No Global Demos, No Global Democracy? A Systematization and Critique

Laura Valentini

A globalized world, some argue, needs a global democracy. But there is considerable disagreement about whether global democracy is an ideal worth pursuing. One of the main grounds for scepticism is captured by the slogan: "No global demos, no global democracy." The fact that a key precondition of democracy—a demos—is absent at the global level, some argue, speaks against the pursuit of global democracy. I discuss four interpretations of the skeptical slogan—each based on a specific account of the notion of "the demos"—and conclude that none of them establishes that the global democratic ideal must be abandoned. In so doing, I systematize different types of objections against global democracy, thus bringing some clarity to an otherwise intricate debate, and offer a *robust but qualified* defense of the global democratic ideal.

Our world is ever more globalized. It is home to a growing network of commercial, financial, and cultural relations transcending state boundaries. Over the past twenty years, the process of globalization has been at the heart of lively debates within explanatory political science as well as normative political theory.

From an explanatory point of view, scholars have focused on the effects of globalization. They have addressed questions such as whether global economic integration is—at least partly—responsible for the perceived decline of the welfare state in high-income countries,[1] the rise of inequalities in developing countries,[2] and global environmental change.[3] From a normative point of view, discussions have focused on the appropriate institutional responses to globalizing trends. Some have advocated the establishment of global redistributive schemes aimed at bridging the socio-economic gap between developed and developing countries.[4] Others have championed targeted reforms of the international arena, with a view to combating problematic globalization-related phenomena such as tax competition,[5] the brain drain,[6] and dangerous climate change.[7] Others still have debated what legitimacy standards ought to constrain the transnational and global forms of power we are now subjected to.[8]

A popular view within the latter debate—the view I shall investigate here—is that legitimacy beyond borders, just like domestic legitimacy, requires *democratic decision-making*. To be sure, advocates of this view champion different institutional configurations of the international arena, ranging from a centralized democratic global government, to a diffuse scheme of global governance, in which different international institutions and networks operate democratically.[9] These differences notwithstanding, the idea of democracy beyond borders—involving the creation of transnational or supranational sites of democratic deliberation and decision-making—is the object of lively discussions in the growing field of international political theory.

Predictably, not everyone is sympathetic to the prospect of a democratically organized global order. There is considerable disagreement about whether global democracy constitutes an *ideal worth pursuing*. One of the main grounds for scepticism about global democracy is captured by the slogan: "No global demos, no global democracy."

This slogan—in the general form "no demos, no democracy"—has often been employed in relation to the European Union, as a concise explanation for its

Laura Valentini is Associate Professor of Political Science at the London School of Economics and Political Science (l.m.valentini@lse.ac.uk). *Her research interests lie in contemporary political theory, with a particular focus on normative questions arising in the international arena. She is grateful to Luis Cabrera, Pablo Gilabert, Bob Goodin, Christian List, David Owen, Luke Ulaş, Andrew Walton, and the participants at the following events: the LSE Global Demos workshop (July 2011), the Uppsala University Political Theory seminar (November 2011), the ISA Annual Convention (San Diego, April 2012), the Global Democratic Governance Group seminar (St. Gallen University, April 2012), and the workshop on Justice and Feasibility (Turku, October 2012) for comments and discussion. She owes special thanks to Markus Patberg for his extensive written feedback and to the anonymous reviewers of this piece as well as to Jeffrey Isaac for their detailed and constructive engagement with this work.*

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perceived democratic deficit.[10] The lack of a demos, namely of a European people united by common sympathies and willing to cooperate in addressing shared problems, was (and continues to be) seen as a major cause for the slow progress of the European political project.[11] The same slogan—or at any rate the logic behind it—has been embraced, *mutatis mutandis*, by global-democracy skeptics.[12] After all, if the absence of a demos raises concerns about the viability of democracy in the EU, *a fortiori* it should raise concerns for the pursuit of democracy at the global level. As Robert Keohane puts it, there is no "global public," in that both clear criteria determining who is entitled to participate in decision-making and "a sense of common destiny" are missing at the international level.[13] This, critics of global democracy conclude, makes global democracy normatively unattractive,[14] and "utopian in the sense of illusory."[15] On this view, the democratic standards we hold dear at the domestic level have no meaningful role to play at the global one. Democracy beyond borders is not an ideal worth pursuing.

