



# Cosmopolitan Justice: Its Eclipse and Necessity

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## Abstract

Educational philosophers often invoke cosmopolitanism as a pillar of political paideia and an appropriate response to challenging times. However, they rarely theorize or employ cosmopolitan justice. This article highlights its neglect within educational philosophy and explains its significance for rooted cosmopolitanism and for *Bildung* (all-round pedagogy). Borrowing the notion of “justice-sensitive externalities” from Mattias Kumm’s international legal theory, I expand cosmopolitan justice and distinguish it from social justice. This move helps me broaden the scope of *Bildung* by adding aims of cosmopolitan-legal literacy, while offering a more robust theoretical response to geopolitical realities such as the question of Palestine and contemporary institutional developments like Donald Trump’s Board of Peace.

**Keywords:** Territorial-cosmopolitan justice; Decolonial; Kumm; Justice-sensitive externalities; Palestine; Board of Peace

## Introduction

Cosmopolitanism entered in contemporary educational philosophy through various philosophical avenues. For instance, drawing on modern universalism, some scholars have endorsed or critiqued the liberal moral cosmopolitanism that emphasized the human community as an object of knowledge and moral commitment. Others have employed poststructuralist thought to study global flows, contest the liberal cosmopolitanism of human rights, debunk the sovereignty of the nation-state and address the aporetic or dissonant nature of a shared world. Despite their differences, whether humanist, postmodern, or decolonial, these views have given cosmopolitanism, particularly in its “new” or “critical” iterations, a vital place in educational philosophy.<sup>1</sup> Predictably, then, as a “way of life, an ideal and an outlook” [1,

p. 49], cosmopolitanism is considered a “viable educational response to the challenges of globalisation” [2, p. 1]. When addressing contemporary political issues, educational philosophers often situate their efforts as responses to global crises that are typically considered unprecedented. One such response recommends cosmopolitanism as an ideal worthy of pedagogical cultivation in a world plagued by persistent challenges, whereas another explores the limits of cosmopolitanism in the face of such exigencies. Yet it is striking, and perhaps contradictory, that the array of challenges to which cosmopolitan education responds rarely specifies a missing or betrayed cosmopolitan right (justice regarding states, communities or stateless peoples) as one of the deficits that these crises reveal. While the list of challenges typically includes climate change, economic volatility, migration and regressive ideology, these are seldom connected to a misused, misguided or missing cosmopolitan justice (which is defined in Section 1).

1 These well-established points require no further citation here, as they are already extensively documented in the literature on cosmopolitan educational philosophy.

I use the “eclipse”<sup>2</sup> metaphor regarding the neglect of cosmopolitan justice in related discourses (including education), suggesting that, while the challenges of this justice are ever-present (and have recently intensified), current theoretical sensibilities have occluded them from scholarly view. While contemporary geopolitics exacerbate the crises in cosmopolitan justice and neutralize the normative, problem-solving power of international law, my focus here remains strictly on the lack of theoretical engagement with the key term of cosmopolitan justice, rather than its empirical absence in global politics. The practical violation of cosmopolitan justice comes up here solely to illustrate what this scholarly omission fails to address. Also, the inattention to cosmopolitan justice must not be confused with the discursive waning of “cosmopolitanism” as a keyword in recent educational-philosophical research, which I study in a forthcoming work.

I argue in this article that cosmopolitan justice (encompassing inter alia ecological, distributive and territorial faces) merits educational-philosophical attention. To demonstrate this, after some preliminary remarks, I take six steps: (1) define cosmopolitan justice, highlighting especially its territorial aspect; (2) distinguish cosmopolitan justice from social justice to specify its scope; (3) employ Mattias Kumm’s analytical category of “justice-sensitive externalities” to illustrate what is currently bypassed; (4) present the eclipse of such topics in educational philosophy as a major lacuna; (5) explain why these externalities are crucial for *Bildung*; and (6) consider the implications of this lacuna on how educational philosophers address, or fail to address, justice-relevant externalities exemplified by Palestine within the global context of Donald Trump’s Board of Peace<sup>3</sup>. I conclude that a head-on engagement with cosmopolitan justice (particularly the territorial aspects demarcated by justice-sensitive externalities) is vital for rooted cosmopolitanism and the education it demands.

### Preliminary Remarks: Indications of the Eclipse

Cosmopolitan justice, especially in its territorial aspect, may be unattractive to scholars because it evokes sovereignty, human rights and universal law – issues fraught with power dynamics, ambiguities and complexities. For example, the “new cosmopolitanism” avoids the universal humanity and “human rights and global justice” frameworks whose translation into educational initiatives is thought

to operate hegemonically [3, pp. 25-27]. Even when global justice comes up in philosophies from which educational scholars occasionally borrow insights, its emphasis is on distribution, which sidelines challenges of territorial rights, sovereignty, intervention, self-determination and tensions in international relations. At best, cosmopolitan/global justice preoccupy followers of Charles Beitz and Thomas Pogge, or Gillian Brock and Kok-Chor Tan, whose philosophical priorities center on individual well-being in a world of deficient distributive justice; likewise, theories such as Nagel’s, Rawls’, Sangiovanni’s, Blake’s, Miller’s, and Valentini’s are contested through the distributive prism.<sup>4</sup> The core debate revolves around matters of distributive justice—specifically, whether principles of socio-economic justice (like resource distribution, wealth equality, or minimized material deprivation) apply globally or are confined within state borders.

When issues of self-determination, state independence, and international relations arise, they remain secondary. Instead, within this specific literature, such concepts are treated as derivative variables and institutional constraints that scholars employ only to argue for or against global distributive duties. The basic assumption is that individuals, not states, are the ultimate units of moral concern; arbitrary borders should not determine a person’s life chances. This perspective neglects how, precisely because borders exist and cannot simply be wished away, they function ambiguously [4], thereby inviting a specific, territorial-cosmopolitan justice irreducible to distributive issues.

Regardless of the reasons or the frameworks, this broad neglect of cosmopolitan justice as a key analytical category extends far beyond educational philosophy. A general Google Scholar search for “cosmopolitan justice” between 1995 and 2025 yields only 5,995 results, which is strikingly low compared to the 116,749 hits for “global justice” (typically referring to distributive matters), 299,740 for “cosmopolitanism” and 256,238 for “the decolonial”. Consider the following figures, not as evidence but as conjectural grounds:

The first graph vividly illustrates the scholarly neglect of the term “cosmopolitan justice”. While the terms “cosmopolitanism” and “decoloniality” have substantially grown, with the latter skyrocketing after 2015, cosmopolitan justice remains a flat line at the bottom of the scale. Since cosmopolitan justice is the broader notion of justice that corresponds to cosmopolitanism, and is thematically a

<sup>2</sup> What has been eclipsed is not just the term “cosmopolitan justice” but also the set of issues (e.g., collective self-determination principle) that fall into its province and will be indicated in later sections.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.timesofisrael.com/full-text-charter-of-trumps-board-of-peace/>

<sup>4</sup> Given that the foundational texts of all these prominent theorists (e.g., Beitz, Pogge, Rawls, Nagel and so on) are widely anthologized, extensively discussed, and easily searchable within the standard literature, specific citations are omitted here to avoid unnecessarily inflating the bibliography.

crucial subset of it, its remaining understudied is particularly striking. One would expect that most publications on cosmopolitanism would contain some mention of this justice. Of course, noting a statistical absence of interest is not, per se, an argument for the need to study cosmopolitan

justice. However, arguments about why we should delve into it will be given in later sections. The aim of the figures here is merely to indicate the breadth of the neglect.

### Google Scholar — All Terms Over Time

Yearly result counts for each search term across all of Google Scholar

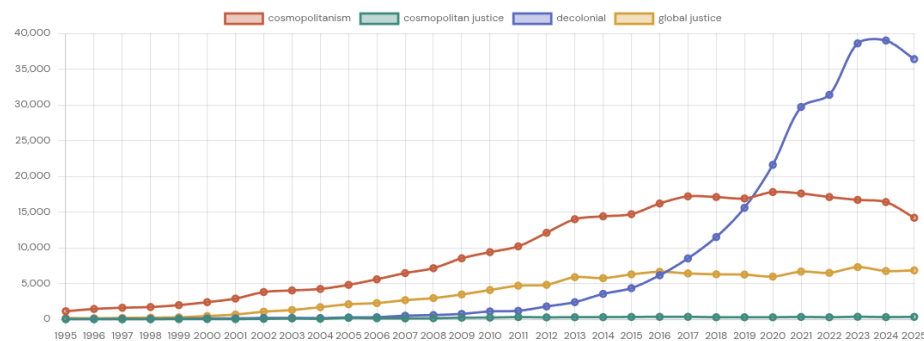


**Figure 1:** Bibliometric analysis of term frequency\*.

\*Data on term frequency were extracted manually from Google Scholar using a custom-developed bibliometric dashboard tool (available at <https://github.com/IA-Papastef/simpistic-bibliometric-dashboard>). I am indebted to Ioannis Papastefanou for conducting the bibliometric search and assisting with data visualization.

