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KANT'S TRUST IN THE POLITICAL VALUE OF LABOUR AND GLOBAL MOBILITY. A NON-IDEAL ACCOUNT OF COSMOPOLITAN NORMATIVITY¹

ABSTRACT

This account first endorses the normative strength of Kant's cosmopolitan right, even if it is not lacking in non-ideal traits, and then takes issue with Flikschuh's well-known interpretation of what she labels Kant's "dilemma of sovereignty". Second, I tease out some of the non-ideal features underpinning Kant's cosmopolitanism with the help of the Kantian theory of labour, which in turn helps reveal the material conditions behind the qualifications of the subject who in Kant's view is able to move through the world. Finally, I draw some conclusions about the advantages of a non-ideal approach for upgrading the normative value of global mobility in Kant's juridical philosophy.

KEYWORDS

Kant, cosmopolitanism, labour, citizenship, non-ideal approach.

My paper will first claim that the lack of *enforceability* in Kant's cosmopolitan right should not be understood as a normative flaw, but rather as a key feature for orientating contemporary discussions about the human right to live on earth and be respectfully treated on a global scale. My account will thus endorse the normative strength of Kant's cosmopolitan right, even if it is not lacking in non-ideal traits, and will take issue with Flikschuh's well-known interpretation of what she labelled as Kant's "dilemma of sovereignty" (Flikschuh

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2010). In my discussion of Flikschuh, I engage in a dialogue with interpreters such as Pinheiro Walla (2016), Huber (2019) and Davies (2020), who in recent papers have highlighted the role that the legal features of community play in Kant's political philosophy. Second, I will tease out some of the non-ideal features underpinning Kant's cosmopolitanism with the help of the Kantian theory of labour, which will help to reveal the material conditions behind the qualifications of the subject who in Kant's view is able to move through the world. In this second section I will take into account recent papers by Pascoe (2022), Davies (2021) and Vrousalis (2022), who deem Kant's appraisal of work helpful for outlining the epistemic and economic dependence structures that challenge the universality of the republican claim to civil independence. I will also touch on Huseynzadegan (2022), who in a recent paper addresses Kant's cosmopolitan mobility from a non-ideal standpoint, taking inspiration from Charles Mills' *black radical Kantianism* as a "plot twist" in the contemporary interpretation of Kant. Finally, I will draw some conclusions about the advantages of a non-ideal approach for upgrading the normative value of global mobility in Kant's juridical philosophy.

The Normative Scope of Kant's Cosmopolitan Right

My argumentation will be based on a widely known excerpt from the DR, in which Kant claims that cosmopolitan right belongs to the corpus of legal normativity for reasons of systematicity and thus openly refuses to reduce it to a well-intentioned philanthropy.² An example might be the following:

Since the earth's surface is not limited but closed, the concepts of the right of a state and of a right of nations lead inevitably to the idea of a *right for all nations* (*ius gentium*) or *cosmopolitan right* (*ius cosmopolitanicum*). So if the principle of outer freedom limited by law is lacking in any of these three possible forms of rightful condition, the framework of all the others is unavoidably undermined and must finally collapse. (RL § 43, 6: 311)

This text encourages a full development of all the layers of the rightful condition for the normative cohesion of right. In this vein, Flikschuh's stance on cosmopolitan duties stresses their systematic function and legal authority. Yet, in my view, her argument overstates the fact that these duties are not enforceable by laws ensuing from the right of the state, as they respond to a supra-national juridical sphere, and claims that this lack of coercion would consequently diminish their power. My account opposes this as I consider that the character of cosmopolitan right does not entail any weakness with regard to international relations among states. Moreover, cosmopolitan values do not assume that only a national lawgiver and executive power can provide a creditable

² This claim also appears in the presentation of the third definitive article of perpetual peace. See PP (8: 357): "As in the foregoing articles, we are here concerned not with philanthropy, but with right".

