Wilfrid Laurier University

Scholars Commons @ Laurier

Political Science Faculty Publications

Political Science

2014

Snapshots From the Margins: Transgressive Cosmopolitanisms in Europe

Feyzi Baban
Trent University, fbaban@trentu.ca

Kim Rygiel
Wilfrid Laurier University, krygiel@wlu.ca

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholars.wlu.ca/poli_faculty

Part of the Migration Studies Commons, and the Political Science Commons

Recommended Citation

Snapshots from the margins: Transgressive cosmopolitanisms in Europe

Feyzi Baban
Trent University, Canada

Kim Rygiel
Wilfrid Laurier University, Canada

Abstract

Right-wing parties and governments in Europe have recently expressed greater hostility towards cultural pluralism, at times officially denunciating multiculturalism, and calling for the closure of borders and denial of rights to non-European nationals. Within this context, this article argues for rethinking Europe through radically transgressive and transnational understandings of cosmopolitanism as articulated by growing transnational populations within Europe such as immigrants, refugees, and irregular migrants. Transgressive forms of cosmopolitanism disrupt European notions of borders and identities in ways that challenge both liberal multiculturalism and assimilationist positions. This article explores the limits of traditional cosmopolitan thinking while offering a vision of cosmopolitanism based on everyday negotiations with cultural differences, explained using two illustrative examples or snapshots.

Within the context of growing economic and political crisis across Europe, xenophobia and racist attacks against migrants are on the rise. In Greece, the far-right party, Golden Dawn, increased its popular vote in the 2012 summer elections. This growing anti-

Corresponding author:
Kim Rygiel, Department of Political Science, Wilfrid Laurier University, 75 University Avenue West, Waterloo, Ontario, N2L 3C5, Canada.
Email: krygiel@wlu.ca

foreigner, anti-migrant violence is not unique to Greece, however, but growing across Europe in countries such as Holland, Germany, Hungary and the Czech Republic. Once regarded as a model of liberal cosmopolitanism, attention to the EU and Europe now revolves around crises and the growing visibility of right-wing parties and movements, expressing hostility towards cultural multiplicity, officially denunciating multicultural-ism, and calling for the closure of borders and denial of rights to non-European nationals. It is against this bleak context that we argue for the need to rethink Europe through radically transgressive and transnational understandings of cosmopolitanism, as articu-lated by growing transnational populations within Europe, such as immigrants, irregular migrants, asylum seekers, non-residents and non-status individuals.

Contrary to traditional articulations of cosmopolitanism based on the EU's institutional framework, these expressions of transgressive cosmopolitanism challenge European borders and identities but in ways that take issue with the anemic understand-ing of power underpinning both liberal multiculturalism and nationalist positions that demand cultural difference be assimilated. The article develops its theoretical frame-work using illustrative examples or 'snapshots' (Göle, 2000). The term 'snapshot' is meant to reflect the use of particular examples, rather than case studies, that draw atten-tion to sites of transgression to illustrate the theoretical arguments of the article. The first snapshot depicts how immigrant communities challenge national narratives from within the borders of Europe. It focuses on third-generation Turkish-Germans' claims to belonging as Germans. The second snapshot illustrates how migrants and their families, together with villagers and transnational activist networks, are challenging European notions of borders and identities from beyond and across Europe's borders. It examines the responses of the Infomobile/Welcome to Europe networks and of Turkish-Greek villagers in Sidiro to the violence enacted upon irregular migrants crossing the border between Turkey and Greece. Both snapshots illustrate transgressive forms of cosmo-politanism that occur through everyday experiences and interactions based on living with difference. Such examples demonstrate the potential of transgressive cosmopolitanism to disrupt the foundational frameworks of national narratives and to reconstruct the boundaries of European identity in the process.

Dealing with cultural differences within Europe: assimilationist and multicultural approaches

Over the past thirty years, populations across Europe have grown increasingly culturally diverse as a result of the presence of guest workers and migrants from former colonies, undocumented migrants and refugees, and the existing ethnic multiplicity within Europe's borders, a diversity that continues to challenge national identities (Talani, 2012). European national identities are often portrayed as having unified cultures and thus as unable to fully absorb cultural difference or properly acknowledge cultural dis-tinctiveness (Rogers and Tillie, 2001; Ricciardelli et al., 2003). Debates about how to address this growing diversity often focus on two distinct strategies: assimilation or mul-ticulturalism. The assimilationist approach regards the visibility of cultural differences of migrants, refugees and others as detrimental to the integrity and coherence of national identities. It yearns for an earlier time of nation-building when, through a great deal of

forgetting and rewriting of history, national narratives absorbed different ethnicities within a single national identity. This approach seeks to erase what is perceived as different, thus demanding minorities shed their cultural belongings (Sackmann et al., 2003).

In contrast, multicultural approaches acknowledge cultural difference, granting it visibility within the public sphere. Assuming that individual freedom and integrity necessitate the acknowledgement and protection of one's cultural identity, adherents of multiculturalism argue that depicting the public sphere as neutral or free from particularistic attachment is, at best, illusionary and, at worst, a vehicle for further marginalization and dispossession of identities that do not fit within the hegemonic national identity (Taylor and Gutmann, 1992). Furthermore, from the multicultural position, national identity is often achieved by homogenizing cultural differences at the expense of cultural pluralism. As a result, multicultural strategies promote recognition of cultural difference within the public sphere as well as specific policies aimed at protecting minority cultural belonging (Kymlicka, 1995, 2001). This recognition of cultural differences within the public sphere requires a shift in defining citizenship away from national identity towards policies that acknowledge and protect cultural plurality (Tully, 1995). No longer hegemonic, dominant national subjects are unable to claim the privileged statuses they once held. Similarly, when the state no longer belongs to one privileged group, it must reorient its institutional framework to promote and protect cultural plurality within its borders.

Currently, neither assimilation nor multiculturalism adequately addresses the question of how to negotiate cultural diversity within Europe. Space has thus opened up for various right-wing groups across Europe to successfully exploit hostility towards Muslims, im/migrants and asylum seekers. Far right parties, such as The Sweden Democrats in Sweden, Geert Wilder's Party for Freedom in Holland, The Front National in France and the British National Party in the UK (among others) are not only active within European countries but also influential in shifting the tone and content of public debate about cultural minorities and upsetting electoral balances in a way that pushes mainstream political parties to adopt election platforms sympathetic to xenophobic and racist policies.