### Relative Share — Percentage Over Time

Each term's share of total results per year (Google Scholar)

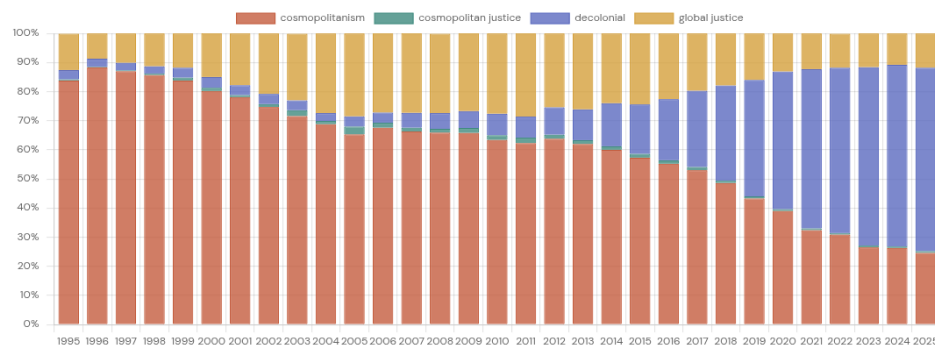


**Figure 2:** Changing prominence of cosmopolitanism, decolonial, and cosmopolitan justice scholarship over time.

This figure reveals that, while the term “cosmopolitanism” (red) dominated theory in the late 90s, it has been systematically squeezed by the rise of the decolonial (blue), which now occupies nearly half of the relative share. Meanwhile, cosmopolitan justice (the thin green sliver) remains almost invisible throughout the thirty-year period.

A possible objection to the figures is that they are not evidentially unassailable. However, they need not be; they are not used here to demonstrate an absolute fact, but only

to indicate a possible trend worthy of further metric study or a bounded review with specific journals, years, search terms, and inclusion criteria beyond the scope of this article. Another related objection is that the rarity of the term “cosmopolitan justice” does not prove that its conceptual content, such as global conflicts and self-determination principles, is also neglected; these ideas may be present but phrased differently. This objection likewise misses the mark: as will be illustrated later, even when scholarship addresses war, colonial injustice, climate responsibility, territoriality or

transnational issues, it avoids not only the term “cosmopolitan justice” but also the legal-political aspects of such issues that transcend the dominant welfare-humanitarian paradigm.

This holds true for the similar objection that searching for “cosmopolitanism” and “cosmopolitan justice” bypasses scholars who research related issues (or the limits of statism) using other key terms, such as “transnational justice”, without engaging with cosmopolitanism due to its historical undertones of Eurocentrism. Crucially, if this is true, it confirms, instead of falsifying, the claim that decolonial discourse has sidelined cosmopolitan philosophy, and that both neglect the term cosmopolitan justice. As will be shown later, however, dispensing with “cosmopolitan justice” impoverishes not only cosmopolitan philosophy itself, but also any philosophy aspiring to transcend methodological nationalism. When the term “cosmopolitan justice” is missing from Anglophone cosmopolitan literature, the underlying ideas and principles that define the precise normativity of justice beyond mere global aid, wealth distribution, or individual well-being are often also absent. Likewise missing or understudied are global conflicts, such as the Chagos case, that are irreducible to relationality or transnationalism.

### 1. What is cosmopolitan justice?

What is the cosmopolitan justice that has been eclipsed? Onora O'Neill provides a handy definition: cosmopolitan justice determines what is owed “to all regardless of location or origin, race or gender, class or citizenship” [5, p. 45]. I expand this “all” to encompass not only individuals but also states/peoples/collectivities and nature. What is owed surpasses the classical liberal ideal of cosmopolitan justice as a set of universal ethics; it also comprises a territorially sensitive framework of distributive and collective rights or claims. For example, concerning global conflicts, we should not only lament the resulting suffering, alleviate it and emphasize that all lives are grievable, but we must also weigh and defend the rights to collective self-determination of wronged peoples. I suggest that such rights extend far beyond financial matters. This normativity is missing, however, when the entire discourse is structured around distributive justice. Cosmopolitans argue for global wealth and resource realignment, while statists use the concepts of state sovereignty and self-determination as conceptual shields to prove that distributive justice cannot logically operate outside the state. Regrettably, both neglect the political capabilities that are violated when communities, small states or ecosystems suffer the consequences of uneven global power – consequences that deny merited self-determination, truncate well-exerted sovereignty or violate ecological justice.

Much of cosmopolitan normativity is typically reduced to global economic relations and cultural flows, confining

issues of justice to including individuals into these dynamics, rather than addressing matters of territorial rights and international ecological measures beyond mere individual action. Against such limitations, my redefinition of cosmopolitan justice transcends relational ontologies to recognize also states, peoples, and nature as subjects and recipients of justice. In a critical dialogue with indigenous and other discourses (see, for instance, [6]) on land and place affectivity, which cannot be developed here for reasons of space, this framework contests the commodified western view of land, the detached footloose self and the unqualified glorification of mobility, asserting that justice is impossible without territorial and ecological stability. It recognizes that, for the dispossessed, the right to a place is a prerequisite for any other cosmopolitan right while identifying and addressing the ethical debts created by global forces and imperial legacies that fall outside the reach of domestic justice systems.

This redefinition rests on the following assumptions. First, injustices are also committed against groups and populations [7], species, and whatever is vulnerable to predatory behaviour [8,9]. Second, cosmopolitan justice comprises global distributive justice and the principle of global equality of opportunity. This principle states “that it is unfair if some have worse opportunities because of their national or civic identity” [10, p. 113] – which is vital for a cosmopolitanism that considers more than just basic rights to subsistence for each person. Acknowledging that vulnerability extends to groups and ecosystems reveals that basic individual rights are insufficient. They fail to account for systemic disadvantages, allowing “some to have much worse prospects in life than others” for no reason other than their geographic location or citizenship [10, p. 115].

However, cosmopolitan justice covers broader ground than mere distribution. Likewise, injustice refers to inflicting harm or imposing disabling conditions on others not only through distributive inequities, but also through mechanisms such as decision-making, division of labour and participation, which resist reduction to the logic of distribution [7, p. 55]. Faces of oppression such as “exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence” may entail or cause distributive injustices, but they “all involve issues of justice beyond distribution” [7, p. 56]. These constitute ethico-political challenges that also affect collective identities and their capabilities, further inviting a cosmopolitanization of the capability approach beyond its current liberal-individualist framework.

Cosmopolitan justice addresses ethico-political questions beyond the confines of the state or a person's mobility across states, including queries such as: is inequality (and unequal wealth distribution) across the world just?

Are historical ethical debts of powerful countries a good reason for absolving the financial debts of formerly exploited countries?<sup>5</sup> What obligations “arise in terms of historical justice in relation to other countries” [11, p. 63]? What are the limits of state sovereignty? When is intervention in another state’s space or politics justifiable, if ever? What constitutes the ethical ground of international law? [12]. These questions reflect, *inter alia*, the political and legal aspects of cosmopolitanism. Furthermore, why is it just for people to defend their territory from aggression and what counts as violence or aggression? How should conflicts be resolved, and on what principles? Cosmopolitan justice concerns all these normative challenges and requires an enlarged perspective on what is owed to all: individuals, peoples, states and the natural world.

While cosmopolitan educational philosophy frequently explores global flow interconnectedness and its issues of individual respect, responsibility and inclusion, it rarely investigates these systemic questions of international law and territorial aggression. This is part of a broader tendency. Indicatively, even Iris Young, who crucially (though tangentially rather than analytically) deplored colonial injustice, drew her examples exclusively from domestic affairs. In her monumental text “Five Faces of Oppression” [7], she ignored violations of cosmopolitan right and faces of oppression within international relations. Though she criticized the individualism that obscures injustices inflicted on groups, her focus remained on groups oppressed “in our society” [7, p. 57]. This silence underlines the eclipse of cosmopolitan justice concerning stateless peoples or small-state capabilities in global affairs even within more recent sources, educational or otherwise.

Cosmopolitan justice should also challenge anthropocentrism. Environmental justice must operate on a cosmopolitan rather than merely localized or social scale. Hence, it requires more than individual sensitization and measures within states. Cosmopolitan-ecological justice combats the current theoretical myopia of looking askance at users of plastic bags while condoning environmentally high-risk missile attacks on Iranian nuclear positions. Thus, it invites a head-on confrontation with the international permissiveness surrounding nuclear testing, weaponry, and their global-scale environmental hazards. Such considerations combine environmental and legal (cosmopolitan right) sensibilities to address related deficits.

## 2. Cosmopolitan Justice and Social Justice

Cosmopolitan justice is irreducible to social justice. It requires more than what social justice accomplishes domestically. For, the recipients of its benefits are outside the borders or beyond the sphere of immediate contact. Applied to education this means that cosmopolitanism should not be exhausted in pondering human difference in classrooms. Nor should it be limited to normativities such as respecting others, preparing students to live and work across borders or lamenting global suffering. However, most educational philosophers still associate cosmopolitanism exclusively with social justice [13]. Two assumptions lead to such associations, and both are false. The first, let us call it a “symmetry fallacy”, is that social justice suffices for global problems: global justice is simply domestic justice writ large.<sup>6</sup> The other assumption, let us call it an “exceptionalism fallacy”, is that there is sound argument for rejecting at a global level the ideals that we accept within the state, thereby exhausting justice within its social, intra-state dimension. Implicit in such arguments is the premise that the global context is disanalogous in some morally relevant respect [10]; hence, though some ideals apply domestically, they do not apply globally.<sup>7</sup> As Caney has already convincingly dismantled both assumptions, they require no further elaboration here.