embodiment of rightful authority. On the contrary, interpreters such as Pinheiro Walla (2016), Huber (2019) and Davies (2020) note the positive effects that Kant's cosmopolitan principles imply for humanity, even if they cannot count on the support of an earth-encompassing lawgiver for their fulfilment. In my view, Flikschuh's systematic approach overstates the alleged superiority of statist sovereignty, watering down the value of the factual interaction that subjects have shown around the world and throughout history, even if – as I will discuss later – this exchange is burdened by strong gender and racial biases. She therefore wrongly limits the role that cosmopolitan sovereignty plays in Kant's writings by neglecting the value of issuing legal norms for regulating global mobility and for rightfully ruling on the acceptance or refusal of foreigners at ports and coasts around the world.³ In contrast to a partially Hobbesian outline of the lawgiver's authority in Kant's political philosophy, I agree with Huber (2019) when he suggests that *hope* is a key value in Kant's cosmopolitan guidelines. Indeed, the section of the *Doctrine of Right* that focuses on cosmopolitan right denounces the violence and abuses historically committed by “citizens of the world” (RL § 62, 6: 353) as they attempted to engage in *commercium* with distant peoples and “to visit all the regions of the earth” (ibid.). Yet it also affirms that these damages “cannot annul” (ibid.) the normative force of cosmopolitan right. In contrast with the entangled origins of all public authority, Kant chooses a straightforward argument for claiming the potential rightfulness of human global interaction. In fact, the interaction that comes with global mobility occurs in the public eye, where the authority of cosmopolitan bonds is unconcealed. Thus, the *communio possessionis originaria*, i.e. the proof of the postulate of practical reason, which enables the entitlements of non-physical possession in the sphere of private right, is an *a priori* condition displayed by the finitude of the earth, and not the effect of a coercion adopted for ending the violence that prevails in the state of nature. The authority of the *communio possessionis originaria* thus fulfils a key role in the private right. In a well-known text pertaining to private right in DR (§ 13) Kant inserts an interesting preliminary remark to his theory of property:

all human beings are originally (i.e. prior to any act of choice that establishes a right) in a possession of land that is in conformity with right, that is, they have a right to be wherever nature or chance (apart from their will) has placed them. (RL § 13, 6: 262)

In other similar texts Kant deals also with the common possession of the earth as an openly empirical fact ensuing from the embodied and finite condition of human beings, whose contact with others forces them to adopt a

3 An opposite and in my view inspiring interpretation of this somewhat concealed source of legal normativity in Kant appears in Pinheiro Walla (2016: 175–176), when she addresses the legal authority of the *lex iusti* in Kant's DR (6: 251) and in Davies (2020: 333–334), who highlights the gap between “juridical duties” and “general duties of right” as the *honeste vive* principle.

rightful condition.⁴ There is thus no mystery in this enlarged possession, since Kant recognizes the ambiguity embedded in the word *community* [*Gemeinschaft*] and thus affirms in the first *Critique* that different substances sharing the same space should be considered as an instance of *commercium*, and thus “as a dynamical community, without which even the local community (*communio spatii*) could never be empirically cognized” (KrV, A213/B 260). Taraborrelli (2019: 19) has recently added a helpful conceptual nuance for further examining how this dynamic community of earth dwellers develops. As she highlights, Kant points out in Refl. N. 1170 that a “citizen of the earth” [*Erdbürger*] can be either a “son of the earth” [*Erdensohn*] or a “citizen of the world” [*Weltbürger*] (Refl. n. 1170, 15: 517),⁵ and as such drawn to differing interests and conducts. Taraborrelli suggests that Kant’s cosmopolitan claims must meet both conditions. I agree with the fact that earth dwellers usually move around the world (traders, settlers, travellers) without a sound background of cosmopolitan values. Yet in my view cosmopolitan right seems to do its job by using them as unwitting go-betweens. Put slightly differently, Kant is aware of the fact that throughout history global mobility has never been a peaceful path. Moreover, he also highlights that the violence triggered by global mobility “provide[d] the occasion for troubles and acts of violence in one place of our globe to be felt all over it” (RL § 62, 6: 353). This claim fully overlaps with the celebrated statement in PP in which Kant praises the natural interconnection among the peoples of the earth, insofar as “the violation of rights in *one* part of the world is felt *everywhere*” (PP 8: 360), thereby making cosmopolitan right a key component of what he calls “the unwritten code of political and international right” (ibid.). In a nutshell, the conceptual shifts between *Erdbürger*, *Erdsohn* and *Weltbürger* should not make us reluctant to address cosmopolitan right as a right for all earth dwellers, who behave principally as key actors for empirically proving the legal authority that this type of right aims to exercise. Naturally, these earth dwellers achieve only a partial, epistemic view of the cosmopolitan community. Yet the experience of their misdeeds and failures becomes extremely valuable for raising, in the section of RL on cosmopolitan right, an argument for the legal regulation of global human interactions:

all nations stand *originally* in a community of land, though not of *rightful* community of possession (*communio*) and so of use of it, or of property in it; instead they stand in a community of possible physical *interaction* (*commercium*), that