This rather bleak picture convinces many in Europe that cultural plurality is not the solution but the problem (Finkielkraut, 1995). Yet, cultural plurality is now part of European reality and embedded within the fabric of many European societies. The assimilationist approach is no longer sustainable, informed as it was by old-style forms of nation-building. Rather, today, with fast-paced population movements and transnational linkages, people are able to situate themselves in more than one national community. As a result, cultural plurality within state borders flourishes and prevents dominant national narratives from erasing cultural belonging and the forgetting of past memories (Taras, 2009).

If assimilation is no longer adequate to maintain the social fabric of the nation (one that is increasingly complex, transnational and plural), then the simple acknowledgement of cultural difference is equally inadequate to represent and negotiate differences in the public sphere. The multiculturalist critique correctly notes that the problem with assimilation is that it inevitably leads to a loss of cultural belonging on the part of those who are asked to assimilate into the dominant culture (Kymlicka, 2001). Since one's own

cultural belonging is an integral part of one's individual freedom and dignity, multicultur-
alists again rightly argue that the loss of cultural belonging is equivalent to losing
individual freedom and dignity, something neither justifiable nor desirable in a democratic
polity (Taylor and Gutmann, 1992). Yet, simply recognizing and protecting cultural differ-
ence only partly addresses the question of how to live together in diverse societies. Critics
of multiculturalism argue that while multiculturalism attempts to protect individual dig-
nity, it does so solely by emphasizing cultural belonging, leaving little room for interaction
between different groups—an interaction that some proponents of multiculturalism might
even see as contributing to a loss of cultural authenticity. Critics such as Miller (2000)
argue that protecting cultural authenticity, without taking into account how different
cultural groups relate to one another in a hierarchical social order, can further marginalize
certain cultural groups. After all, many cultural groups who demand recognition and pro-
tection are also those who are located at the bottom of the social hierarchy. Recognizing
and celebrating cultural diversity, without also addressing the intricate power relations that
maintain social hierarchy among different groups, is likely to achieve very little in terms of
ensuring fair and equitable participation within the political process.

Debates in Europe about how to best integrate Muslim and Roma populations, and
immigrant and racialized populations more generally, in addition to debates about
regulating legal and illegal immigration, are often framed within the parameters of these
contrasting assimilationist/multicultural positions. While the Right often embraces assim-
ilation, governments, the media and the general public, especially in continental Europe,
tend to view multiculturalism with skepticism. Since German Chancellor Angela Merkel
famously declared that attempts to build a multicultural society in Germany have 'failed,
utterly failed', other voices within Germany and other European countries continue to
contribute to this skepticism (*Guardian*, 17 Oct. 2010). In Holland, for example, the
argument is frequently made in public that homogeneity is essential to the nation-state's
survival since the state has a limited capacity to absorb newcomers (Scheffer, 2011).

Within this context, new ways of thinking about difference within European societies
are urgently needed. Historically, European governments and liberal scholars of
European integration have presented Europe as a cosmopolitan polity. This understand-
ing of Europe is rooted in the EU's institutional and liberal rights framework. However,
as the next section illustrates, such an understanding of cosmopolitanism is problematic
and belies alternative readings of a much bleaker European history and the treatment of
difference in the transition from empire to nation-state building. Approaches towards
dealing with cultural differences within European societies need to be rethought through
radically transgressive and transnational understandings of cosmopolitanism. Such alter-
native visions of cosmopolitanism can be found, we argue, in the growing activism of
transnational populations within Europe, such as immigrants, irregular migrants and
asylum seekers.

Cosmopolitanism as an alternative approach to dealing with cultural differences

Cultural diversity within European societies and the continual movement of people
across borders defy the narrow logic of assimilation. The very existence of cultural

plurality, and the many ways it manifests itself through the everyday economic, political and social interactions of people, are a reminder that no culture can exist as an isolated island. The way cultural differences are negotiated is as important as acknowledging these differences to preserve individual freedom and dignity. In recent years, cosmopolitanism has emerged as an alternative response to the difficulties of both assimilation and multiculturalism noted in the previous section. There is now a growing body of literature emphasizing the idea of cosmopolitan belonging within Europe as a way of overcoming the dichotomy between cultural difference and homogeneous national identity (Paasi, 2001; Pichler, 2009). This scholarship largely focuses on the EU as the vehicle through which narrow national interest can be overcome in order to achieve common understandings and identities among European populations (Beck and Delanty, 2006; Beck and Grande, 2007a). In this particular notion of cosmopolitan Europe, the Europeanization process irrevocably binds European nation states to one another through institutional linkages. This creates the conditions for forging new narratives based on overlapping cultural belongings that are informed by a broader notion of European identity (Beck and Delanty, 2006; Zielonka, 2006; Beck and Grande, 2007b). Arguments favoring cosmopolitan Europe frequently focus on the EU's institutional capacity to link nation states in ways that are not necessarily based on cultural codes and a shared European identity. Habermas' infamous discussion of Constitutional Patriotism is one of the clearest examples of how shared identity might be created through the abstract principles of legal frameworks (Habermas, 2001). Others have also looked to the EU's institutional capacity in order to provide alternate venues for promoting a European sense of belonging (Bauman, 2004; Beck and Grande, 2007b).

However, cosmopolitan Europe, as it is predominantly defined in the existing literature, has very little to offer cultural minorities, illegal immigrants, Roma populations and other marginalized ethnic minorities within national borders, given that this imagined European identity does not necessarily alter the configurations of national identities. More importantly, since many of these marginalized groups are already thought of as existing outside of, or as not belonging to, European culture, a supranational European identity might well result in their further marginalization. For example, right-wing parties and groups, once focusing attention at the national level, now direct their appeals to the supranational level, and coordinate across national borders through appeals to the idea of a 'European civilization', an idea facilitated institutionally at the supranational level by the EU. In this sense, a notion of a supranational European identity may in fact contribute to the further marginalization of such populations.