That cosmopolitan justice is distinctive from other kinds constitutes no moral ground for rejecting it. On the contrary, this distinctiveness explains why the global realm requires a framework that social justice cannot provide, and vice versa. It also highlights the tensions between social and cosmopolitan justice (e.g., intra-state social justice operating regardless of, or even at odds with, a just foreign policy or with ecological justice) and the possibilities for reconciling them. Rather than imposing rigid boundaries, this differentiation suggests a complementary division of labour, one tailored to the requirements of different contexts. These differences compel us to acknowledge not only individuals but also peoples, states and nature as claimants of justice. Evidently, cosmopolitan justice requires expanding *Bildung* (all-round education), or global citizenship education (GCE), in common cause with democratic citizenship education, despite their different foci.

This distinction combats methodological nationalism. Methodological nationalism characterizes the social theory that takes the “nation-state as its implicit unit of analysis” and projects the researcher’s society or culture onto the globe [15, p. 412]. To avoid it, many theorists merely stretch

5 On such questions, economic cosmopolitanism meets other faces of cosmopolitanism (legal, historical, affective, ecological, ethical, political and existential), thus revealing the need for a stereoscopic optic on cosmopolitanism and its related notions of justice (see [14]).

6 This is problematic not only normatively, but also pragmatically, because it ignores that there is not, and there should not be, a world state that would dole out such an extended social justice.

7 I am modifying and generalizing here a point that Caney [10, pp. 117-118] makes more specifically about global equal opportunities.

the terms “culture” and “society” to signify phenomena within or outside of state borders and legal frameworks. However, this is a merely nominal change; upon closer inspection, most, if not all, of the topics addressed by cosmopolitan scholars reflect the filtered sensibilities of their own cultures or societies. A rigorous methodological cosmopolitanism rooted in cosmopolitan justice is precisely what much philosophy (educational or otherwise) lacks when it discusses, even with the best of intentions, macropolitics without considering territorial injustices such as turning subaltern or attacked peoples into refugees and climate-induced dislocations of populations. By contrast, distinguishing social from cosmopolitan justice advances a methodological cosmopolitanism more consistent and rigorous than the popularized alternatives.

Because conflicts involve states and cosmopolitan right, not just individuals, we must recalibrate analyses beyond exclusively recognitive and democratic justice frameworks such as Nancy Fraser’s [16]. Without reproducing the shortcomings of traditional Westphalian territorial sovereignty, and without sidestepping issues of malnutrition, misrecognition and misrepresentation, we require cosmopolitan frameworks that consider territorial injustices and struggles against colonial residues, neocolonial practices and imperial politics. Such politics, which harm stateless peoples or small, powerless states thereby perpetuating global Realpolitik power-differentials, asymmetries and dynamics, fall within cosmopolitan-justice considerations that should enrich our theoretical purview.

No matter how one stretches the meaning of the social, the fact remains that societies are organized around the constitutionalism of “We, the people”, namely, the sovereign, whether nation-state or multi-ethnic, state. Legitimate authority and democratic justice continue to require a commitment to human rights and the rule of law mediated by a constitution that binds social agents as free and equal citizens in collective self-government. International affairs, however, operate differently. There is no sovereign world state, and rightly so [17, p. 607]. That a full-fledged constitutionalism is inapplicable, and can hardly be politically advocated, should not cede international problems and law to power politics [17, p. 610]. The sovereign state should neither be left unchallenged, nor should it be sidestepped by global powers, supra-national power alliances and their strategic interests, the legitimacy of which is even less democratic and less defensible. This necessitates a cosmopolitan justice that is distinctive and irreducible to social justice, to recognitive and democratic justice, or to global-distributive justice.

Interestingly, the prevailing critique of, or even hostility toward, state sovereignty typically demands constraining only domestic policies, rather than aggression beyond its

borders. Viewing the nation-state as a colonial invention, many scholars lack the framework to defend a state under threat. In cosmopolitan philosophy (including its educational variant), this critical gaze rarely extends to the constraints that international law (e.g., the UN Charter) should impose on a country’s external affairs. Scholars scrutinize how a state treats its internal “others”, while remaining silent on how that same state treats populations outside the border. They miss that, for small states or defenseless peoples facing Realpolitik, a Westerner’s vague conceptual and ethical shift toward a relational ontology that upholds only the individual as a claimant of justice is of little to no use, compared to the jurisdiction of the UN Charter.

However, contemptuous of the UN as a failed, statist model of global coordination, many scholars ignore the need to defend the universal validity of the UN principles against their misinterpretation or violation by powerful countries. They choose instead to jettison the institution on the pretext of its longstanding deficits. Instead of critically engaging with the Third World Approaches to International Law (see, for instance, Makau Mutua [18] and the works of B. S. Chimni, James Gathii and Antony Anghie) that expose the UN complicities, they use these critiques conveniently as an excuse for discarding the UN idea wholesale and for securing for themselves the self-image of the decolonially-minded scholar. Thus, they comfortably bypass that the TWAIL criticizes not only the complicities of the UN but also those of Western postmodern academia. Major representatives of the TWAIL reject “attempts by some scholars, particularly those of postmodern and postcolonial persuasions, to diminish the importance of scholarship and political movements and strategies deployed by earlier Third World voices and political leaders as tools against the imperial projects of the West” [18, p. 32].

Certainly, the UN is no panacea; it often reproduces colonial and geopolitical hierarchies, but this is not because its democratic principles are flawed or its Article 2.4 is expendable. Rather, it is because power politics dominate international relations and the structure of the UN has, from its very inception, served the profit-seeking aspirations of the big powers. The UN remains, however, the main forum of territorial-cosmopolitan justice for powerless people such as the Chagossians to internationalize their struggle and ground their claims.<sup>8</sup> Twailian scholarship promotes antihierarchical and non-Eurocentric ways of establishing “universally acceptable norms” [18, p. 36], rather than blanket dismissals of international law. It aims “to make real the promise of international law to transform itself into a system based, not on power, but justice” [18, p. 40]. The discursive eclipse of this justice within Western scholarship reflects, by contrast,

8 <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-55848126>

a failure to respect the division of labour between the social and the cosmopolitan; indeed, the plea for domestic social justice often obscures justice-sensitive externalities, namely, the injustices exported beyond the state's borders. I turn to such injustices in the next section.

### 3. Justice-sensitive Externalities

From a cosmopolitan perspective that accommodates its corresponding category of justice, national and international law should be mutually supportive and complementary. Their deep interdependencies that illuminate whether state claims to legitimate authority are justified should be carefully weighed [17, pp. 611-612]. State agency comprises a wide range of national policy choices. National policy produces justice-sensitive externalities, each generating "distinct normative concerns" [17, p. 617] for the structural features of international law and, by extension, the priorities of political *paideia*. Mattias Kumm's analytical category of "justice-relevant negative externalities" [17, p. 612] helps us reveal challenges underexplored in cosmopolitan philosophical discourses. It designates precise, structural legal-political operations and actions, or omissions to act, that generate cross-border injustices.

Justice-relevant (or justice-sensitive) negative externalities involve harms perpetrated by policies that affect outsiders in ways that raise "concerns about whether their interests have been appropriately taken into account" [17, p. 613]. These externalities encompass state or even supra-state actions (or omissions) that inflict harm beyond a state's domestic sphere, emerging within the interstices where peoples, states and cultures/societies intersect. They are state actions and policies that affect populations beyond the border, reflecting colonial mentalities, effecting domination or destruction and serving a narrow-minded, profit-oriented patriotism. Some such externalities are obvious: "there are states that embrace an aggressive, expansionist foreign policy" against the political independence of other peoples or against the territorial integrity of other countries [17, p. 620]. That imperial actions might enjoy widespread democratic support in the aggressor state, or that the aggressor state is considered a well-structured Western constitutional system, cannot justify such actions. Historic colonial policies and their contemporary continuities constitute such obvious externalities,<sup>9</sup> as typified by recent US aggression against Iran. Indicative of the neglect of cosmopolitan justice is that the global public debate largely focused on the illegality of the act on the narrow grounds of domestic, US-based civic licencing (such as Congressional procedures and the War

Powers Act). This debate downplayed the fact that such aggression violates the UN Charter, a breach that domestic Congressional consent cannot wash away. Thus, once again, we witness a lopsided emphasis on the domestic legal face of justice over its global legal face.

Beyond overt aggression, cosmopolitan justice concerns more insidious external injustices. These include justice-relevant negative externalities, such as "the establishment of nuclear power plants near the border with insufficient safety standards" [17, p. 620].<sup>10</sup> To these, I add that some states vote unjustly within the UN, while some supra-state NGOs intervene neo-colonially in conflict resolution efforts. Other extra-territorial effects involve the seizure of foreign land by global powers for military bases. One such manifestation is the 1970s expulsion of the Chagos population by the UK and the US to establish the Diego Garcia Military Base. Another colonial, justice-sensitive externality is the inability of powerless states to exercise sovereignty; some are forced to tolerate the use of their territory as a military base by global powers for launching operations against third countries. Consider Cyprus's current inability to exercise full sovereignty and neutrality due to the British Sovereign Base Areas, which were imposed as a non-negotiable precondition for independence in 1960. Significantly, when an Iranian-made drone recently hit Cyprus amid retaliatory strikes on British military assets, the fact that this hazard was a direct consequence of these bases was globally ignored. In effect, the continued existence of such military enclaves on the land that the British withheld from the Cypriots when granting them independence violates their territorial rights.<sup>11</sup>

Cosmopolitan justice is also violated when states or supra-state formations fail to realize positive externalities, omitting to act despite a clear responsibility [17, p. 620]. The EU's acquiescence to Israel's politics in Palestine under the pretext of self-defence rights is a pertinent example. Consider also the EU double standards in actively defending

10 Another example is the "carbon-dioxide emission standards that contribute to global warming. While the detrimental effects of these standards may be moderate in the polluting jurisdiction, that pollution may lead to severe droughts that cause starvation, severe flooding that results in the forced relocation of millions, or even the wholesale sinking of island-states in other jurisdictions" [17, p. 620].