4 See Cicatello (2017) on the key role this distinction plays for grasping Kant’s cosmopolitan program.

5 See Taraborrelli (2019: 20): “[T]he son of the earth and the earth dweller are on the earth and move on the earth as if they did not know that it is a bounded sphere; this means that they can become aware of the sphericity and boundedness of the earth and of the commonality with others only through actual experience of reciprocal limitations (*Schranken*). In contrast, the citizen of the world is aware of being on a bounded spherical earth in common with others: not only does he consider himself as a part of a whole (humankind), but he is also able to bear in mind this whole when he judges and acts as if the others were simultaneously present in his mind”.

is, in a thoroughgoing relation of each to all the others of *offering to engage in commerce* with any other, and each has a right to make this attempt without the other being authorized to behave toward it as an enemy because it has made this attempt. (RL § 62, 6: 352)

While *communio* draws upon some type of common possession, *commercium* opens an ongoing process of reciprocal acquaintanceship. I will address some examples of the interaction that Kant examines in his foundation of cosmopolitan right, insofar as they help to shed light on the kind of normative order he presents in section III of RL and in the Third Definitive Article of PP. As Stilz (2014: 201–202) rightly summarizes, cosmopolitan hospitality rules the contact with people living on different continents and firmly prohibits the plundering of their natural resources, the blurring of the boundaries between trade and military occupation, the forcing of one tribe to adopt another way of life on their own territory or the settling in a foreign land used by nomadic people without a honest contract whose conditions are clear to both parties. This list of cosmopolitan duties helps to make clear the normative infringement these unfair practices entail, and also reduces the scope of the postulate of public right which Kant formulates in RL § 42. In fact, the global framework of mobility makes it feasible to “avoid living *side by side* with all others [my emphasis]”, a circumstance that urges the subject to abandon “the state of nature” of society and enter into a “rightful condition” for administering “distributive justice” (RL, 6: 307).⁶ In other words, global interaction does not entail any permanent cohabitation nor the integration of foreigners as refugees in host countries. Yet it rules an ephemeral coexistence which nevertheless gives shape to our feeling of belonging to a common world. As Flikschuh (2017) and Stilz (2014) have rightly hinted in this vein, cosmopolitan mobility acquaints European citizens with ways of living that do not raise any property claims over the land, decidedly enlarging our notion of human community and the forms of organizing common life. As § 62 of RL adamantly points out, settlers may occupy the territories of non-state people only in the case that these nomadic people submit to them through an honest contract, as each human group on the earth has equal claim over the land from which they live.

In my view it can be disappointing to assume the curtailment of basic rights that ensues from the fact that cosmopolitan right cannot enforce Europeans in the guise of traders or would-be settlers to respect the juridical rights of people who have not raised any property claims or rights (see RL § 62). Nonetheless, cosmopolitan right is expected in Kant’s view to spread like wildfire the *moral* blame of European subjects who do not abide with the global rules of hospitality, thus explaining what Ripstein called “Kant’s juridical theory of colonialism” (2014). Obviously, the colonialist powers did not immediately stop plundering and treating as subordinate entire human groups around the world by dint of appealing to cosmopolitan values in the philosophical agenda. Yet

⁶ See an analogous text in PP (8: 349): “all men who can at all influence one another must adhere to some kind of civil constitution”.