There are more reasons to be wary about invoking cosmopolitanism to address the question of cultural diversity within Europe. Since the time of the Stoics, cosmopolitans have sought to find a common space in which human communication and solidarity might be possible (Nussbaum, 1996). Cosmopolitans identify those narrowly defined cultural and personal identities as major obstacles towards building a common understanding of what it means to be human. From this perspective, the ability to discover our common humanity only becomes possible when we no longer insist on defining our relationship with others through the prism of these limited identities. The tension between cultural belonging and the desire to find the universal around which common humanity can unite is a difficult one to resolve, and cosmopolitan thinking has had a rather difficult

history in finding a resolution to this tension (Harvey, 2000; Pollock, 2000). In fact, since its early inception, cosmopolitans have shown skepticism towards plurality and difference, very often portraying the tension between the universal and the particular as an irresolvable one. As a result, whether in ancient Greece, the Enlightenment period, or more recently, many cosmopolitan thinkers view difference among human communities as detrimental to the achievement of a sense of belonging to a common humanity. The principal dilemma at the heart of cosmopolitanism is a desire to replace the particular with the universal, around which common understanding can be built (Honneth, 1997; Lutz-Bachmann, 1997). Identifying a universal that might transcend narrow cultural identities often leads cosmopolitans to believe that this universal might be found in the abstract category of reason, common to all humans irrespective of cultural differences. From the Stoics to Enlightenment thinkers, cosmopolitanism has privileged reason with the teleological conviction that the spread of abstract reason would eventually unite humans, enabling us to leave behind our parochial and local sense of cultural belonging. However, cosmopolitanism's historical record has, unfortunately, proven to be rather problematic. The unifying voice of reason has often resulted in the hierarchical classification of human societies. The Enlightenment tradition, for example, is particularly rife with this mode of thinking whereby nations governed with the specific purpose of civilizing those whom they believed had not yet attained similar levels of enlightenment. As many have observed, this civilizing mission was used to justify colonialism and to govern human communities said to be lacking in reason, belonging to the lower end of the human hierarchy, and thus incapable of governing themselves (Fine and Cohen, 2002; Appiah, 2006; Delanty, 2006). However, as Laclau (1995) argues, reason is hardly ever universal but rather determined by specific local conditions. What is thought to be abstract and common to all humans is always defined by the cultural contours of human societies. The cosmopolitan yearning for universal principles through which to unite people has often meant nothing more than assigning the role of universal to a very particular cultural context. This problematic articulation of traditional cosmopolitan thinking has been integral to a painful history of colonialism and imperialism, in which various human communities were brutally coerced into what was believed to be the domain of universal reason. This problematic history has convinced many people that cosmopolitanism cannot, and should not, be the arbiter of cultural plurality at a time when societies are more culturally diverse. The lesson many take from cosmopolitanism's problematic history is that it is neither desirable nor possible to unite people around culturally specific articulations of universal values.

Transgressive cosmopolitanism: rethinking cosmopolitanism from the margins

Despite this tainted past, we wish to argue that the original ideal of cosmopolitanism still has the potential to offer an alternative approach towards thinking about cultural plurality, one which is neither limited by the homogenizing logic of assimilation nor the essentializing tendency of multiculturalism. As an ideal, cosmopolitanism begins with the assumption that human beings are bound by relationality. Living together is the basis of human sociality and unavoidably connects people, creating bonds between them in

ways that sometimes lead to human emancipation and other times not quite so. This relationality of humans is also the basis of the human desire to emphasize and negotiate differences. From our reading, the cosmopolitan moment begins, in other words, with the acknowledgement of and willingness to engage with difference. While acknowledging difference, traditional forms of cosmopolitanism have been less prepared to engage with or accommodate it. Perhaps, the waning influence of national narratives reminds us that human societies have always been pluralistic, that is until they were artificially separated and forcefully homogenized through national boundaries. National identities rest on the false assumption that messy and diverse forms of human existence can be neatly ordered through universal categories. There is now a growing body of literature that insists on the reimagining of cosmopolitanism in ways that denounce its association with top-down forms of universalism inherent in traditional forms of cosmopolitanism, arguing instead for rethinking cosmopolitanism as originating from below (Beck, 2002; Nyers, 2003; Appiah, 2006; Cheah, 2006; Werbner, 2008; Delanty, 2009; Landau and Freemantle, 2010). Building upon this logic of cosmopolitanism 'from below', the idea of transgressive cosmopolitanism surpasses the simple dichotomy of assimilation and cultural recognition. Both assimilation and cultural recognition are apolitical in the sense that they restrict opportunities for negotiating cultural differences, through which established and stable categories of groups and identities are disrupted. In contrast, transgressive cosmopolitanism begins with the idea that cultural particularity should neither be absorbed into the larger whole nor be viewed as something unchanging, frozen and authentic.

Invoking cosmopolitanism, albeit critically as transgressive cosmopolitanism, to address negotiating the growing cultural plurality within national communities requires some caveats and clarification of assumptions, however. First, the starting point of transgressive cosmopolitanism is an awareness of the fact that traditional cosmopolitan thinking has historically been associated with the false idea of universalism integral to imperialism, colonialism and exclusionary forms of nationalism, all of which assume that social cohesion can only be achieved by eliminating particularity. As a result, the promise of cosmopolitanism today can only be realized if the cosmopolitan act begins with an acceptance of difference and plurality as the fundamental condition of human sociality. This acceptance of otherness as a fundamental condition of human sociality requires that new relationships between universality and particularity be developed in which the relationship between self and other is not viewed as an irresolvable tension but as one of relationality. As a result, the logic of transgressive cosmopolitanism not only rejects the traditional dichotomy between the universal and particular that privileges the universal and treats the particular as deviant, but also refuses to subscribe to moral universalism or cultural relativism. In this sense, transgressive cosmopolitanism is a thin form of cosmopolitanism, characterized by the refusal to accept a strong sense of universality as the way to engage with difference. In order to rework this relationship between the universal and particular, transgressive cosmopolitanism seeks to construct cosmopolitan thinking from the margins, local experiences and marginalized cultures. Following Walter Mignolo's (2000) argument that cosmopolitanism should be conceived of from the perspective of coloniality, we argue that cosmopolitanism within the context of Europe should be reconstructed from the perspective of im/migrant

communities, minority cultures, Roma populations and other more marginalized groups in society. As Mignolo aptly observes with regard to colonial discourses, the transgressive cosmopolitanism of marginalized cultures and groups captures what top-down and traditional forms of cosmopolitanism miss: to read the cosmopolitan experience critically from the margins.