Are these skeptical claims warranted? Does the reasoning behind the slogan "No global demos, no global democracy" carry a knock-down objection to the global democratic ideal? To answer this question, I discuss four interpretations of the slogan—each based on a specific account of "the demos"—and conclude that none of them implies that global democracy is not an ideal worth pursuing. My aim in doing so is twofold. First, I want to clarify and systematize different types of objections against global democracy, often implicit in the "no global demos" thesis. In doing so, I navigate my way through the literature, offering what I hope is a novel and useful map of an intricate conceptual terrain. Second, I want to offer a *robust but qualified* defense of the global democratic ideal, which takes skeptics' worries seriously, but which also vindicates the normative and practical relevance of democracy beyond borders.[16]

My defense is *robust* insofar as it shows that global democracy is normatively desirable *across* different criteria for determining who has a right to participate in political decisions, and not just based on the much-discussed "all-affected-interests" principle.[17] My defense is *qualified* in that, unlike other defenses, it does not proclaim the near-inevitability[18] or relatively straightforward accessibility of global democracy.[19] Instead, it acknowledges that global democracy is a distant ideal that cannot be realized in the near future, without concluding that it is not worth pursuing or "utopian in the sense of illusory."[20]

In coming to this conclusion, I engage with both critics and advocates of global democracy, from the perspectives of normative political theory as well as empirical political science/International Relations (IR). On the one hand, my discussion takes seriously, though ultimately rejects, the skeptical arguments offered by authors such as Robert Keohane, Robert Dahl, David Miller, and Sarah Song; on the other hand, it sympathetically qualifies some of the most prominent defenses of global democracy, ranging from those of David Held and Daniele Archibugi to those of Arash Abizadeh, Robert Goodin, and John Dryzek.

Moreover, although my discussion is conducted, for the most part, in the style of analytic normative political theory, my intended audience is broader than that—as reflected by the range of literatures surveyed. Specifically, I attempt to show both how normative debates can have implications for real-world policy discussions (e.g., about what forms of accountability and legitimation are appropriate at the international level) and, conversely, how findings from empirical political science and IR may help us adjudicate normative questions (e.g., about the desirability of global democracy).

This work is structured as follows. In the first section, I set out the necessary and sufficient conditions for an ideal to count as worth pursuing: desirability, non-infeasibility, and moral accessibility. In the second and third sections, I define the notions of "democracy" and "demos." In the fourth section, I consider four different interpretations of the skeptical slogan. They respectively suggest that, due to the lack of a global demos, global democracy is undesirable, infeasible now, altogether infeasible, and morally inaccessible. I argue that only the claim that global democracy is infeasible now warrants endorsement, but that it does not undermine the normative or practical relevance of the global democratic ideal. I conclude that no version of the slogan "No global demos, no global democracy" succeeds in establishing that global democracy is not worth pursuing. However, my arguments also suggest that its pursuit should be carried out cautiously, keeping in mind—as critics of global democracy have correctly insisted—that the preconditions for democracy to be successfully established at the global level are presently missing. I therefore point towards a fruitful, and somewhat under-explored, middle ground between global-democratic enthusiasts and skeptics.

Political Ideals

We all entertain ideals of various kinds—about the sorts of persons we want to be, the jobs we want to have, or the partner with whom we want to build a life. Ideals are familiar entities in our horizon of thought, but not all of them are worth pursuing.[21] I suggest that, in order to be worth pursuing, ideals must meet three individually necessary and jointly sufficient conditions: *desirability*, *non-infeasibility*, and *moral accessibility*.[22]

> *Desirability*: An ideal is desirable if it depicts a state of affairs in which "good things" are realized.

Ideals are desirable almost by definition; a dreaded scenario would never be described as "an ideal." It is important to keep in mind, however, that the desirability of any given state of affairs depends on the particular

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normative perspective we adopt. For example, while those on the political left regard significant levels of redistributive taxation as desirable (i.e., ideal), those on the right do not. The labeling of any state of affairs as an ideal, then, is perspective-dependent. But once we assume a given normative perspective—which, in our case, is democratic (refer to the next section for details)—we can at least broadly identify what is desirable, and what is not.