Kant views cosmopolitan tenets as a pedagogical counterpart in the ideological arguments to which colonialist powers often resort. As is well known, Kant openly disavows all fraudulent colonialist reasoning in his RL, affirming that “the good intentions [of priests, settlers and other sort of exploiters] cannot wash away the stain of injustice” (RL § 62, 6: 353). Nor does Kant’s reframing of global interaction guarantee juridical protection to human beings in danger, for instance, when this danger erupts within national states, which Reinhardt (2019: 306–307) prudentially pointed out as limiting any contemporary use of Kant’s limited cosmopolitan right. More specifically, global mobility instead sparks *hope*, a key value for historical progress according to Kant, as I mentioned above with regard to the interpretation of Huber, insofar as such an interaction shows how individuals can progressively foster the “expanding federation”⁷ of states and thus lay the foundations of an earthly *Weltrepublik* that transcends the traditional features of classical statist sovereignty. Huber’s account of the cosmopolitan source of sovereignty in Kant would do well to check its resemblances to the notion contained in the DV of beneficence as a duty of equity. Indeed, Kant views beneficence as a universal duty “because [human beings] are to be considered fellowmen, this is, rational beings with needs, united by nature in one dwelling place so that they can help one another” (TL § 30, 6: 453), which has close ties with the cosmopolitan account of humanity as a whole. As Kant encourages the subject to grapple with the “injustice of the government” in the name of equity, he addresses the individual subject, not the state. This seems also to be the case of cosmopolitan right, which relies on the moral authority of general juridical tenets.⁸ In the *Anthropology*, Kant describes the “free agreement of *individuals*” in terms of “a progressive organization of citizens of the earth toward the species as a system that is cosmopolitically united” (ApH 7: 333) and promotes the fulfilment of human capacities. Yet does Kant-inspired cosmopolitan mobility rely on any material conditions for its fulfilment? In my view, the issue of labour might be a helpful issue for exploring the non-ideal features that hinder the staging of a horizontal cosmopolitan exchange from the Kantian standpoint.

7 PP 8: 357: “Just like individual men, they must renounce their savage and lawless freedom, adapt themselves to public coercive laws, and thus form an *international state (civitas gentium)*, which would necessarily continue to grow until it embraced all the peoples of the earth. But since this is not the will of the nations, according to their present conception of international right (so that they reject *in hypothesi* what is true *in the-si*), the positive idea of a *world republic [Weltrepublik]* cannot be realized. If all is not to be lost, this can at best find a negative substitute in the shape of an enduring and gradually expanding *federation* likely to prevent war”.

8 Davies (2020: 11) consecrated a helpful paper to rightly parse this set of principles underpinning Kant’s political philosophy: “General duties of right are also an important class of duty. They are distinctively political duties for which no external enforcement is permissible. That Kant is able to accommodate such duties is a strength of his view; one that has not been sufficiently appreciated in Kantian literature. Accepting the existence of unenforceable duties of right indicates that Kant’s political philosophy has a much wider scope than is often believed”.

What Kant's Theory of Labour Tells Us about the Right to Global Mobility: the Indian Blacksmith and the Household Servants

It is a matter of fact that Kant addresses the right to global mobility by focusing on European subjects under the influence of an ingrained racism, which his anthropological, historical and geographical remarks confirm (Huseynzadegan 2022: 6). Interpreters such as Gani (2017) have noted that the subjects who engage in contact with other people in Kant's writings are mostly white European citizens, which involves at the least an unconscious epistemic and moral injustice towards the inhabitants of other continents. Kant's *Lectures on Anthropology* present a large and detailed encyclopaedia of the laziness and other physical and cognitive disabilities attributed to non-white peoples. It is worth noting in this context that when Kant refers – in KU, § 2, entitled “The satisfaction that determines the judgment of taste is without any interest” – to the Iroquois Sachem, who visited Paris in the 18th century, he likens him to a kind of fairground attraction. Indeed, Sachem's judgments appear quite childish in Kant's view, as the Iroquois affirms for instance “that nothing in Paris pleased him better than the cook-shops [*Garküchen*]” (KU 5: 204–205), thus suggesting that his sense of taste did not meet the requirements of an authentic taste, disenfranchised from any empirical influence. Even though Kant openly criticizes colonialism in his *Doctrine of Right*, his doctrine of right still helps to legitimate a colonially embedded mobility, insofar as he seems merely to assign this right, at least as a voluntary deed, to the denizens of Europe. In this same vein, Valdez (2022) affirms that Kant's racialized anthropology extols the commercial skills of Mediterranean countries, overrating the contribution of Northern Europe to modern capitalism, and revealing the shortcomings of his account of global trade.