Rather than locating cosmopolitanism within institutions and organizations such as the EU, or within conceptual frameworks such as Kantian universality, transgressive cosmopolitanism focuses on the everyday political interventions of marginalized populations in order to reconstruct cosmopolitanism from the margins. In this we share Beck's (2002: 21) and Landau and Freemantle's (2010: 377) observation that cosmopolitanism 'from below' must be seen as a practice based on people's everyday life negotiations and experiences with difference. Reading the everyday interventions of marginalized populations through the prism of transgressive cosmopolitanism restores the notion of the political back to cosmopolitan thinking. It does so by directing our attention towards those discrepant moments, contradictions and discontinuities that emerge when marginalized populations engage in political acts and make claims to rights as members of society. These political acts lead to genuine forms of cosmopolitanism for they reveal hegemonies and sources of power that create marginalization in the first place, but also forge solidarities among different populations. Transgressive cosmopolitanism's political potential lies in its promise to link diverse populations and allow the marginal subject to make transformative claims to the very content of national narratives. While assimilationist approaches require minority cultures to integrate within national narratives, transgressive cosmopolitanism insists that true integration works in both directions; minority cultures should equally be entitled to demand the remaking of national narratives. From the perspective of transgressive cosmopolitanism, national cultures are not the privileged reference points from which to judge the integration of others; instead, they are open to remaking through the actions of marginalized populations. Transgressive cosmopolitanism also differs from multiculturalism in that it not only demands the recognition and preservation of marginalized populations and their cultures, but also the possibilities for such groups to make transformative claims about national narratives.

The transformative and relational logic embedded within this notion of transgressive cosmopolitanism presented here provides a platform for integration that is very different from the one currently suggested by assimilationist approaches. Transgressive cosmopolitanism is based on marginalized groups acting in ways that force national narratives to reveal their mechanisms of power and exclusion. This is why transgressive cosmopolitanism is both political and radical; it begins with the assumption that the integration of marginalized groups (such as Turks into German society, for example), necessitates transforming particular national discourses (in this case, German national discourse and what Germanness means). Finally, in contrast to traditional understandings of cosmopolitanism that looked to the universal as a guarantor of human solidarity and unity, transgressive cosmopolitanism does not assume that there are any preconceived universals. Instead, as Rancière notes in his portrayal of politics, any temporary closure, agreement and consensus can only come from the ground up, emerging as a result of constant negotiations through politics, only to be remade through other interventions (Rancière, 1999).

Transgressive cosmopolitanism and the politics of everyday life

It is through marginal people's daily experiences and everyday interactions with difference that transgressive forms of cosmopolitanism emerge. As Landau and Freemantle (2010: 376) correctly observe, what traditional forms of cosmopolitanism miss 'are the forms of "actually existing cosmopolitanism" (Beck and Sznaider, 2006: 6; see also Robbins, 1998; Vertovec, 2006), that emerge as ordinary people in relatively poor countries address quotidian challenges to meet their broader individual and collective objectives'. Following others such as Beck (2002), Landau and Freemantle (2010), and Nyers (2003), in this section we consider how marginalized peoples (whether cultural minorities, immigrants, irregular migrants or asylum seekers) enact forms of transgressive cosmopolitanism through everyday engagement with others and their cultural differences by making claims to the right to belong, or even to exist, (i.e. live, eat, work, die in dignity) within a community. Through everyday interactions with difference and claims to belonging and sociality, people forge relations with others. It is this sense of relationality that is central to our understanding of transgressive cosmopolitanism.

Scholars such as Peter Nyers (2003) and Landau and Freemantle (2010) and Beck (2002) look to the 'actions of migrants and minorities' as examples of 'dialogical imaginative ways of life and everyday cosmopolitanism' (Beck, 2002: 21). Focusing on anti-deportation activism of undocumented non-citizens in Canada, Nyers (2003: 1070) illustrates how 'the political campaigns by abject migrants are potential sites of a critical cosmopolitanism'. Nyers refers to this as 'abject cosmopolitanism', which involves 'acts of citizenship' that 'contest and reshape the traditional terms of political community, identity and practice'. Through such acts of contestation around who counts within the political community, Nyers (2003: 1075) argues that abject populations problematize notions of cosmopolitanism 'from below'. Like Nyers, Landau and Freemantle (2010: 375) are also concerned with the way in which im/migrant groups, in this case, in Johannesburg, enact a form of cosmopolitanism from below. They refer here to 'tactical cosmopolitanism' to indicate the way in which migrants use the language of cosmopolitanism to strategically negotiate their inclusion and belonging in ways that transcend ethnic, national and transnational paradigms. However, rather than seeing migrants' engagement as offering 'an alternative way of belonging', rather they argue that migrants strategically use 'cosmopolitan rhetoric and organizational forms allowing them to live outside of belonging while claiming the benefits of it' (Landau and Freemantle, 2010: 381). In other words, 'migrants practically and rhetorically draw on various, often competing systems of cosmopolitan rights and rhetoric to insinuate themselves, however shallowly, in the networks and spaces needed to achieve specific practical goals' (Landau and Freemantle, 2010: 380).

Both 'abject cosmopolitanism' and 'tactical cosmopolitanism' highlight important dimensions to rethinking cosmopolitanisms 'from below' that are related to the everyday acts or practices of immigrant and irregular migrants. Our discussion of transgressive cosmopolitanism similarly engages with the notion of practices of claims-making through which one 'enacts' one's self as a political subject (Isin and Nielsen, 2008). However, unlike 'tactical cosmopolitanism', we do not see transgressive forms of cosmopolitanism as necessarily foreclosing the possibility of making claims to alternative

ways of belonging and living with difference. Rather, transgressive cosmopolitanism makes a normative claim that calls for alternative ways of living with difference based on notions of relationality. It also differs from discussions of 'abject cosmopolitanism' in that, while it may involve political acts, such as in the case of transnational activist networks discussed below, it need not do so. Transgressive cosmopolitanism includes those 'quieter' aspects of daily living that require simply acts of engagement with difference. As we illustrate in the following section, transgressive cosmopolitanism takes multiple forms but what these share is a normative commitment to the value of engaging with difference.