11 In a House of Commons debate on 19 March 1959, Aneurin Bevan, Deputy Leader of the Labour Party and then Shadow Foreign Secretary, explicitly accused the Conservative government of using partition as a weapon to force the Cypriots into a corner. The conservative British government "was engaging at that time in a shabby trick". Its officials were "fomenting the idea of partition in Cyprus so as to drive, by fear, the Cypriots into accepting [the British government's] position". Bevan's testimony in Hansard highlights that the Cypriots accepted the independence terms—including the bases—not as a free choice, but because the alternative (partition) was presented as an imminent threat. <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/1959-03-19/debates/e972ca63-9370-410c-9982-b53762e60fdf/Cyprus>

9 However, as I argue later, though the decolonial seems to be addressing them, in reality, it is too focused on verbal issues or politics of difference and is usually translated into domestic decolonizing of how the other as a person is viewed, and not how a people or other states are treated.

Ukraine's sovereignty, while the EU's profit-seeking policies toward Türkiye ensure a persistent silence (or, at best, occasional nominal support for Cyprus) regarding the ongoing violation of Cypriot sovereignty and the illegal Turkish occupation of 37% of Cyprus territory.<sup>12</sup> Such selective sensitivities expose a structural hypocrisy within supra-national formations, demonstrating that these configurations are as capable of undesirable politics as the nation-state. A democratic façade does not equate to cosmopolitan legitimacy. Yet, students are not sensitized to such issues. No constitutional cosmopolitanism [13] qua critical commitment to the UN Charter is educationally cultivated. The eclipse of cosmopolitan justice is, therefore, not just an intellectual oversight, but a pedagogical shield that protects future citizens from recognizing complicities of their own "democratic" institutions in global illegalities.

#### 4. Cosmopolitan Justice and its Eclipse

While some educational philosophers also consider cosmopolitanism "a claim about justice" [19, p. 445], this appeal to justice remains individual- or social group-oriented. It privileges social justice over territorial-cosmopolitan justice, thereby neglecting land rights as a properly cosmopolitan rather than merely local issue. However, cosmopolitan justice involves more than recognitive justice for groups, hospitable openness to individuals across borders and global social justice (conceived as the equitable treatment of individuals worldwide); it must also encompass territorial-cosmopolitan justice for peoples and states, reflecting the principles of international right and active responsiveness to justice-relevant externalities.

Nowadays, cosmopolitanism centralizes the well-being of individuals "wherever they are located" and "distributive justice across nation-states" [20, p. 540]. The risk is, however, a reductive, self-oriented cosmopolitanism. Even Kantian cosmopolitanism becomes individualized when Kant's ideas on hospitality are severed from his broader effort to extend the social contract globally based on cosmopolitan right. The Westphalian nation-state framework, which informs

the UN Charter, upholds territorial sovereignty, precludes foreign intervention and concedes "to each state the right to determine and address inequalities within their domestic jurisdiction" [21, p. 611], is now categorically dismissed. It is replaced by a "post-Westphalian frame" for a global social justice "against maldistribution, misrecognition and misrepresentation" [21, p. 611]. Consequently, many consider nation-statehood a barrier to recognitive and global social justice. This jaundiced outlook facilitates *inter alia* a flagrant disregard for the aspirations of stateless peoples and the legitimate claims of states suffering from interventions, invasions and (neo)colonial, imperial-state policies (e.g., the forced imposition of foreign military bases). More specifically, the post-Westphalian focus on political "misframing" mainly critiques how statist boundaries structurally exclude affected outsiders from democratic representation; it sidelines justice-sensitive externalities. Expanding the democratic frame to give outsiders a voice is a communicative utopia that individualizes cosmopolitan right as a mere extension of democratic and social justice. It thus misses the fact that the roughly 2,000 Chagossians evicted from their land are not seeking a seat at the table to vote on Western foreign policies. They demand their right to return to their land, and this is no matter of inclusion in the body politic of the US or the UK (the perpetrator states).

Overall, the post-Westphalian focus on political "misframing" mainly critiques how statist boundaries structurally exclude affected outsiders from democratic representation [22]; it overlooks territorial-cosmopolitan justice while conflating misrepresentation and raw geopolitical violence. However, the problem with justice-sensitive externalities, such as military attacks or settler colonialism, is not a missing democratic representation but an illegal material aggression of one collectivity against another. Expanding the democratic frame to give outsiders a voice is a communicative utopia that individualizes global problems and disregards such externalities. By categorically dismissing the Westphalian framework as an obsolete barrier to recognitive justice, the post-Westphalian frame inadvertently disarms vulnerable populations of sovereign statehood, the only legal and institutional shield capable of defending their collective self-determination against the material operations of imperial power.

The received view on cosmopolitanism focuses on individuals [23] and on identifying the cosmopolitan self [24, p. 423]. The postmodern priority of subjectivity and relationality over collective identity mandates a dismissal of related political affects and rights. By pathologizing identity as something inflexible, essentialist and inherently tyrannical, the anti-identitarian mindset discards it or concedes it to

12 Several United Nations resolutions from both the Security Council and General Assembly have condemned the 1974 Turkish invasion and subsequent occupation of Cyprus, repeatedly declaring these actions and the resulting "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus" (TRNC) as illegal and unacceptable. Key UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolutions: 360, 541 and 550; Key UN General Assembly (UNGA) Resolutions: 3212, 3395 and 37/253. See, for instance, <https://unscr.com/en/resolutions/550/>; <https://www.gov.cy/pio/en/documents/important-general-assembly-resolutions/resolution-3212-xxix-1974/>; <https://www.cyprusun.org/?p=3929>; and <https://www.greece.org/heco1/Projects/cyprus/UNRes37253.htm>. Therefore, this point about the EU having double standards concerning invasions is no subjective grievance, but a justified critique of EU strategic interest policy. Contrast the recent EU-Türkiye "Roadmap for Cooperation" (deepening economic and security integration with Türkiye) signed in April 2026 to the EU's being vocal about international law and territorial integrity in Ukraine.

regressive opponents as their exclusive domain.<sup>13</sup> Ironically, even the most radical branches of critical GCE remain tethered to an individualist ontology that bypasses collective identity-related rights, failing to consider global conflicts through the prism of territorial-cosmopolitan justice and its challenges.

Specifically, what Vanessa Andreotti considers central in “global citizenship education” is “whether and how to address the economic and cultural roots of the inequalities in power and wealth/labour distribution in a global complex and uncertain system” [25, p. 22]. She appropriately cautions GCE about the risks of new civilizing missions, but she limits them to economics and culture, omitting geopolitics. She structurally excludes territorial, justice-sensitive externalities and their political roots. Hence, she fails to consider state asymmetries in sovereign power and deficits in territorial-cosmopolitan justice as issues that GCE should address. Andreotti’s perspective remains as individualist as that of her peers: “action is always a choice of the individual after a careful analysis of the context” [25, p. 30]. Consequently, the related critical literacy is limited to enabling learners “to reflect on their context and their own and others’ epistemological and ontological assumptions: how we came to think/be/feel/act the way we do and the implications of our systems of belief in local/global terms in relation to power, social relationships and the distribution of labour and resources” [25, p. 27].

13 However, ironically, despite the anti-identitarian spirit that refuses to attribute identities to people or acknowledge collective affect, some international scholarly events use state identity (and corresponding affiliation) precisely as ground for excluding some academics: consider as an example the ECER conference where it is stated that “ECER 2026 will not accept: any submission which is authored or co-authored by a colleague who lists an affiliation with a Russian or Belarusian university or Institution”; “any participants who are affiliated with a Russian university or institution and/or are based in Russia. The same applies for Belarus”. Thus, even an independent (non-affiliated) scholar, so long as she lives in Russia or Belarus, is excluded from the conference. <https://eera-ecer.de/ecer-annual-conference/submission-general> and <https://eera-ecer.de/ecer-annual-conference/registration-and-fees> Consider here that this stance is not toward institutions of illegal states that have been the product of military aggression (e.g., “TRNC”). It is toward UN member states which have liabilities to invasion just as Turkey, Israel or the US also have (whose institutions and academics are not excluded). Russia and Belarus are guilty also of domestic repressive politics just as some other countries (some of them allies of the West) are (whose academics are not thus excluded however). ECER excludes totally on grounds of national identity judged by NATO alliance. How do the conference organizers know that some Russian scholars are not dissidents in their country, who are now blocked also from ECER academia? Moreover, this measure operates on double standards. Why not exclude people from the US or from Israel if we are to exclude from Belarus and Russia on grounds of foreign aggression? From a cosmopolitan point of view worthy of the name, there should be no exclusions of this kind, unless the institution or its state is itself illegal; nobody should be excluded from academic events; or, if exclusions are to apply to states, then at least this application should avoid double standards and be limited only to what the UN considers a product of aggression and does not recognize as a legal state.