Employment contracts are intended to guarantee legal equality between employers and employees in the capitalist market, which Kant – as before him the Abbé Sieyès in revolutionary France – was wont to see as a key shift for boosting meritocratic social promotion.⁹ Naturally, inequalities would have many ways of perpetuating their social impact. Moreover, as Jordan Pascoe (2015, 2022), Hasan (2017) and Moran (2021) pointed out in ground-breaking papers on this matter, the kind of work that the subject performs determines his access to either passive or active citizenship (Davies 2021). In Kant's view, all labour relations pertain to acquired right. Thus, no employment contract can tolerate that someone allows another to be his owner (*sui dominus*) (RL 6: 270), thus alienating himself as the property of someone else. It is also well known that active citizenship draws on the conditions of freedom, civil equality and civil independence or civil self-sufficiency [*bürgerliche Selbständigkeit*].¹⁰ This last condition implies that the “existence and preservation” of the subject do

⁹ See Byrd (2004: 126n).

¹⁰ I follow the translation of this German expression recently suggested by Kant scholarship. See Vrousalis (2022: 457, footnote 6).

not depend on someone else's choice (RL 6: 314), and so "his civil personality" (ibid.) does not need to be represented by other.¹¹ Thus, immaturity in civil matters, which Kant attributes to all women due to their biological features (ApH, 7: 209), is an obstacle to their being recognized as a sort of "stakeholder" of the commonwealth, an idea that – as sundry interpreters have highlighted (Maliks 2014, Moran 2021) – the Abbé Sieyès used to break down the various contributions that subjects provide to the state. According to the *Doctrine of Right*, there are three kinds of onerous contracts of letting and hiring (RL 6: 285; cfr. Fey 27: 1361–1363): a) to let an object or property to another for his use, usually including the payment of an interest (*locatio rei*); b) to grant another the use of one's own forces for an agreed price (*locatio operae*); and c) to empower someone as a managerial agent for managing a business or a shop (*mandatum*). As previously stated, the structures of dependence in work have a strong impact on the political status of the subject and in my view also on his access to cosmopolitan right; for instance, in the case that the worker does not own any property, has no access to raw materials and relies only on his own forces to keep himself alive. The following passage of TP is quite telling with regard to the social map Kant creates of how work determines social relationships:

The domestic servant, the shop assistant, the labourer, or even the barber, are merely labourers (*operarii*), not artists (*artifices*, in the wider sense) or members of the state, and are thus unqualified to be citizens. And although the man to whom I give my firewood to chop and the tailor to whom I give material to make into clothes both appear to have a similar relationship towards me, the former differs from the latter in the same way as the barber from the wigmaker (to whom I may in fact have given the requisite hair) or the labourer from the artist or tradesman, who does a piece of work which belongs to him until he is paid for it. For the latter, in pursuing his trade, exchanges his property with someone else (*opus*), while the former allows someone else to make use of him (*operam*). But I do admit that it is somewhat difficult to define the qualifications which entitle anyone to claim the status of being his own master. (TP 8: 295n)

Even if at the end of this passage Kant acknowledges that defining civil self-mastery is in fact a ticklish issue, he clearly breaks down the labour framework of the hairdresser, the woodcutter and the Indian blacksmith as being separate from that of the wigmaker, the tailor and the European blacksmith.¹² While the first are deemed dependent, the second are viewed as independent, as they trade their products, and not merely their services for a wage or an assignment to temporarily manage someone else's business (Davies 2021: 7–9). Kant focuses in particular on how these workers obtain their raw materials and the means of production, which in the case of the Indian blacksmith involves roaming through different regions – and perhaps countries – to ensure

¹¹ I fully agree with the reading that Moran (2021: 116–117) suggests of this RL passage, based on William Richardson's translation of Kant's essay rather than on the usual translation by Mary Gregor.

¹² See Vrousalis (2022: 454).

his survival or to increase his income (Hasan 2017: 921). A key aspect of Kant's analysis is the fact that even if the Indian blacksmith becomes a wealthy man as he "works [his] way up" (RL 6: 315), he will still never enter into active citizenship, as he would not own property and thus would not be charged with the payment of taxes.¹³ Moreover, the errant life of most of those individuals that Kant refers to as the "underlings of the commonwealth" disavows their consideration as being ready to engage in politically active membership:

The woodcutter I hire to work in my yard; the blacksmith in India, who goes into people's houses to work on iron with his hammer, anvil and bellows, as compared with the European carpenter or blacksmith who can put the products of his work up as goods for sale to the public; the private tutor, as compared with the school teacher; the tenant farmer as compared with the leasehold farmer, and so forth; these are mere underlings of the commonwealth because they have to be under the direction or protection of other individuals, and so do not possess civil independence. (RL 6: 314–315)