Non-infeasibility. An ideal is non-infeasible if we have reason to hope that it can be realized, or at least approximated.[23]

This condition is met when ideals are *not proven infeasible*.[24] I illustrate what this criterion involves by first examining the notion of feasibility, and then explaining its relationship to non-infeasibility.

Criteria of feasibility can be defined in a variety of ways, from very narrow to rather expansive.[25] It may not be feasible for a young lecturer, Mary, to become a professor if by "feasible" we mean "feasible here and now." However, there is a broader sense in which it is feasible for Mary to do so. There is arguably a possible world, accessible from the existing world, in which she is a professor; if she continues to work hard, she might eventually get there.

When it comes to political ideals, the sense of feasibility we should be interested in is a fairly permissive one. It would be excessively conservative to say that the ideal of a just society is not feasible because it cannot be realized tomorrow. By this standard of feasibility, hardly any political ideal would count as feasible. A more plausible account of feasibility stipulates that a political ideal is feasible when (i) it is in principle compatible with the basic features of human nature as we know it, and (ii) it can be achieved or approximated from the *status quo*.[26]

For instance, a society of angels might be desirable, but for obvious reasons it is not feasible: it fails to meet (i), and must therefore be declared not worth pursuing; to borrow once again Keohane's phrase, it is "utopian in the sense of illusory." Somewhat similarly, a world of mutually independent political communities might be desirable, but given existing globalizing trends, it is arguably infeasible: it violates (ii). There is no possible world, accessible from the existing world, in which a truly Westphalian system of states can emerge or be approximated.

So far, I have sketched an account of feasibility for political ideals. Recall, though, that we are ultimately interested in something weaker than that: non-infeasibility. Why? Because positively establishing that an ideal is feasible is often too onerous. Such positive establishment requires the identification of a path from the *status quo* to a world in which the relevant ideal is fully instantiated or approximated. Given the complexities and contingencies of human existence, this is too much to ask for. If proving feasibility were a necessary condition for an ideal to count as worth pursuing, many ideals that are clearly worth pursuing would lose their normative power and, as other scholars have also pointed out, our normative outlooks would thereby become excessively *status quo* biased.[27] Consider the ideal of a slavery-free society. Positively establishing the feasibility of this ideal, by conclusively showing *how* slavery could be abolished and what form of social organization could replace it, would have been virtually impossible when slavery was a dominant social practice. Yet it would have been a mistake to infer from this that the abolition of slavery was not worth pursuing. In fact, doing so would have arguably turned the alleged infeasibility of a slavery-free society into a self-fulfilling prophecy: if an ideal is not pursued, it is unlikely to be realized.

To establish that an ideal is worth pursuing, then, all we need is enough ground for reasonably hoping that the ideal can be realized or approximated, not a "full demonstration" of its feasibility.

Moral accessibility:[28] An ideal is morally accessible if we have reason to hope that it can be realized or approximated without excessive moral costs.

Whether an ideal is all-things-considered worth pursuing depends on what Juha Räikkä calls the "moral costs of transition" towards that ideal, measured by the standards of the normative perspective adopted—again, democratic in our case.[29] If getting to the ideal would create much damage along the way (more damage than our normative perspective allows), then we have to declare the ideal not worth pursuing. Plainly, if the *only way* of bringing about a just world were through a Third World War, the ideal of a just world would be *morally* inaccessible, hence not worth striving for.

In sum, an ideal is worth pursuing if, and only if, it is desirable, non-infeasible, and morally accessible from where we are.

Democracy

Democracy is a paradigmatic example of what W.B. Gallie called "essentially contested" concepts.[30] There are many different competing conceptions of what "true" or "real" democracy amounts to, and virtually endless disputes about which one best expresses democracy's value. Since defending any one of these conceptions would take us too far from the topic of the present work, I limit myself to the following, ecumenical definition.

Democracy: A political system is democratic if, and only if, those to whom its decisions apply[31] have the opportunity to participate in their making as equals (for short "have a say in them").