Like Andreotti, most scholars prioritize epistemic justice (changing how individuals think) over Westphalian justice (state rights and territorial integrity). From a liberal-universalist framework, Johannes Drerup also critiques deficits in current educational mindsets and practices [26]. However, he typically frames these as epistemic or distributive issues (who gets to speak, who is tolerated, who gets resources) rather than as territorial or military ones. No examples of the latter have so far emerged in either Andreotti’s or Drerup’s educational-political frameworks. Drerup treats rights as universal moral truths without explicitly addressing the sovereign legal structures and cosmopolitan-justice principles required to protect those rights against foreign interference. In focusing on the moral legitimacy of universalism, he bypasses the political legitimacy of statehood. Consequently, Drerup’s corpus contains extensive discussion of global justice, but no analysis of actions that undermine the very emancipatory potential of universalism (e.g., states’ attacking other states’ sovereignty, denying a people’s right to statehood, imposing foreign military bases or coercing other states’ neutrality).

Unlike these frameworks, critical pedagogy maintains a more concrete anti-imperialism. However, its focus on class can obscure territorial-cosmopolitan justice. By prioritizing class struggle as the primary or universal axis of oppression, this tradition inadvertently flattens the juridical specificities of global conflicts. Whether through the critical-pedagogical emphasis on class struggle, the decolonial call to surpass the nation-state, or the liberal-universalist abstract moral benchmarks, most educational philosophers converge in a shared silence, a form of sanctioned ignorance. They lack conceptual tools, such as justice-sensitive externalities, and a robust defense of sovereign equality and territorial integrity, required to challenge the material geopolitics of our contemporary world.

It is neither theoretically productive to further concretize this critique of what prominent scholars omit nor is it possible to prove a silence other than by identifying it and inviting the reader to disprove it.<sup>14</sup> Hence, it rests with the reader to check how rare, or even absent, are mentions of thorny issues such as the denial of the Armenian genocide, the Herero genocide compensations, the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, the Chagos<sup>15</sup> and the Cyprus issues. Even the Palestinian issue,

14 I have indicatively discussed some representative selections across the theoretical spectrum. As I cannot discuss within article-length limits what all the most influential theorists fail to theorize, I encourage the reader to consider the discursive record of educational philosophy and GCE journals. I have found no sources that either use related examples or contain the conceptual tools that are appropriate for raising, instead of erasing, these issues.

15 The recent (supposed and now frozen) solution to the Chagos issue has left the biggest island Diego Garcia under UK-US control as a military base.

despite its recent visibility, surfaces in educational discourse only through a philanthropic prism of suffering that laments its visible effects.<sup>16</sup> I am not necessarily urging scholars to take a personal stance on these examples; indeed, doing so without adequate historical knowledge can be detrimental. However, scholars should acknowledge the relevance of such cases to cosmopolitanism and GCE and the need for related key categories, such as principles of cosmopolitan right and justice-sensitive externalities. These issues are quintessential externalities precisely because the countries of our field's major contributors produce such externalities or maintain foreign policies that dictate how they are globally managed.

When cosmopolitan theory discusses justice, it remains primarily recognitive, oriented to respecting cultural others and limited to the politics of difference. For example, "by ignoring the political identities, roles, and rights of Indigenous citizens and nations in favor of framing Indigenous identity as an exclusively cultural topic", cultural cosmopolitanism "reproduces a core practice of settler colonialism—the erasure of Indigenous peoples" [27, p. 312]. Even when global publics are sensitized to problems such as their governments' aggressive or unjust foreign policies,<sup>17</sup> a rare occurrence anyway, bottom-up initiatives dissipate into demonstrations.<sup>18</sup> These effect mere psychic discharge, unwittingly legitimizing Western regimes as "democracies" that tolerate dissonance. Ultimately, the structural and legal concerns of cosmopolitan justice remain neglected.

Until a decade ago, cosmopolitanism was widely "associated with global social justice" and "the world as a moral community" [20, p. 540]. Thus, the term "global social justice" was at least on the cosmopolitan agenda; however, now even this has been abandoned. The hostility toward the state and the naïve assumption of the 1990s and 2000s that nationhood had receded [28, p. 541] eventually led to disregarding not only state-related or territorial-cosmopolitan justice but also global social justice. The hegemonic consensus in liberal circles and academia was "that national sovereignty has been transcended", empowering "deracinated populations, non-governmental organizations, and the Internet" to create a happy "multitudo fidelium" from below [28, p. 541].<sup>19</sup> Critically,

16 These are examples that I am familiar with, and I can raise them with some confidence in sustained research on them; there are very many that remain outside the purview of political education, but I am not knowledgeable about them enough to deal with them specifically. Thus, I offer here only the conceptual tools necessary for others to address them with rigor.

17 New cosmopolitanism endorses "bottom-up practices for human rights and global justice" [24, p. 424].

18 Consider here the important but futile mobilization of people against the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

19 As Brennan, who combatted such naivety, puts it, this phrase, *multitudo*

this reveals the following paradox: these culturalist, self-proclaimed cosmopolitans failed to notice, let alone theorize, major deficits in cosmopolitan justice that cosmopolitan normativity and vision should be suited to address.

The causes of this eclipse of cosmopolitan justice are complex and manifold. Some are historical and territorial, reflecting the identities of prominent promoters of cosmopolitanism. These scholars often originate from states with resolved territorial matters or with colonial pasts and mentalities that do not always enable comprehension of what it means to be stateless or colonized or suffering territorial-cosmopolitan injustices of denied principles and rights. Besides, "it does not feel good to admit" the historical burden and ongoing effects of Western colonialism [27, p. 321]; some appease their global sensibilities with the decolonial and feel comfortable with their new self-image. Conversely, cosmopolitan philosophies that maintain a sharp critical edge and invoke cosmopolitan justice may appear clunky, especially to adherents to the post-critical trend who often favour sweeping indictments of even justice-seeking educational instrumentalism.

Beneath the eclipse of territorial-cosmopolitan justice lies the Western relationship to land as a mere commodity from which one profits, especially if it is the land of others, free for the taking. "Even when land was taken unjustly from Indigenous peoples, settlers often felt angry about and opposed Indigenous land rights, which they felt posed a threat to their entitlement to private property" [27, p. 322]. This commodified relationship to land remains an unexamined substrate of Western educational philosophy, often occluding the justice claims of the rooted and the dispossessed. For the colonizer, the world is a space to move through; for the colonized, the world is a space to hold on to.

If this unconscious assumption permeates Western educational philosophy, it may find a remedy in the anti-colonial and ecological spirit of Indigenous philosophies, which explicitly address land issues. To admit theft of land is difficult and has implications that Western scholars may wish to avoid [27, p. 322]. This reluctance holds for wrongs inflicted not only in the North American context but also globally. However, even Leilani Sabzalian, who pertinently enables these optics, overlooks their significance for cosmopolitanism and GCE. She demonstrates how Indigenous sovereignty is erased in citizenship education, without detecting this erasure within GCE or wider cosmopolitan discourses. Sabzalian argues that knowledge "about land, treaty rights, sovereignty, trust relationships and responsibilities—should be seen as central to democratic citizenship education and

*fidelium*, sums up the influential, and completely disproved, vision of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri [2000] in their book *Empire*) [28, p. 541].

educating an informed citizenry" (Sabzalian, 2019, 325). I argue that this knowledge is equally vital for GCE.

From 1945 to roughly 1992, global space was understood as the terrain of interstate interaction [20]. "As the Cold War ended", many scholars "envisioned a Kantian future of perpetual peace", anchored in a strengthened United Nations system [29, pp. 226-227]. While decolonization solidified the normative status of cosmopolitan right and territorial integrity, a parallel trend emerged: Western scholars started questioning and historicizing the nation as a modern construct, without noticing that their foci remained their own localities, which were in fact empires rather than nation-states. Interestingly, while Western academia was aspiring to deconstruct the nation-state, much of the world was still trying to secure a state as a prerequisite for justice. Hence the "eclipse": in a reflex reaction that preserved the imperial mindset, the West began theorizing a world without borders exactly when the dispossessed were finally claiming theirs [4].

From the early 1990s until 2010, the emphasis shifted to individual boundary crossings and the global interconnectivity of diverse networks. The global became associated with "economic relations, political imperatives, and social and cultural flows", whereas the local (e.g., inter-communal relations and environmental crises) preoccupies "global policy, politics and regional realignments" [20, p. 542]. Many important critiques of the unchecked latitude of state sovereignty have been articulated from this new global-space framework. However, I argue, critics overlook the fact that states remain key to cosmopolitan projects that address economic, ecological and territorial injustices. Educators "interested in social justice look primarily at race, class, and gender issues" regarding "economic and social opportunities or access"; they overlook "our interdependence with a more than human world as more than an add-on category" [24, p. 429]. The focus on race, class, and gender often reflects the detachment from the land, treating justice as a matter of individual access rather than territorial/ecological stability.<sup>20</sup> As Sabzalian [27, p. 319] warns, the trend to "denationalize" citizenship by discussing "global," "transnational," "postnational," or "cosmopolitan" citizenships beyond the nation-state compounds "the erasure of Indigenous citizenship and nationhood within citizenship literature". This erasure operates against Indigenous citizenship, but also more broadly against the powerless.