As Moran (2021: 108) has observed, Kant probably became acquainted with the lifestyle of the Indian blacksmith through Pierre Sonnerat's essay, *Reise Nach Ostindien und China*, in which this labourer was said to travel with an apprentice and to obtain a high income. As in the other examples Kant gives, it is telling that all labourers considered as not fitting into the category of eligible to vote do not produce a product (*opus*) to be sold in a market, but rather offer their services and skills temporarily to others. Kant even holds doubts – in his essay *On the Turning Out of Books* (VUB, AA 08: 80) – that a book might be considered to be alienated from its author, as it could also be understood to result from the use of human faculties granted to the public, and is never completely alienated from its creator. This point would impose some restraints on editors in republishing the previously released texts of an author without his/her permission. What determines Kant's view of the type of labour that does not eventually produce a marketable product is the fact that the letting and hiring contract (*locatio conductio*) grants to others the use of someone's effort and skills for an agreed price, making the worker merely hired help (*mercenarius*) (RL 6: 285) and not an independent labourer.

As I hinted above, it is quite paradoxical that most dependent workers are not usually settled in one place, but instead travel through different regions,

¹³ See Davies (2021: 6–7), who takes into account different interpretations of the economic bonds underpinning Kant's distinction between passive and active citizenship and considers the approach to this matter by Pinzani/Sánchez Madrid (2016) as a "revised economic dependence reading", which would be "unable to account for the difference between a domestic servant and a civil servant. Even if neither has access to the means of production, the civil servant still counts as an active citizen". Cfr. Vrousalis (2022: 444), who stresses the scope that community comes to have in Kant as a "productive interdependence", where the material capacity to contribute with goods and commodities to the commonwealth summons the main traits of the Aristotelian model of citizenship.

which might indeed make them perfect candidates for being classed as cosmopolitan travellers. Yet this nomadic way of life jeopardizes their meeting the minimum requirements for contributing as co-legislators of the commonwealth.¹⁴ Compared to the flexible bonds of dependent workers, contracts ruling domestic labour rely on what Kant calls “the right to a person akin to the right to a thing” (RL 6: 276). This kind of labour contract regards household servants, whom the contract binds to “do whatever is permissible for the welfare of the household”, as outsourced workers hired by affluent men to perform the tasks that would normally fall to their wives due to their gender. Kant offers the following account of the legal bind between the head of a household and his domestic servants:

[T]he servant agrees to do whatever is permissible for the welfare of the household, instead of being commissioned for a specifically determined job, whereas someone who is hired for a specific job (an artisan or day laborer) does not give himself up as part of the other’s belongings and so is not a member of the household. – Since he is not in the rightful possession of another who puts him under obligation to perform certain services, even if he lives in the other’s house (*inquilinus*), the head of the house cannot take possession of him as a thing (*via facti*); he must instead insist upon the laborer’s doing what he promised in terms of a right against a person, as something he can command by rightful proceedings (*via iuris*). (RL 6: 360)

I agree with Pascoe when she stresses Kant’s indirect awareness that reproductive labour is embedded as a concealed pillar of republican freedom, as the claim of rightful servitude confirms, insofar as no active citizen can dispense with having guaranteed this dimension of life.¹⁵ This aspect of Kant’s juridical philosophy invites intersectional approaches to his political philosophy,

14 Moran (2021: 121–122) gives a convincing account of the tasks linked to active citizenship according to Kant: “The person who produces an opus can, so to speak, leave her shop and goods in the hands of another person while she attends to public business. Her opus can, in other words, support her even while she is attending to other matters. This interpretation is especially informative if we think of Kant’s notion of public participation as requiring more than a simple vote once every few months or years, but instead requiring sustained information-gathering, debate, and discussion –along the lines of the way we might think of jury duty today”. Cfr. Davies (2021: 17–18).