Rather than assuming politics simply as antagonism, transgressive cosmopolitanism seeks a form of politics that is still grounded in normative claims of living with difference and seeks to build solidarities and commonalities across differences. We look to the ways in which marginalized peoples make claims to belong within communities and do so by demanding recognition of their belonging based on in-between or transnational identities and based on a transformation of the hegemonic national identity in the process. Transgressive forms of cosmopolitanism are enacted by immigrants and irregular migrants who make claims, if not to outright belonging, then to sociality, that is to the right to exist within communities and the related rights of living, working, sharing and even dying as members of that community. In the examples discussed below, this normative claim to belonging through claims-making may be thought of as putting into motion a form of transgressive cosmopolitanism.

Snapshots of transgressive cosmopolitanism from the margins

In this final section, we provide two illustrations or 'snapshots' (Göle, 2000) of cases in which moments of transgressive cosmopolitanism may be seen to be at work.

Snapshot 1: Transgressive cosmopolitanism of Turkish-Germans: re-negotiating 'Germanness' and belonging

Homi Bhabha once defined the Turkish presence within Germany as an 'incommensurability of translation' (Bhabha, 1990). By this he meant that it was impossible for Turkish voices to be heard within the German national discourse. Bhabha's earlier work on hybridity (described as being located at the heart of the nation and as emerging from a torturous colonial history), is not applicable to his description here of Turks in Germany: German national discourse, he argues, is not willing to open itself up to the intervention of Turkish voices. Others have similarly noted that particular articulations of German national identity and its historical development are not conducive to inclusion of those perceived as 'others' (O'Brien, 1988; Kofman, 1995; White, 1997; Kastoryano, 2002).

In a research trip to Germany, Baban (2006: 189) describes how one of the 'first-generation Turks explained that his generation knew who they were, and if they had any doubts, Germans were ready to remind them about their identity. With a smile on his face, he said, "If I say that I am German, even birds would laugh at me."' While these observations may have some validity for first- and, to a certain extent, second-generation

Turkish-Germans, for third-generation Turkish-Germans, born and raised in Germany, the question of identity is much more complex. While still experiencing serious obstacles to becoming part of German society, a significant portion of third-generation Turkish-Germans do not necessarily identify with being simply Turks but rather as belonging to Germany or to both Turkey and Germany (Kaya, 2007). The fact that Turkish-Germans wish to see themselves as either fully German or as both German and Turkish challenges German national identity, which has historically been closed to accommodating such cultural hybridity or ambiguity. When Turks are classified as foreigners or see themselves as only Turks, they do not challenge how Germanness is defined and understood. When they define themselves as Germans or as both Germans and Turks, however, they begin to disrupt the boundaries of German national identity since they can no longer be defined simply as foreigners.

The presence of third-generation Turkish-Germans with citizenship rights alters the category of foreigner, raising questions of when and how one becomes not only a citizen but also a German. While most first-generation Turks were usually classified as foreigners, since the 1980s, numerous terms have emerged to describe the status of third-generation Turkish-Germans: *ausländische Mitbürger* (foreign co-citizen), *Bildungsinländer* (educational insiders), *Jugend mit Migrationshintergrund* (youth of migrant background) and *Deutsche ausländischer Herkunft* (German of foreign descent). These terms attempt to define the border between national identity and citizenship and share a desire to install a neat division between legal and cultural belonging. In other words, these terms indicate that while third-generation Turkish-Germans have a legal right to belong, nevertheless they may not belong socially to the German cultural and ethnic sphere. Yet, the way third-generation German-Turks narrate their presence in Germany and interject themselves within the German national imagination defies the neat division that these terms attempt to establish (Baban, 2006).

In the 2011 Toronto Film Festival, the director of the festival, Piers Handling, introduced Turkish-German film director Fatih Akin as the new Fassbinder of Germany. He is presently the most well-known 'German' film director outside Germany. All of his films tell stories of individuals who easily navigate cultures and can be described as border individuals as defined by Edward Said (1986). His movies *Head-On* and *The Edge of Heaven,* for example, recount the intersections of lives that go back and forth between Turkey and Germany with narratives that weave together these two countries in ways that identities are defined through transnationalism and border crossings. His movies cannot be made by someone who is born and raised solely in either Turkey or Germany but only by someone who has the ability to mediate both cultures as part of his/her identity. Similarly, a growing number of Turkish-German writers, such as Emine Sevgi Ozdamar, Zafer Senocak, Feridun Zaimoglu, Engin Erturk, Renan Demirkiran and Alev Tekinay, produce works that narrate the voices of individuals who are located between Turkish and German cultures and experience everyday life as a continual border crossing. Common to these stories is this ability to move back and forth between both cultures without feelings of alienation. The writers draw on their experiences, as Turkish-Germans but their stories are German. Every time they mediate their Germanness through their dual and transnational experiences, they add new dimensions to German national identity by people who do not necessarily see themselves as migrants but as

inhabitants of the cultural habitus of German society. These interventions ranging from literature, cinema, music and all kinds of everyday interactions constantly challenge the neat distinction between legal citizenship and national identity. As a result, German national identity is reconfigured through these interventions.

What does it mean for German national identity to face citizens who claim to be Germans and yet are also deemed to be outside the cultural sphere of Germanness? Classifying Turks as foreigners conveniently avoided this question. However, the unavoidable presence of the third generation and their attempts to define themselves within the confines of the German cultural sphere have forced this question into the public debate as a form of transgressive cosmopolitanism. Coming from a marginalized group that refuses to be excluded but consciously defines itself as belonging to both Turkish and German cultures, the third generation's claims to German national identity are neither fully assimilationist nor fall simply into the category of cultural authenticity. Instead, they display a desire to become a part of German society and to do so without leaving their Turkishness in the private sphere. Yet, they do not necessarily see their Turkishness as the central and unchanging dimension of their identity. Their definition of Germanness is inherently a political act in that it not only forces into the public realm the questions of 'Who is German?' and 'What does it mean to be German?', but also answers these questions, claiming that German national identity is now defined, in part, as being transnational and existing at the intersection of German and Turkish cultures.