The point is that regardless of how hard contemporary

20 In this transition from the institutional to the flow-based global space, the cosmopolitan right, once anchored in territorial integrity, now dissipates into a vague set of ethical "flows", leaving no clear theoretical framework for addressing territorial grievances.

theory may have struggled with the legacies of modern cosmopolitanism, it has failed to theorize cosmopolitanism beyond individualism, the Cartesian centrality of the self,<sup>21</sup> the liberal conception of groups as the sum-total of individuals and the figure of the mobile burgher as detached from the land, collective affects and shared identities.<sup>22</sup>

## 5. Expanding Education

Justice-relevant externalities illustrate the need for examining: (a) territorial-cosmopolitan justice; (b) the normative interdependence of the national and the international; and (c) the expansion of educational cosmopolitanism and GCE. Concerning (a), for state policies to be just, a consideration of the legitimate interests of outsiders is essential [17, p. 614]. This is the province of territorial-cosmopolitan justice.<sup>23</sup> Recognizing "the centrality of justice-sensitive externalities" helps us understand not only "the limits of national constitutional authority and the purpose of international law" [17, p. 617] but also what lies beyond social justice. Concerning (b), the premise that "national sovereigns can claim no legitimate authority to address questions involving justice-sensitive externalities unilaterally" [17, p. 613] is self-evident and requires no further elaboration. It serves as a bridge to (c), to which I now turn.

Educational philosophy is remarkably silent concerning the justice-sensitive external effects of state policies, especially when these originate from the philosophers' own states. Cosmopolitanism typically emphasizes the existential power of individuals "to construe their lives as their own projects" and imagines "a global moral environment where more and more might know their lives as their own achievement" [29, p. 226]. Even when philosophy revisits the old cosmopolitan ideal of human beings (regardless of national, religious, cultural, or political affiliations) becoming "members of the same community" [1, p. 50], it preserves individualism. It evokes a "cosmopolitan" ethos of "coming generations holding global citizenships and forms of symbolic capital" (Strand, 50). Beyond other shortcomings, this cosmopolitanism engenders, I argue, a total privatization of the self-determination principle, dissociating it from cosmopolitan right and *geo-politics*.<sup>24</sup>

21 Thus, much cosmopolitan theory has treated the global citizen as a "mind" detached from a "body" (and thus detached from the land the body occupies).

22 On the faulty liberal reduction of groups to aggregates or associations, see Young [7].

23 The territorial-cosmopolitan justice is one aspect of cosmopolitan justice. Other aspects of cosmopolitan justice (such as the economic, ethical, political, ecological, historical, legal and existential ones) are also relevant to geo-politics and in a complex interplay with the territorial aspect [14].

24 I italicize *geo-* in "*geo-politics*" to evoke the doubleness that I have discussed elsewhere [32], namely, the standard sense of *geo-politics* but

Thus, Kant's cosmopolitanism is reduced to the cosmopolitan right to hospitality of individuals as strangers within the philosophers' territories, obscuring Kant's collectivity-relevant, legal cosmopolitanism concerning a justice that would regulate interstate relations. The individualization of cosmopolitanism is also evident in the educational-philosophical borrowings from Derrida which, despite their value, focus exclusively on asylum seekers, refugees and immigrants. Inadvertently, this focus has reinforced a methodological nationalism that makes the domestic space the sole arena of contestation; others garner interest only when they reach our shores [30] or, at most, when they are NATO allies in conflict with NATO enemies [31]. The anti-cosmopolitan implications of this methodological nationalism have remained unperceived and thus unchallenged by most educational philosophers. Ultimately, school "cosmopolitanism" becomes, to adapt Brennan's apt parlance, a "self-congratulatory open-mindedness" fetishizing "an otherness that is only nominally so because it shares many of the same middle-class sensibilities" [28, p. 542].

Still, some scholars engage with the visceral realities that others face. Some explore how these should redirect our philosophical focus [33] and our classroom dialogues [34]. However, this focus centers on "widespread human suffering" viewed "through an anti-/post-/decolonial lens" and taught philosophically via "a critical phenomenological approach" [33, p. 15]. There is no mention of cosmopolitan rights, even though the case discussed is Gaza. The affordances and limitations of such approaches illuminate a broad omission in Western political education and a failure to engage with world issues before they produce visible bloodshed and subsequent discomfort or tensions in Western public spaces and classrooms. Likewise, Aslandur and Kroll's paper focuses "on the consequences of the [Gaza] war for the debate in Germany and how these impact the pedagogical practices of teachers and civic educators" [33, p. 121]; my translation from the German original). The article proceeds by increasingly psychologizing and individualizing the Palestinian issue, confining its relevance to pragmatic challenges of classroom dialogue. Finally, normative principles are treated as mere subjective constructs for students to form individually.

The decades-long denial to Palestinians of their right to statehood does not surface in these articles, which consider only the recent situation. Both papers indirectly confirm the suspicion that an international-right conflict becomes dialogue material only when it produces televised bloodshed. It is viewed exclusively from an affective perspective at the expense of the ethico-political dimensions that would enable perception of Western justice-sensitive externalities that

predated October 7. Like most other Western readings of contemporary Gaza events, these articles treat the genealogy of the problem as mere prehistory to what seemingly begins with October 7 as "history proper". Likewise, within the confines of a social- or distributive-justice perspective, if the primary goal is framed as justice in terms of resource allocation, human rights baselines, or economic aid, it effectively transforms Palestinians from an occupied nation seeking sovereign independence into a deprived population seeking a better welfare or human rights regime. This can inadvertently legitimize a paternalistic, subaltern status quo by prioritizing material well-being over collective political agency.

"The current pause in fighting in Gaza (as of this writing) marks a period to reflect on the horror that has been happening there: a once-unthinkable genocide and the ongoing threat of a regional war that portends even more devastation" [33, p. 15]. From the missing ethico-political perspective, however, this interlude marks a period for reflecting precisely on what a ceasefire means for the fate of a people's fundamental rights. By reducing Gaza to a purely ethical problem of stopping bloodshed, Palestine as an ethico-political issue of cosmopolitan right becomes totally eclipsed. Psychological, cultural and ethical prisms on such issues are important, but not exclusively so. They should be combined with ethico-political and legal ones of territorial-cosmopolitan justice and justice-sensitive externalities in a stereoscopic optic [14]. Otherwise, cosmopolitanism degenerates into an individualist, instrumentalist defense of self-determination, namely, the claim that "Palestinians need a state because it is the most efficient instrument to protect their human rights and distribute resources". This leaves open a dangerous, paternalistic loophole: if an occupying power or an international body could somehow guarantee perfect human rights and economic prosperity to Palestinians without granting them a state, the cosmopolitan instrumental defense of statehood collapses, failing to meet the anti-colonial vision of a people's political agency. Through an anti-colonial prism, the right to be a self-governing political community, subject to fulfilling requisite criteria, such as a territorial democratic majority principle untainted by demographic manipulation or imperial gerrymandering, is foundational. It cannot be bought off, compensated for, or substituted by distributive justice, foreign aid, or civil rights within a subaltern framework. This does not guarantee that sovereignty will always be exercised in just ways, any more than such an outcome is ever guaranteed for those communities that already enjoy the right to statehood.

It is certainly no small feat to be attuned to suffering and the shock effect it produces for western global publics and multikulti classrooms. However, despite these commendable intentions and interventions, such approaches to global

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also the politics revolving around earth and ecology.

conflicts evade geopolitics, rights to self-determination and arguments against settler colonialism. These remain outside the purview of philosophy (inter alia educational) and outside of classroom dialogue. When the focus on the visible and glaring suffering is exclusive, the related educational challenge is confined to how we speak about the other and how the other's trials affect our feelings and composure. The related global conflict passes our filters ethicized, emotivized and psychologized. In the case of Azada-Palacios and of Aslandur and Kroll's articles, missing is the attention to the epistemic substratum of geopolitics, and territorial-cosmopolitanism is entirely missing; this oversight prevents the perception and critique of justice-sensitive externalities before the conflict escalates into shocking news headlines.

The authority to decide issues of justice regarding a people is neither easily claimed nor easily earned. As such, the topic is inherently difficult and complex: for example, territorial integrity may protect an oppressive regime; or territorial stability may conflict with a defensible claim to secession. What validates a community as a "people" may involve ethnic affect, or a distinct national consciousness bound to a specific geography, or a long historical process transforming land into a meaningful place. This complexity, however, does not justify rendering some people a "state of exception" by forcing them into statelessness or by condoning illegal occupation of their land; nor should it operate as an alibi for philosophical disengagement with such cases. Similarly, it is invalid to condone unilateral aggressive action against states, in violation of international law, on the grounds of their bad human rights record; the negative implications of actions that transcend sanctions or international pressure to involve aggressive war are too many to recount here. The intricacies of these issues have been explored by a niche within political philosophy, with Margaret Moore and Avery Kolers as major representatives; however, whether the post-Westphalian views in this vein (including those of Anna Stilz and Cara Nine) dispense with colonial logics lies outside the scope of this article. For instance, Allen Buchanan's theory is highly problematic in this regard, as it can be weaponized by powerful states to validate or invalidate sovereignty selectively. What matters here is that precisely due to its complexity, territorial-cosmopolitan justice requires a corresponding political and legal literacy that is still missing in *Bildung* theory, in schools and in wider society. Regrettably, understanding geopolitics is also a rarity within our field and beyond. Many educational philosophers lack foundational knowledge inter alia because the affected outsiders possess neither equal standing in domestic policy formation nor opportunities for epistemic justice. By engaging with cosmopolitan justice and justice-sensitive externalities, I argue, cosmopolitan education and GCE can be expanded according to the following rationale, which prepares students and future citizens to harken to

such outsiders.