15 See Pascoe (2022: 23–25): “Kant’s reliance on dependent labour to structure the distinction between active and passive citizenship ensures that while it may be the case that *anyone* can work his way up, it is not possible for *everyone* their way up, since *someone* will have to do dependent labour. [...] These patterns are central to Kant’s account of civil independence, although they remain invisible when we ignore the *material conditions* of this independence. [...] Kant’s ‘right to a person akin to the right to a thing’ provides a crucial dimension missing in Marx’s analyses of labour, identifying the economic role of household labour at a critical historical moment, as the bourgeois household coalesces as a necessary site of unwaged labour to support the reproduction of the burgeoning global capitalist market”. Pascoe (2022: 61) also claims that “the patterns of outsourcing domestic labour force us to consider how intersecting forms of oppression organize [the] right to ‘work one’s way up’”.

revealing the hidden gendered and racialized face of the republican claim of civil independence. This hidden face displays a material interdependence that Kant considers well-off people may rightfully outsource to alien forces. Yet such social structures of dependence leave a deep imprint on the access of dependent workers to the cosmopolitan space. In the case that domestic servants accompany their employer – the head of the household – in his travels through other countries or continents, their labour merely assures the welfare of the only traveller who counts, i.e. the home owner, which makes the inequality of their positions evident. Even if Kant adamantly condemns any form of colonialism and thus of slavery, especially from the 1790s onwards, he seems to favour the right to leisure of the white bourgeois male, whose cognitive activities are more highly valued than the coarser skills of non-European peoples, who are therefore better suited to working as the servants of others.¹⁶

Conclusions

I draw from the above remarks that cosmopolitan goals raise a normative scope in Kant's system of right. Yet the structure of Kant's cosmopolitan mobility is as highly racialized as it is gender-biased, impelling some subjects (dependent workers, women and household servants) to abandon their places of employment and emigrate to other countries. Moreover, although the household servants of a wealthy family might travel through non-European continents, it is only as members of a "private commonwealth", whose welfare they are committed to steadily foster, even when it sojourns in a foreign country. Naturally, these servants might be rescued after being shipwrecked in the manner of Robinson Crusoe, but as human beings needing urgent assistance due to an unwitting accident, not as part of a voluntary movement. One would be inclined to think that only people serving the commonwealth by working for the state (TP 8: 295), i.e. officers with a wide range of positions or the commissioned traders of European companies, might be considered to meet global mobility requirements. Yet the traders that Kant mentions as he outlines the dynamics of international commerce in his time seem to be the individuals in charge or else commissioned to carry out another's business in their absence (RL 6: 285–286). Therefore, the *locatio conductio* of these merchants places them in a relationship of dependence to the business owner's authority, but nevertheless disqualifies them from cosmopolitan itinerancy.¹⁷ This seeming paradox deserves to be further explored. My aim in this paper has been to show how Kant's theory of labour may shed light on some non-ideal features of his normative cosmopolitan theory, insofar as it makes visible the impact that labour bonds between employers and employees have on the political standing of the subject.

¹⁶ See Pascoe (2022: 41).

¹⁷ This textual evidence challenges Davies' approach to the different civil standing of officers and workers. See Davies (2021: 134).

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All Kant's citations refer to volume and page numbers of the Prussian Academy Editions of Kant's *Gesammelte Schriften*. I employ the abbreviations of Kant's writings established by the *Kant-Forschungsstelle* of the University of Mainz and I used translations from the Cambridge Edition of Kant's works, published by Cambridge University Press.

Abbreviations

Ant *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*

RL & TL *Metaphysics of Morals*

PP *Toward Perpetual Peace*

TP *On the Common Saying: This May Be Correct in Theory, but it is of No Use in Practice*

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Kantovo poverenje u političku vrednost rada i globalne mobilnosti. Ne-idealno objašnjenje kosmopolitske normativnosti

Sažetak

Tekst započinje razmatranjem normativne snage Kantovog kosmopolitskog prava, bez obzira na to što ono poseduje i ne-idealne odlike, i raspravom sa uticajnom interpretacijom Katrin Flikšu Kantove „dileme suverenosti“. Zatim, rekonstruišem neke ne-idealne odlike na kojima počiva Kantov kosmopolitizam uz pomoć kantovske teorije rada, što omogućava da se prepoznaju materijalni uslovi iza kvalifikacija subjekta koji je, iz Kantove perspektive, u stanju da se kreće kroz svet. Najzad, izvodim neke zaključke o prednostima ne-idealnog pristupa za poboljšanje normativne vrednosti globalne mobilnosti u Kantovoj filozofiji prava.

Ključne reči: Kant, kosmopolitizam, rad, građanstvo, ne-idealni pristup