Snapshot II: The transgressive cosmopolitanism of irregular migrants: renegotiating sociality across the border

Sidiro is a village populated by Turkish-Greeks on the Greek side of the Turkish-Greek land border. It is also the site of a mass grave where migrants who have died crossing the Turkish-Greek border are buried. The story of what is happening in Sidiro speaks to both the rampant violence against migrants, which is increasing at the borders (Pro-Asyl et al., 2012), but also to the potential for transgressive forms of cosmopolitanism to emerge and in the most unlikely of places.

On a research trip to Sidiro in August 2012, we met with a group of villagers just before prayer time and asked them to show us the mass grave for dead migrants. From a distance the mass grave looked simply like a fenced off area of dirt but slowly we realized that there were many individual mounds of dirt and that beneath each one was a person. There were no signs of remembrance, no headstones, names or signage of who was buried beneath the dirt. However, this has become the official place where all of the dead migrants are buried. We asked the villagers why the bodies of migrants were being buried here in this village and the villagers recounted to us the following story of how the gravesite emerged.

One of the villagers explained that initially migrants were buried in Greek cemeteries until the Greek villagers began to refuse, as they did not know these strangers who were being buried in their cemeteries. Because the police believed many of the dead to be Muslims, the bodies were taken to the Muslim Turkish-Greek villages in the mountains, such as Agriani, and later Sidiro (see also Kofinis, n.d.). Bodies of the dead migrants have been buried in these village cemeteries since 2000 but these villagers also started

to complain. They wanted to know more about who these people were and why they were being buried in their villages. Also the dead were not being given a proper Muslim burial. This is when the *müftü* (Muslim religious leader) became involved, demanding that the migrants be given a proper Muslim burial.

A villager explained that eight migrants had been buried the week of our visit and that the mass grave now contained almost 400 bodies (numbers confirmed in an interview with *müftü* Mehmet Serif Damadoglou, 24 July 2013). The migrants died while crossing the border along the Evros/Meriç river, some drowning and others freezing to death (Infomobile/Welcome to Europe, 2011). The villagers were not aware, however, of the part of the story that involved German and Greek activists working together as part of a migrant solidarity network that brought them to discover the gravesite two years earlier and of how these activists worked in solidarity with the families of the lost migrants to come to the village to reclaim some of the bodies.

Welcome to Europe is an NGO which campaigns on behalf of migrants and refugees in Greece and describes itself as 'a grassroots movement that embraces migration and wants to create a Europe of hospitality' (http://www.w2eu.info/). Members have been driving back and forth across Greece in a van they call the 'Infomobile' since 2010, collecting information about irregular migrants and refugees, and helping trace relatives who have disappeared trying to cross the country's borders (Rygiel, interview with Infomobile/Welcome to Europe member, 26 July 2012). The project was based on an idea, initiated in Germany, of taking a minivan and driving around Germany 'to inform them [refugees/migrants] about their rights in Germany' and how to claim asylum (interview, 26 July 2012). 'The minors [young activists] are also quite active on internet blogs, started working with young refugees. This was the idea at the beginning' (interview, 26 July 2012). At the same time, relatives of the lost refugees came to Germany in search of their lost family members and through this solidarity network, Greek and German activists set about helping the families by asking at the hospitals and police stations to find out where the missing relatives were. In the middle of this journey, the infomobile discovered the mass grave in Sidiro, at that time with 200 bodies buried in it, in the summer of 2010. The cemetery had little other marking or notice other than a 'bullet-ridden sign' (Infomobile/Welcome to Europe, 2011: 3). The Infomobile group later met at Tychero to hold a ceremony in memory of the dead people (Infomobile/Welcome to Europe, 2011) and produced a statement that read:

> We want to give back a piece of dignity, to those whose lives disappeared – right here – into the senselessness of the European borders. We gathered here to give back a piece of dignity also to those who survived. A piece of dignity that was lost on the way to Europe, like the passports or the photographs showing the faces of the loved ones that are carried away by the water. We want to give back a piece of dignity to all of us, who feel ashamed at the moment of these deaths because we failed in our attempt to stop this murderous regime and to create a welcoming Europe. We came with different backgrounds. Thanks to all who are here today and thanks also to those who cannot be here, but are nevertheless with us right now, like Tahera who lost her husband Bashir in summer 2010 in Evros. (Infomobile/Welcome to Europe 2011: 10)

This is a story, then, of how transnational networks of solidarity form across country borders between Germany and Greece, in solidarity with those who are outsiders to Europe,

in order to assist with the rights of refugees and migrants, and connect to the families coming from Iran, Afghanistan, Sudan and elsewhere to find their deceased relatives. The story of transnational activism in solidarity with migrants and their families clearly demonstrates transgressive forms of cosmopolitanism from the margins. Here, the violence enacted on migrants at the border has brought together activists within Europe across nation state borders, in this case, Germany and Greece, to work in solidarity with those who 'belong' outside Europe but have transgressed to the inside of Europe's borders. In working together with the families of lost travelers, relations are built that extend beyond Europe's borders to networks within the Middle East and Africa. These networks illustrate forms of cosmopolitanism that emerge from acts of transgressing borders (territorial and identity-based). Such acts generate a sense of universalism, but not in the traditional sense of a universalization of a particular, but rather a universalism dependent upon the condition and practice of relationality through and across differences. By doing so, their acts of solidarity make visible the coercive power of border controls but also challenge it through acts of relationality and common humanity such as expressed at Tychero. As the declaration above notes, the acts of solidarity and kindness are examples of transgressive cosmopolitanism because they are motivated by a belief in the right to dignity that should be common to all, even in death, by virtue of simply being human. In the acts of searching for, remembering and mourning deceased migrants, they restore names, histories and dignity to the dead, and in doing so try to recreate an alternative notion of Europe, one that is welcoming rather than hostile towards others.