To "avoid doing injustice" states must consider justice-sensitive externalities when drafting national policies [17, p. 613] and exercise self-restraint, especially since such issues are rarely resolved by supra-national institutions. However, this requires citizens to understand themselves "as something more than just participants in a practice of national self-government" concerned only with domestic constituents (614). Citizens must be prepared to accept that international right should guide foreign policy, restrict state authority and ground a system of international law<sup>25</sup> that decrees cosmopolitan justice. Furthermore, they should be legally literate, vigilant and virtuous enough to demand that this system not reflect the expansionist politics of powerful global players, especially when such global payers are their own countries. This necessitates attention to the epistemics of what counts as justice and how an injustice is proven through compelling argument. Appropriate learning is required, alongside a pedagogy of commitment to knowledge, truth and discursive and epistemic justice beyond domestic affairs. Such requirements have escaped the eye of canonical cosmopolitan education. The vague plea for knowledge of the world elides the necessary knowledge about the justice-sensitive externalities of powerful countries [35] and the concrete material mechanisms of power. This remains true even of frameworks that ostensibly extend the boundaries of justice globally, such as Martha Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach (see, e.g., [36]). Despite its call to include marginalized populations beyond state borders within the scope of ethical concern, such a framework remains fundamentally distributive and individualist. It limits global justice to a matter of ensuring individual human beings worldwide cross a minimum threshold of central capabilities. Thereby, this approach privatizes capabilities or avoids expanding the notion to uneven power among communities and states. Furthermore, it fails to theorise the precise legal-political constraints required to prohibit powerful states from exporting externalities or to defend the collective, territorial sovereignty of vulnerable peoples.

An analogous conceptual deficit prioritises individual ethics over structural right within Kwame Anthony Appiah's celebrated model of "rooted" cosmopolitanism. By reducing cosmopolitanism to a conversational ethos of cultural contamination, hospitality, and shared human values, Appiah's framework also privatizes ethical debts; like Nussbaum's, it treats cosmopolitan justice as social justice writ large, a justice to the individual qua citizen of the world. This outlook relies on a Nietzschean forgetfulness of dead

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25 A system of international law "would have to provide an impartial and appropriately participatory procedure to resolve these issues in a way that is reasonable and justifiable to all concerned" [17, p. 617].

metaphors, mistakenly treating the figure of the “citizen of the world” as a self-evident ethical baseline rather than a legally vacant construct. This culturalist focus also elides the material asymmetries of international law, remaining silent on the macro-level, material violence of territorial theft, military occupations, and the exported justice-sensitive externalities that systematically harm collectivities beyond the social sphere of the state.

“Given disagreement over questions of justice”, appropriately structured procedures are required for weighing the validity of claims to justice. “The alternative would be to have the more powerful side dictate and enforce its conception of justice against the weaker side” [17, p. 615]. This alternative is ethico-politically unacceptable, though it remains, regrettably, a pragmatic reality that is likely to intensify in the wake of Trump’s Board of Peace. Still, no procedure, regardless of how decolonial-minded it may be, guarantees that even well-informed and appropriately disposed actors will perceive an injustice, let alone combat it. Equally crucial are the material causes of injustice that typically remain operative during negotiations. Decolonial educational philosophy misses that these are irreducible to ideological causes.

I illustrate this complex point by critiquing Walter Mignolo’s cosmopolitanism. Mignolo theorizes decolonial cosmopolitanism as an option in synergy and tension with others, such as liberal, Marxist, and postmodern cosmopolitanisms [37]. Among the merits for educational philosophy is that the decolonial lens prevents “liberal convictions from ignoring historical inequalities” [38, p. 14]. However, Mignolo’s analysis focuses on differences, specifically, on how imperial and colonial differences have been invented or preserved through Eurocentric cosmopolitanism, rather than directly on injustice; thus, the related pathologies are attributed to imperial/colonial handlings of difference. Consequently, the facile, underlying assumption is that justice-sensitive negative externalities are reducible to how we view difference: as if material dispossession and territorial aggression would miraculously dissolve through an epistemic shift alone, or as if related injustices would simply disappear if colonial difference were overcome.

Hence, Mignolo’s intellectual universe implies a communicative utopia where complexity is reduced to “dialogue among civilizations” [37]. The underlying principle of his cosmopolitan localism is that no human being or country possesses the right to dominate another. Thus, decolonial cosmopolitanism accommodates the democratic principle of collective self-determination. However, Mignolo sets as the sole precondition of cosmopolitanism the construction of a world where imperial and colonial differences are erased.

This blithely reduces aggression solely to ideological causes, mistaking the rationalizations of expansion for its structural causes. Ultimately, this move dematerializes global conflicts and mystifies the structural economic drivers of global injustice, such as profit and power.

Such causes are irreducible to mere politics of superiority; neutralizing them requires far more than the dialogical erasure of imperial and colonial differences. Instead, it demands a radical overhaul of the current power-and-profit-driven politics that produce such injustices. Therefore, cosmopolitan justice transcends the existential and cultural enrichment of the mobile self, insofar as it concerns the responsibilities not just of one individual for another, but of collectivities for other collectivities, and, ultimately, for the natural world. Political education must be expanded to encompass all these dimensions to avoid the implicitly racialized conceptual gatekeeping that perpetuates the eclipse of cosmopolitan justice in its theory and practice. Geopolitical complexities seldom disrupt our educational-political discourses or GCE priorities. *Bildung* is not theorized as an all-round *paideia* that offers this kind of cosmopolitan literacy. To illustrate the need for expanding cosmopolitan educational philosophy toward cosmopolitan justice and justice-sensitive externalities, I turn below to a recent critical intervention.

## 6. Educational Philosophy and a Specific Externality

The multiple issues of justice that arise from negative externalities of national or global policies are largely bypassed in educational philosophy. As I indicated in a previous section, this neglect is attested by how rarely such issues surface in oft-cited educational-theoretical publications. Invasions, military occupations and ongoing violations of human rights have been ignored even by cosmopolitan philosophers [31]. Instead, educational philosophy typically draws its themes and examples from the range of issues over which the state of the philosopher can plausibly claim legitimate authority. A rare exception to this trend is a recent collective paper on Gaza. However, as with the Azada-Palacios [33] and the Aslandur and Kroll [34] articles, much in Davids et al. illuminates precisely the extent to which cosmopolitan justice is eclipsed in our field. Even a brief, indicative deliberation reveals how educational philosophy addresses, or fails to address, justice-sensitive externalities, as exemplified by the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Although the collective paper concerns Gaza, namely, a paramount justice-sensitive negative externality squarely within the province of territorial-cosmopolitan justice, neither cosmopolitanism nor self-determination principles and other such concepts surface in it. Indeed, these terms are absent from the text, save for a single contribution. The concept of occupation appears in only four contributions,

and fewer still couch the issue within the international relations framework. Instead, a humanitarian or domestic social justice idiom dominates. The Palestinian people have engaged in decades-long anti-colonial struggles, all alone, to claim their right to statehood, but educational philosophers failed to heed the message, not enough even to acknowledge this claim. As one contributor implies, in grappling with Gaza, the West fails to repoliticize human rights. Worse, some contributors ponder whether Gaza is a legitimate topic, without asking themselves: would they pose this question concerning educational-philosophical articles discussing “Black Lives Matter” without deeming such scepticism as subtly or overtly racist?<sup>26</sup> Would they controversialize the educational engagement with hate speech without fearing the charge of racism? Even this performativity of pondering the educational-philosophical suitability of the topic (regardless of concluding that it is suitable) is the epitome of unperceived discrimination. Had they valued territorial-cosmopolitan justice as they value social justice, they would have taken the suitability of Palestine (and not just Gaza)<sup>27</sup> to educational-philosophical discussion as self-evident and set out to discuss the issue head-on.

In his response to Davids, Gert Biesta<sup>28</sup> overlooked my points regarding territorial-cosmopolitan justice and the self-determination principle. Eclipsed for far too long, cosmopolitan justice and its principles remain incomprehensible or unnoticed in educational-theoretical debates. Thus, Biesta predictably claimed that my “blunt critique” failed to identify the idiom that I considered missing. He stated that educational-philosophical discourses are richer and wider than I implied, without providing any textual evidence of where and when this purported diversity produced substantive analysis concerning the Palestinian issue prior to its televised bloodshed. Nor did he cite sources that employ the conceptual tools of territorial-cosmopolitan justice and related principles of international right for analysing such justice-sensitive externalities – a citation that would indeed prove that I wrongly detected a lacuna of such sources. Biesta’s commentary ultimately confirms that my implicit claim about the field’s structural aversion to engaging with “geopolitics” when discussing global conflicts

was not a gratuitous or blunt polemical insult, but a sober description. Hopefully, the reader has, through the present article, found me less obscure concerning the subtle racisms beneath the eclipse of cosmopolitan justice.

Let me clarify to the reader who still finds me obscure why it is implicitly racist to omit consideration of the principles and rights to collective self-determination that most Western populations enjoy – while others do not due to Western foreign policies. Many Western scholars who reside in countries where self-determination, territorial integrity, and sovereignty are taken for granted systematically elide, in their cosmopolitan theories, these same necessities for others who meet all the democratic criteria for statehood. By ignoring self-determination, these scholars overlook the fact that human rights are practically unenforceable without a sovereign state to guarantee them. Failing to advocate for the statehood of others, while living under the legal and military protection of one’s own, constitutes a paternalistic double standard. It implies the premise that the West has supposedly outgrown the state, while stateless peoples who fulfil territorial criteria should just skip that foundational stage of security and move straight into a global space where they possess no legal standing. This selective application of universal principles stems from a subtle racism, one that implies certain populations lack the inherent maturity to exercise full sovereignty.