The present definition of democracy embodies the idea, reflected in its etymology, of giving "power to the people" in the making of political decisions. As anticipated, the definition is neutral across, and compatible with, different conceptions of what count as appropriate forms of collective

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decision-making. That is, it is consistent with models of democracy based on deliberation and participation in discourses, as well as models based on voting and elections of representatives (or combinations of the two).

No matter what specific institutional operationalization of democracy we favour, its value rests on a commitment to equal respect for persons *qua* self-determining agents, capable of leading their lives pursuing their ends and goals. Specifically, democracy is said to be both instrumentally and intrinsically valuable on grounds of equal respect.[32]

First, it is instrumentally valuable because it ensures that social outcomes are, to the extent that this is possible, responsive to everyone's interests.[33] Second, it is intrinsically valuable because it expresses the equal status of persons in the face of reasonable disagreement—namely disagreement between rational people committed to equal respect—about how society should be governed.[34] By allowing for participation in collective decision-making, democratic procedures treat people with equal respect as rational, autonomous agents.[35] A democratic commitment to equal respect so understood undergirds the normative perspective from which the rest of my analysis is conducted.

The Demos

The idea of a "demos" is both contested and elusive. To clarify it, I start by distinguishing, with Christian List and Mathias Koenig-Archibugi, between two understandings of the demos: compositional and performative.[36] Put in the terms of this work, the former—which is mentioned, but not discussed, by List and Koenig-Archibugi[37]—employs a criterion of *normative desirability*, and identifies those who, given fundamental democratic commitments, should be included in the decision-making body. The latter, by contrast, employs a criterion of *feasibility*, and sets out the conditions that must be satisfied by a group of people in order for it to be capable of supporting a democratic decision-making system. In what follows, I briefly discuss each in turn. I refer to the demos understood compositionally as "demos$_C$," and to the demos understood performatively as "demos$_P$."[38]

The Demos$_C$

As I have mentioned earlier, central to democracy is the principle of equal respect for persons. Equal respect demands that all be given the opportunity to participate in the decisions that apply to them as equals. But under what conditions does a decision *apply* to someone? Two answers are particularly prominent in the literature: "when one is subjected to a decision" and "when one is affected by a decision."[39] The former corresponds to the so-called "all-subjected principle," the latter to the so-called "all-affected interests principle."[40] To make my argument against the no-global-demos thesis as *robust* as possible, here I do not subscribe to one or the other conception of the demos$_C$. Rather, I set out the strongest version of each of them and, in the next section, show that the no-global-demos thesis fails to undermine the global democratic ideal independently of which one we adopt. Let me start with the *all-subjected principle*, versions of which have been discussed or proposed by Arash Abizadeh, Ludvig Beckman, Christopher McMahon, Sofia Näsström, and David Owen.[41]

All-subjected principle: All and only legal subjects should have a say in the making of the legal decisions that bind them.

This principle holds that all and only those who are legally obligated to abide by the law, i.e., legal subjects, should be entitled to democratic participation. The democratic commitment to equal respect for autonomous agency, so the argument goes, demands that legal subjection be accompanied by a right to participate in the making of legal decisions. Why? Because participation establishes a connection between the will of the subjects and the will of the ruler, allowing the autonomy of the former not to be undermined by the latter's authority. The principle can be summarized in the following slogan: "no legal obligation without participation."

Although the democratic impetus behind this formulation of the principle is clear enough, some scholars—most prominently Arash Abizadeh—have plausibly objected that democratic entitlements should follow *de facto,* as opposed to legal, subjection. After all, coercive laws—i.e., commands backed by the threat of sanctions—may *de facto* apply to, and thereby constrain the autonomy of, individuals who are not recognized as legal subjects, and thus not legally obligated to obey.[42] For instance, we can easily imagine a state refusing to consider refugees as "subjects," thus placing them under no legal obligations, while at the same time subjecting them to autonomy-impairing coercion.[43] This suggests that a more plausible formulation of the all-subjected principle is captured by the slogan: "no *de facto* coercion without participation."