A few families have come to Sidiro to look for their missing relatives. Here transgressive cosmopolitanism also reaches, perhaps less visibly, the more unlikely location of the village. The villagers' positionality is already complex since, as Turkish-Greeks, they exist in the relatively isolated space of the town as outside-insiders. Yet, they find themselves confronting the realities of European border controls thrust upon them through the burial of migrants taking place amidst their communities. The act of burial is, for the villagers, a form of transgressive cosmopolitanism. They recognize the importance of providing a place in this world if only to pass into the next and of fulfilling the duty of providing a proper burial—even if it is for those who are strangers to their community. In describing the burials, the villagers do not use the term '*multegi*/migrant' but a more universal language in which the migrants are not strangers but human beings. The villagers despairingly say, 'There is so much human waste' or 'a waste of human lives' (*'Insan ziyanligi'*).

However, as noted earlier, the story of transgressive cosmopolitanism is not without conflict. The villagers are also angered by the fact that families sometimes come to reclaim relatives and the villagers are asked to dig up the bodies they have buried so that they can be removed and flown back to places like Iran for another funeral. They are upset by this for not only is this against Muslim customs but it implies that the burials that the villagers provide are not good enough. But more than this, the villagers repeatedly state that they are doing their best to try to give a proper Muslim burial to these people, as it is their duty. They feel that the families are 'wasting our time for nothing'. In fact, the villagers here are on the front line of the war against migrants, witness to the murders and deaths and trying to assist in the ways in which they can, without perhaps always understanding the larger geopolitical picture of the Europe that is being reproduced through the violence of

border controls and the securitization of migration. However, in these contradictory moments, nevertheless, we see examples of trangressive cosmopolitan acts by villagers and by the activists working in solidarity with the families that provide a glimpse that another Europe is possible.

Conclusion

These two cases, the Turkish community in Germany, who are involved in reconstituting European identity from within Europe's borders, and the villagers, migrants and their families, and German-Greek networks, who are involved in reconstituting European identity from across and beyond Europe's borders, are examples of transgressive cosmopolitanism. But these very different cases point to the fact that transgressive cosmopolitanism should best be thought of not as a singular concept but as having multiple forms. The cosmopolitanism of the Infomobile and Welcome to Europe solidarity networks differs from that expressed by the Turkish-Greek villagers of Sidiro. The positionality of the activists is not identical to that of the villagers in relation to the irregular migrants and asylum seekers attempting to cross the borders and gain entry into Europe. In the case of the transnational activists, their transgressive cosmopolitanism is motivated by a sense of solidarity, social justice and concern for and responsibility towards those whom they feel have been treated wrongly at the border. Their activism is motivated by an appeal to their countries and the European Union for greater rights for irregular migrants and asylum seekers as they attempt to relocate and start a new life within Europe. The Turkish-Greek villagers, on the other hand, are not motivated to act for the same reasons. Rather than choosing to act in solidarity with the migrants, their communities are forced to respond to the violence of the border. Their responses, however, are not those of disengagement, indifference or even hostility. They are motivated instead by a desire to assist in response to a tragic life situation in their capacity as Muslims. They seek to provide respect in death and peace in the afterlife that those outsiders could not find in their lives fleeing across the border. In contrast to both examples, the transgressive cosmopolitanism demonstrated by the third-generation Turkish-Germans differs yet again. Their cosmopolitanism is one that transgresses national narratives of belonging and demands inclusion and belonging but according to very different cultural terms. Their positionality is neither one of solidarity as an insider nor of an outsider making claims to belong. Rather the positionality of third-generation Turkish-Germans is one of straddling the border as an in-between insider–outsider demanding belonging albeit as outsider–insiders. These examples of transgressive cosmopolitanism illustrate that despite their differences there is a sense of cosmopolitanism that informs their actions, which emerges from the everyday interactions of living with difference. These individuals and groups are motivated by engagement rather than denial, silencing, or outright exclusion of those considered to be outside the community. Such everyday moments, which might seem insignificant individually, have a transformative impact when viewed collectively. Focusing on only the transnational activism of migrant solidarity networks, for example, misses the impact of the villagers' actions, which are also important to the constitution of the total change that occurs as a result of dealing with border crossings.

Taken together, they represent a transformative push towards unraveling the borders of who can be and should be consider European.

But what these examples also share is a desire to find alternative ways of belonging that materialize through engagement with difference. It is this desire to engage with difference that we find so important as a central concept of cosmopolitanism both as ideology and praxis. This desire, moreover, is crucial in a period when governments and people are moving towards ever increasing securitization of everyday life, a securitization that seeks to purify, exclude and eliminate difference. It is by looking at such everyday moments and politics on the ground, at the margin and along the border, that we see evidence of transgressive cosmopolitanism at work. Far from the lofty spaces and places of institutions, legal frameworks and Enlightenment philosophies, cosmopolitanism can be found in examples of practical and everyday praxis in such snapshots from the margins. But this is cosmopolitanism far from the ideals of Kantian universals and singular common identities. Rather, it is a transgressive cosmopolitanism born in and through relations with difference, relations that are sometimes cooperative, forged in solidarity, while at other places, and at other times, are fraught with tension. What notions of transgressive cosmopolitanism ultimately attest to is the human desire for continual striving and movement towards moments or encounters with difference, a human desire for transgression of the wall, the border and the fence.

Acknowledgements

References

Appiah A (2006) *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*. New York: W.W. Norton.

Baban F (2006) From Gastarbeiter to 'ausländische Mitbürger': Postnational citizenship and in-between identities in Berlin. *Citizenship Studies* 10(2): 185–201.

Bauman Z (2004) *Europe: An Unfinished Adventure*. Cambridge: Polity.

Beck U (2002) The cosmopolitan society and its enemies. *Theory, Culture & Society*. 19(1–2): 17–44.

Beck U and Delanty G (2006) Europe from a cosmopolitan perspective. In: Delanty G (ed.) *Europe and Asia Beyond East and West*. New York: Routledge, pp. 11–23.

Beck U and Grande E (2007a) *Cosmopolitan Europe*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Beck U and Grande E (2007b) Cosmopolitanism: Europe's way out of crisis. *European Journal of Social Theory* 10(1): 67–85.

Beck U and Sznaider N (2006) Unpacking cosmopolitanism for the social sciences: A research agenda. *British Journal of Sociology* 57(1): 1–23.

Bhabha H K (1990) *Nation and Narration*. London: Routledge.