Likewise, scholars remain indifferent to the plight of smaller nations unable to resist foreign tutelage without facing vindictive political or economic retaliation from the powers that imposed it. Despite the gravity of such coercion, these thinkers rarely consider such structural violence a relevant topic for cosmopolitanism or GCE. By experiencing Western sovereignty as an absolute right while viewing the autonomy of others as conditional, they reinforce a paternalistic hierarchy rooted in colonial-era prejudice. To sanitize or consider irrelevant to cosmopolitanism the fact that a Chagossian<sup>29</sup> is forced by major Western global players into an existential position that the philosophers of those very players will never find themselves in is the height of subtle racism. Ultimately, it is subtly racist to live comfortably with such pervasive double standards and to assume that the other is less deserving of rights than oneself.

The West lectures on politics while remaining undisturbed by the military and political leverage it deploys to exercise its own sovereignty as profit made or power enjoyed at the expense of others. Predictably, when the universal is defined by those whose statehood is never under

26 In his contribution to Davids et al. (2025, 972), George Yancy astutely applies the lens of racism to the treatment of both Palestinians and Black people, suggesting homologies of suffered catastrophe without conflating differences in the corresponding cases of dehumanization.

27 And, of course, of all other conflicts across the globe that invite considerations of international relations and international law.

28 He writes about my contribution: “Rather than suggesting that ‘we need to change our idioms’ it could have been more helpful if she had given an indication of what such changed idioms might look like or, even better, acknowledge the existence of a much wider range of educational scholarship than what she seems to include in her delineation of the ‘we’ she is critical of” (Biesta, in Davids et al., 2025, 985).

29 Notably, this happens not because of difference per se, namely, because the other is Chagossian or Palestinian or whatever, but because the other stands on the way to profit- or power-operations.

threat, the specific legal right to self-determination of peoples becomes a secondary concern. Consequently, both the post-national decolonizer and the liberal-universalist participate in this neglect of territorial-cosmopolitan justice, thereby ignoring the material necessity of sovereign statehood for non-Western peoples.

This dynamic extends directly into educational philosophy and the school, where thorny global issues, such as the coercion of smaller nations, limited sovereignty and denied (though merited) statehood, remain strictly outside the scope of academic concern or classroom practice. Simultaneously, some EU policy documents lecture other nations from a position of moral superiority [31,39], frequently reproaching foreign curricula for lacking “cosmopolitanism.” However, the cosmopolitanism they champion is typically limited to the cultural consumption of the mobile elite or, at most, to a nominal respect for alterity. Such sanctimonious rhetoric ignores the glaring voids within Western domestic education, which fails to acquaint younger generations with their own countries’ complicity in creating or perpetuating international crises. This discrepancy illustrates a profound Eurocentric bias, positioning the West as a universal teacher exempt from the very scrutiny it imposes on others. By framing Western standards as the global benchmark, these philosophers perform a subtle racism, treating non-Western others not as equal partners meriting the same rights, but as subjects in need of enlightened correction.<sup>30</sup>

So long as educational philosophy keeps cosmopolitan justice and its principles at bay, it operates – unwittingly and despite its scathing attacks on Trump<sup>31</sup> as a figure and Trumpism as ideology – as a secret accomplice of Trump’s extreme, person-centric global governance. The Trump Board of Peace (BoP),<sup>31</sup> envisioned as a revisionist alternative to the UN, advances a normative reshaping of the international system established after WWII, evoking post-colonial “states of exception” where the powerful are legitimized to trample over international law. Fundamental principles and the prohibitions against violations of state sovereignty and territorial integrity are absent from its Charter. The BoP negates the principle of collective institutional equality central to Kant-inspired legal cosmopolitanism. By institutionalizing the purchase of permanent membership, the BoP replaces equality with pure economic power. Lacking the territorial-cosmopolitan idiom, mainstream educational

philosophy remains ill-equipped to deconstruct this model.

While the BoP Charter ostensibly observes international law, it lacks accountability mechanisms and relies entirely on the interpretive authority of the board’s president. International law is thus transformed from a binding framework into a rhetorical discourse of legitimation aimed at producing “best practices” for the swift achievement of *pax romana*. Peace remains a technical program of management for avoiding friction (as it regrettably happens in many peace education discourses), rather than representing a political and multilayered process for cosmopolitan justice and its restorative dimensions. Constituted outside the United Nations, the BoP is not subject to a General Assembly or an International Court of Justice. It aspires to manage international crises and impose conflict resolution globally à la Trump’s Gaza “solution”. It reproduces imperialist patterns under the guise of effectiveness and supports external interventions for the management of “problematic” regions. Because educational philosophy has largely followed trends that sideline the UN and its Charter or tarnish national identity and incriminate territorial integrity and state-sovereignty wholesale, it now lacks the normative tools to resist Trump’s model.

By operating outside the UN framework, the BoP will create more problems and new conflicts, proving catastrophic for the rights of most peoples and nations. It reinforces an absolutist international order that, if normalized, politically returns us to the 19th century. During that era, the principle of self-determination was unknown; territories were ceded, bought or leased without the consent of their populations (e.g., Alaska and Cyprus). However, the recent shift constitutes no simple regression to classical imperialism. The BoP’s legitimacy is managerial rather than explicitly racial or cultural; indeed, given that many nations of the Global South have already been invited to join it, no issue of blatant exclusion arises here. This further demonstrates that the traditional critique of racism or exclusions as the usual suspects of creating unequal representation in global decision-making is insufficient. Within this contemporary context, it becomes imperative to finally consider the more material causes of injustice and the cosmopolitan educational literacy that enables perception of them. Developments like the BoP have been prepared, *inter alia*, by the academic indifference toward cosmopolitan justice and by related complicities that have contributed to a propitious intellectual climate for such shifts.

## Conclusion

The traction of cosmopolitan justice that was noticeable in theory just after WWII has waned. The contemporary retrieval of cosmopolitanism often reflects a relational

30 Cosmopolitan justice-related conceptual tools are key to critiquing current cosmopolitan educational and GCE theory, which focus on terms like alterity, difference, and complicity, though not on collective self-determination, territorial integrity, sovereign equality and the right to neutrality (relevant to the military base example). Thus, even within critical frameworks, a subtle racism persists through a conceptual vacuum.

31 <https://www.timesofisrael.com/full-text-charter-of-trumps-board-of-peace/>

ontology which, despite its merits, is articulated in the furthest remove from the political sphere of human rights (a sphere constitutive of cosmopolitan justice) or operates occasionally in open hostility to it. Most cosmopolitans fall into such complicities when exploring (or failing to explore) global injustices or unresolved problems of international right. Even the turn to rooted cosmopolitanism has taken on a culturalist tint, thereby neglecting the territorial dimensions of cosmopolitan justice [40].

The trend in citizenship discourses to move beyond national identities problematically misses the fact that Indigenous peoples “have not yet been afforded the respect and recognition as nations within” [27, p. 320]. By focusing on ethics and cultural identity or on anti-identitarianism, post-structuralist and decolonial education scholars have abandoned the legal and political tools (like sovereignty and self-determination) that confront global power asymmetries. Instead, they have exalted an abstract ethical openness, thus depriving non-Western populations of the very political tools that the West and its allies deploy to secure their own interests. Scholars criticize the colonial nature of the state, failing to distinguish the imperial-state from the vulnerable nation-state, while ignoring that, for the powerless, sovereignty is the only legal shield against global power geopolitics and the state of nature that such geopolitics perpetuates.

Against such trends, I have pointed out a corrective. By grounding cosmopolitanism in geopolitical realism and “ec-centric” self-reflection and action, I have, in previous work [41], articulated the need to overcome abstract moralizing to directly confront the unresolved conflicts and power asymmetries that define our world. Building upon this baseline, I now defend the necessity of incorporating geopolitics, history, and international relations into the heart of cosmopolitan educational philosophy. GCE cannot exist in a vacuum that ignores the sovereignty and self-determination of others; instead, it must reckon with the very thorny geopolitical realities, from military impositions to historical grievances, that Western theorists so often choose to overlook.

Cosmopolitan educational philosophy tends to confer a cosmopolitan identity as a badge while perceiving justice in ways that unjustifiably alleviate some of the Western citizen's political burdens and tasks of resistance. By implication, others are deprived of the benefits and rights that a more demanding cosmopolitanism would grant them. As educational philosophy stands, it lacks the conceptual tools to address cosmopolitan justice and related externalities that go beyond cultural issues. It has not borrowed these tools, or as I prefer to argue, it has not exapted them from disciplines such as international law studies. Thereby, it remains trapped in methodological nationalism. One cause

of this entrapment may be a subtle, unconscious racism, one that construes conflicts as bicomunal impasses of cumbersome and regressive, nationalist others locked in a developmental stage that the northwestern spaces have long surpassed [31]. Against its methodological nationalism, cosmopolitan Bildung must be enriched with legal and political literacy on justice-sensitive externalities. Otherwise, its claimed methodological cosmopolitanism will remain nominal, a mere declaration untranslatable into a concrete commitment of practical intent. Territorial-cosmopolitan justice allows a cosmopolitan identity to be rooted rather than rootless. A better enacted, more demanding rooted cosmopolitanism should acknowledge cosmopolitan justice as both a normative framework and a legitimate topic of educational engagement.

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