All-subjected principle$_{revised}$: All and only those who are *de facto* subjected to coercive legal decisions should have a say in the making of those decisions.[44]

This version of the all-subjected principle arguably better embodies the democratic ideal of equal respect for autonomy, by postulating that decisions concerning laws backed by the threat of sanctions should be made by those *de facto* subjected to them, independently of their formal legal status. But does this improved version of the principle *fully* reflect democratic values? Perhaps it does not.

To be sure, coercion (narrowly construed) has a deep impact on persons' interests and autonomy, but people's autonomy, their ability to lead their lives in pursuit of their conceptions of the good, can be equally impacted by non-coercive interventions. Consider the frequently mentioned example of a state passing a law allowing the

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construction of nuclear power stations close to its borders.[45] Although this is not coercive of outsiders in the ordinary sense of the term, the impact that a nuclear power station might have on persons' ability to pursue their ends and goals is much greater than the impact of some standardly coercive measures (e.g., a prohibition on driving without seat-belts). Focusing on coercion, then, fails fully to honor the democratic commitment to equal respect for persons *qua* autonomous, self-governing agents. To honor it fully, democratic theorists such as Gustaf Arrhenius and Robert Goodin—among others—argue, we must turn to the *all-affected interests principle*.[46]

> **All-affected interests principle**: All and only those who are affected by a decision should have a say in its making.

In order to count as affected by a decision, one must *have a stake* in it. Consider, for instance, a choice between the current tax system and an alternative one. Assume that the existing system is chosen over the alternative. Even though, relative to the *status quo*, nothing has changed, the maintenance of the old regime has affected all those who would have fared differently under the alternative scheme.[47]

While the all-subjected principle—especially in its original version—might appear too narrow, the all-affected interests principle seems too broad, and in order to gain some plausibility, it needs to be qualified. First, impact on interests should give rise to democratic entitlements only when a certain subset of interests, i.e., important ones, are affected.[48] My town council might have to decide whether to close off a particular street over the weekend, thereby making the path I have to take to reach the town center a few hundred meters longer. Although this decision affects an interest of mine, this interest is of negligible importance, and hence no democratic entitlement is required.

But notice that reference to important interests still is insufficient to obtain a plausible version of the all-affected interests principle. This is because there are decisions that affect very important interests and yet we would never want to be democratically made. To borrow a famous example by Robert Nozick, if the man I love is deciding whether to marry another woman, his decision clearly affects my interests, but it would be absurd to claim that I have an entitlement to a say on the contemplated marriage.[49] Surely, only a certain subset of decisions may plausibly be the output of democratic procedures, and marriage is not one of them. Indeed, we typically think that decisions about marriage fall within that area of personal freedom that the law ought to protect. This observation suggests a further way of qualifying the scope of the all-affected interests principle—and of democracy more generally—namely via constitutional constraints.[50]

It is typically thought that disagreements about the appropriateness of slavery or murder are simply not of the kind that may be settled via democratic deliberation or vote, because murder and slavery are altogether incompatible with equal respect. On this view, there are demands of equal respect that may not be legitimately overridden by democratic decision-making. When it comes to those demands, the all-affected interests principle (and democracy more generally) does not apply.

In sum, a suitably qualified, seemingly plausible, version of the all-affected interests principle reads as follows:

> **All-affected interests principle$_{\text{qualified}}$**: All and only those whose important interests are affected by a decision in principle open to democratic adjudication should have a say in its making.[51]

Having set out the two most prominent (and plausible) candidates for the demos$_C$, namely the (revised) all-subjected principle, and the (qualified) all-affected interests principle, I now turn to the demos$_P$.

The Demos$_P$

The most systematic treatment of the demos$_P$ to date, at a conceptual level, is offered by List and Koenig-Archibugi. In what follows, I borrow their conceptual framework, and combine it with substantive insights from other prominent discussions of the demos$_P$.

From a performative perspective, a group of people qualifies as a demos if, and only if, it exhibits a capacity for democratic agency, defined as "the *capacity* (not necessarily actualized) to be organized, in a democratic manner, in such a way as to function as a . . . group agent."[52] So conceived, the demos$_P$ comprises either the electorate in a well-functioning democracy—in which the capacity in question is already actualized—or a group of people who, if incorporated in democratic institutional arrangements, would allow such arrangements to function properly.

