a specific political unit and that citizens are clearly distinguished from temporary foreign visitors and also from resident aliens. The element of exclusivity that has, historically, been built into the idea of citizenship

might well suggest that global citizenship is an oxymoron. But the development of international law and the pressures of migration have challenged the exclusivity of the nation state and therefore the old concept of citizenship. The dissolution of former colonial empires, and pressure from would-be migrants from Africa and Asia, have also forced European countries to debate the implications of multiculturalism and to rethink their categories of legal citizenship, though often in a restrictive and discriminatory direction.²⁸ The potential for increasing migration among a skilled workforce, however, raises a case for a more generous view of citizenship rights and duties embodied in proposals for multinational citizenship.²⁹ Recent moves to extend dual citizenship, to give resident aliens ('denizens') full citizen rights, and to think in terms of transnational citizenship are discussed in Part II of this book.

The question of refugees who become stateless, a problem that affected millions in the twentieth century, has also challenged the adequacy of exclusive national concepts of citizenship and suggested the need for a global guarantee of minimum rights to those who lose their original citizenship. The development of League of Nations and United Nations provision for refugees and the evolution of international refugee law are also examined in Part II.

One of the central obligations of citizenship, in particular in the republican model, has been to fight for one's country against the citizens of other countries. This duty also underlines the particular loyalties associated traditionally with citizenship and the conflict between citizen patriotism and the universal commitments suggested by global citizenship. Indeed, cosmopolitanism has been associated with the quest to end war between nation states. From this perspective the idea of global citizenship is sometimes posited as an *alternative* to national citizenship, to signify a quite different kind of political allegiance.

But if national politics can be guided by cosmopolitan principles, then potentially national citizenship and global citizenship are not antitheses, but complementary. This position is suggested by Kant in his political pamphlets.³⁰ However, even if the principles governing national and global citizenship can coincide, in practice there is often considerable tension. Peace activists quite often claim to be acting as conscientious national citizens, even when they oppose a particular war, but they are necessarily giving priority to universal principles over the claims of immediate obedience to their government. Peace movements may therefore be seen as one important expression of people voluntarily acting as global citizens.

Transnational movements in support not only of peace, but also of human rights, preservation of the global environment or greater global economic equality are now often seen as vehicles for global citizenship. The development of a global civil society creates a context for citizenship action, just as civil society within the state is an arena for much citizen activity directed towards promoting the good of fellow citizens. In the absence of a fully developed framework of global governance, individuals can choose to develop one aspect of the role of global citizen. Whether taking part in such movements necessarily exemplifies global citizenship is more debatable. These questions are considered later.

Bryan Turner has suggested one interesting alternative to trying to stretch the traditional concept of citizenship to embrace cosmopolitan goals. He agrees with theorists of global citizenship that, given the extent of globalization, the nation state is being undermined, and that, in any case, 'The nation-state is not necessarily the most suitable political framework for housing citizenship rights.' He notes that in Europe there is an increasing tendency to look to the European Court or the EU. Moreover, the state system is not well equipped to respond to the claims for aboriginal rights or the needs of refugees. Therefore he suggests that human rights provide a more universal, contemporary and progressive basis for responding to globalization.³¹

This book accepts the centrality of human rights, but suggests that the concept of universal duty suggested by the tradition of natural law complements the idea of human rights to underpin an evolving global consciousness. We now live in a world where international law and covenants on rights give moral principles some legal weight. Partly because the nation state is not the sole locus of decision-making and loyalty, we need a concept of citizenship that extends beyond it and takes account of global institutions.

There are, nevertheless, difficulties involved in an attempt to elucidate an ideal of global citizenship inherent in the ambiguities of cosmopolitanism. One frequent criticism, for example from conservative or communitarian theorists, is that social responsibility presupposes membership of a clearly defined community with its own values and obligations. One of the potentially negative connotations of cosmopolitanism, therefore, is lack of commitment to a specific polity and culture, or rootlessness and parasitism.³²

Alternatively the claim to cosmopolitanism and world citizenship may be associated with membership of a privileged elite that happens to cross national boundaries. For example, the eighteenth-century *philosophes* formed an intellectual transnational elite. Nevertheless, although cosmopolitan attitudes can be elitist, since the eighteenth century they have been especially associated with popular movements.

A much more central objection is that today's cosmopolitan awareness is based on global economic trends, which are unifying the world but also exacerbating the gap between the world's desperately poor and the affluent, and destroying our natural environment. An optimistic interpretation from a neo-liberal perspective sees the spread of global markets as ultimately leading to greater wealth for the vast majority. Moreover, it can be argued that the global citizens *par excellence* are leaders of economic corporations, jetting round the world and living in similar hotels and meeting similar kinds of people. Falk quotes a Danish businessman, who, when asked if he felt more European than Danish, replied: 'Oh no, I'm a global citizen.'³³ These leaders *may* also develop a sense of citizenly responsibility – corporations usually support charities and are increasingly aware of environmental issues, at least in terms of public relations. But the logic of profit throws up numerous examples of western companies exploiting African or Asian consumers, or seizing their natural assets for drugs or new bio-technology, and it is also easier to ignore environmental standards in