Cheah P (2006) *Inhuman Conditions: On Cosmopolitanism and Human Rights*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Delanty G (2006) Civilizational constellations and European modernity reconsidered. In: Delanty G. (ed.) *Europe and Asia Beyond East and West*. New York: Routledge, pp. 45–60.

Delanty G (2009) *The Cosmopolitan Imagination*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Fine R and Cohen R (2002) Four cosmopolitanism moments. In: Vertovec S and Cohen R (eds) *Conceiving Cosmopolitanism*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 137–62.

Finkielkraut A (1995) *The Defeat of the Mind*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Göle N (2000) Snapshots of Islamic modernities. *Daedalus* 129(1): 91–117.

Guardian (2010) Angela Merkel: German multiculturalism has 'utterly failed'. 17 October.

Habermas J (2001) Why Europe needs a constitution. *New Left Review* 11(1): 11–32.

Harvey D (2000) Cosmopolitanism and the banality of geographical evils. *Public Culture* 12(2): 529–64.

Honneth A (1997) Is universalism a moral trap? The presuppositions and limits of a politics of human rights. In: Bohman J and Lutz-Bachmann M (eds) *Perpetual Peace: Essays on Kant's Cosmopolitan Ideal*. Boston: The MIT Press, pp. 155–78.

Isin E F and Nielsen G M (2008) Acts of Citizenship. London and New York: Zed Books.

Infomobile/Welcome to Europe (2011) Lost-at-border. Available at: http://www.scribd.com/doc/78567527/Lost-at-Border (accessed 26 July 2013).

Kastoryano R (2002) *Negotiating Identities: States and Immigrants in France and Germany*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Kaya A (2007) German-Turkish transnational space: A separate space of their own. *German Studies Review* 30(3): 483–502.

Kofman E (1995) Citizenship for some, but not for others: Spaces of citizenship in contemporary Europe. *Political Geography* 14: 121–37.

Kofinis S (n.d.) Report on the Muslim immigrants' cemetery in Evros (Sidiro). Hellenic League for Human Rights. Available at: http://www.hlhr.gr/detailsen.php?id=586 (accessed 1 July 2013).

Kymlicka W (1995) *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Kymlicka W (2001) *Politics in the Vernacular: Nationalism, Multiculturalism, and Citizenship*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Laclau E (1995) Universalism, particularism and the question of identity. In: Rajchman J *The Identity in Question*. New York: Routledge.

Landau L and Freemantle I (2010) Tactical cosmopolitanism and idioms of belonging: Insertion and self-exclusion in Johannesburg. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. 36(3): 375–90.

Lutz-Bachmann M (1997) Kant's idea of peace and the philosophical conception of a world republic. In: Bohman J and Lutz-Bachmann M (eds) *Perpetual Peace: Essays on Kant's Cosmopolitan Ideal*. Boston: The MIT Press, pp. 59–77.

Mignolo W D (2000) The many faces of cosmo-polis: Border thinking and critical cosmopolitanism. *Public Culture* 12(3): 721–48.

Miller D (2000) *Citizenship and National Identity*. London: Polity.

Nussbaum M (1996) Patriotism and cosmopolitanism. In: Cohen J (ed.) *For Love of Country*. Boston: Beacon Press, pp. 3–21.

Nyers P (2003) Abject cosmopolitanism: The politics of protection in the anti-deportation movement. *Third World Quarterly* 24(6): 1069–93.

O'Brien P (1988) Continuity and change in Germany's treatment of non-Germans. *International Migration Review* 22(3): 109–34.

Paasi A (2001) Europe as a social process and discourse. *European Urban and Regional Studies* 8(1): 7–28.

Pichler F (2009) 'Down-to-earth' cosmopolitanism: Subjective and objective measurements of cosmopolitanism in survey research. *Current Sociology* 57(5): 704–32.

Pollock S (2000) Cosmopolitan and vernacular in history. *Public Culture* 12 (3): 591–625.

Pro-Asyl, Greek Council for Refugees, Infomobile/Welcome to Europe Network (2012) *Walls of Shame: Accounts from the Inside: The Detention Centres of Evros*, pp. 1–96. Available at www.proasyl.de.

Rancière J (1999) *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Ricciardelli M, Urban S and Nanopoulos K (2003) *Globalization and Multicultural Societies: Some Views from Europe*. Notre Dame, In: University of Notre Dame Press.

Robbins B (1998) Introduction Part I: Actually existing cosmopolitanism. In: Cheah P. and Robbins B. (eds) *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling Beyond the Nation*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Rogers A and Tillie J (2001) *Multicultural Policies and Modes of Citizenship in European Cities*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Sackmann R, Peters B and Faist T (2003) *Identity and Integration: Migrants in Western Europe*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Said E (1986) Intellectuals in the post-colonial world', *Salmagundi* 70/71: 46–64.

Scheffer P (2011) *Immigrant Nations*. London: Polity.

Talani L S (2012) *Globalisation, Migration, and the Future of Europe: Insiders and Outsiders*. New York: Routledge.

Taras R (2009) *Europe Old and New: Transnationalism, Belonging, Xenophobia*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Taylor C and Gutmann A (1992) *Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition: An Essay*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Tully J (1995) *Strange Multiplicity: Constitutionalism in an Age of Diversity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Vertovec S (2006) Fostering cosmopolitanisms: A conceptual survey and a media experiment in Berlin. Transnational Communities Working Paper WPTC- 2K-06. University of Oxford.

Werbner P (ed.) (2008) *Anthropology and the New Cosmopolitanism: Rooted, Feminist and Vernacular Perspectives*. New York: Berg.

White J (1997) Turks in the New Germany. *American Anthropologist* 99(4): 754–69.

Zielonka J (2006) *Europe as Empire: The Nature of Enlarged European Union*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Author biographies

Feyzi Baban is Associate Professor of Political Studies and International Development at Trent University, Canada. His research focuses on cosmopolitanism, citizenship, and Turkey–EU relations. He has published in *Global Society* and *European Journal of Social Theory*.

Kim Rygiel is Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science at Wilfrid Laurier University, Canada. Her research focuses on border security, citizenship and migration within North America and Europe. She is the author of *Globalizing Citizenship* (UBC, 2010) and has published in *Citizenship Studies* and *Review of Constitutional Studies*.