List and Koenig-Archibugi further suggest that two conditions have to be met for a collection of individuals to display the relevant capacity for democratic agency: external coherence and internal cohesion.[53] The former refers to the possibility of ascribing coherent collective attitudes to the group in question, such as, say, the desire to build a nuclear power station. The latter, which is particularly relevant to the present discussion, refers to how the attitudes of different members of the group relate to each other.

As other theorists have emphasized, to possess the capacity for democratic agency, group members must have common interests, share some substantive principles, and be bound by robust enough relationships of mutual trust.[54] In this vein, David Miller suggests that "for democracy to be possible, there must be sufficient convergence of *interests and belief* among the set of people who will constitute its domain."[55] While democracy is needed to make decisions in the face of disagreement, democracy cannot work well under conditions where disagreement is too extreme.[56]

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For instance, in a context lacking a firm commitment to fundamental individual rights and the rule of law, meaningful democracy is unlikely to be established.

Similar considerations apply to *trust*. Even if, as argued by Charles Tilly, a well-functioning democracy presupposes a modicum of distrust towards elected officials (who may be voted out if they underperform), without at least *some* mutual trust, a democracy is equally unable to get off the ground.[57] Confidence in one's fellow citizens as well as in one's rulers is essential if one is to regard them as legitimate contributors to, and implementers of, political decisions.

No Global Demos, No Global Democracy?

Having offered definitions of democracy and the demos, in this section I discuss four interpretations of the skeptical slogan "No global demos, no global democracy," and consider whether any of them succeeds in undermining the ideal of global democracy. These interpretations claim, respectively, that global democracy is: (a) undesirable, (b) infeasible now, (c) altogether infeasible, and (d) morally inaccessible—and for each of these reasons, not worth pursuing.

a. There Is No Global Demos$_C$, Therefore Global Democracy Is Undesirable

The first interpretation looks at the demos from a compositional point of view, and suggests that there are no actual or prospective decisions that *apply* to everyone in the world. This being the case, there is no global demos$_C$, therefore global democracy is undesirable.

The correctness of this claim depends on how we understand the notion of a decision "applying to someone." As illustrated in the previous section, two competing understandings are available: the all-subjected and the all-affected interests principle. As I will argue in what follows, no matter which understanding one adopts, the first version of the skeptical slogan turns out to be false.

Understanding I: There is no "global subjection to coercive law," therefore global democracy is undesirable.

Is this a plausible claim? It is not. While we currently lack a coercive global state, there are nevertheless forms of coercion to which everyone is subjected. A prominent example of these, discussed by Arash Abizadeh, is border coercion. Everyone in the world has their freedom restricted through coercive border control, and if we subscribe to the all-subjected principle, it follows that everyone should have a say in the decisions governing these forms of coercion. At the very least, a global democratic agency setting limits on people's freedom of movement is desirable.[58]

One might object, with David Miller, that border control is not strictly coercive, but rather, preventative: it prevents people from accessing certain opportunities, but does not force them to act in particular ways. And since prevention is less autonomy-undermining than coercion, so the argument goes, it does not require democratic justification.[59] Is this objection convincing? It is not.

First, the distinction between coercion and prevention adopted by Miller is far from clear-cut. For instance, by preventing an agent from performing all actions except for one, we are *de facto* "coercing" them. Second, most laws that typically demand democratic justification can be *described* as preventative. Tax laws prevent people from "keeping" all of their pre-tax income. It would seem odd, though, to regard these laws as not coercive, and to consider them unfit for democratic justification. If this is right, the objection to the global coerciveness of border control proves ill-grounded.[60] If we follow the all-subjected principle, then, we must conclude that globally democratic border control is desirable.

What is more, border policing is not the only example of global subjection to coercion. As Eric Cavallero has recently argued, the international property regime may also be described as globally coercive. This regime is constituted by a multiplicity of norms—including the international private law of contracts, torts, and bilateral investment treaties—identifying who holds what property and which bodies have the authority coercively to settle conflicts over property.[61]

Cavallero invokes the coerciveness of the international property regime to argue that, if coercion generates a stringent burden of justification for distributive inequalities domestically, the same burden exists globally.[62] For our purposes, Cavallero's observations can be used to support the claim that, if entitlements to democratic participation are triggered by subjection to coercion, then decisions about international property law should be taken democratically, by virtually the world at large. A global democratic organ setting out the ground rules of the international property regime, in addition to one regulating border control, is therefore morally desirable.

In sum, from the perspective of the all-subjected principle, there are *at least* two areas of decision-making, namely border control and international property, with respect to which the world's population is entitled to participation. Contrary to the first understanding of the skeptical slogan, then, (at least) in matters of border control and international property, there exists a global demos$_C$, thus global democratic arrangements are desirable. Let me now turn to the all-affected interests principle.

Understanding II: There is no "global affectedness," therefore global democracy is undesirable.

Are there no issues in which virtually all human beings have a stake, and that may be suitably settled democratically (i.e., not at the constitutional level)? Of course

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there are. Interestingly, even critics of global democracy acknowledge that today we are faced with genuine *global* concerns, such as international trade, finance, and anthropogenic climate change.[63] If we take the all-affected interests principle seriously, then, the existence of a global $demos_C$ relative to a number of important issue-areas appears almost self-evident.[64]

Some, however, disagree. Thomas Christiano, for example, holds that the version of the all-affected interests principle relevant to democratic decision-making is a very demanding one indeed. In his view, democracy is only desirable when people's interests are affected *in roughly equal measure* by decisions over time. This condition—which obtains between those who share what Christiano calls a "common world"—is met within domestic political communities, but not at the global level.[65] Different decisions have different impact on different groups of individuals on the global plane. For example, while everyone has stakes in decisions concerning climate change, the stakes of the inhabitants of the Maldives islands are typically bigger than those of British residents. Or, as Christiano says, "in the World Trade Organization some member states have far greater stakes in external trade than other states, as can be seen from their very different export to GDP ratios."[66] Under these circumstances, giving each person—or each democratic state—an equal say in decisions about international trade, or climate change management, would seem unfair, contrary to the very principle that underpins democracy: equal respect. What should we make of this argument?

Even if correct, the claim that there is no cluster of decisions that affect the world's population equally does not show that there is no global $demos_C$. This would only be the case if the ideals of equality and popular control central to democracy could be operationalized *only through* equal rights to participate. But this is not so. As Harry Brighouse and Marc Fleurbaey have argued, equality in decision-making is not so central to democratic politics. Rather, key to democracy is the idea that each should have a say *proportional to their stakes in a decision*. The higher the stakes, the greater the participatory entitlements an individual ought to have. And when stakes are roughly equal, participatory entitlements should also be roughly equal. This is what participation "as equals" actually demands.[67]

This way of operationalizing the democratic ideal is intuitively appealing, and better expresses the commitment to equal respect at the heart of it, by explicitly acknowledging that equal respect does not always demand equal treatment. For instance, treating able-bodied and disabled people with equal respect might require treating them differently, giving the latter subsidies that are unavailable to the former.[68] Similarly, equal respect demands that the more a decision impacts on someone's interests—provided the decision falls within the legitimate scope of democratic adjudication—the more that person ought to have a say in that decision.

Some might nevertheless worry that, despite its *prima facie* appeal, the proportional approach to democracy encounters insurmountable difficulties. After all, any plausible defense of democracy must be arguably premised on the existence of reasonable disagreement about what society ought to do. Yet the same type of disagreement will inevitably arise regarding people's stakes. For any given decision, people will reasonably disagree about whose interests are most deeply affected. The proportional approach to democracy can only get off the ground if we possess an uncontroversial metric for measuring stakes, but since no such uncontroversial metric exists, the approach is not viable.[69]

Two points are worth making in response. First, a criterion for measuring stakes is necessary not only for democracy operationalized via proportionality, but also for democracy operationalized via equality in decision-making, so long as the latter requires members of the $demos_C$ to have roughly *equal* stakes.[70]

Second, reasonable disagreements about stakes will inevitably exist, but arguably not across all possible decisions. For instance, it is unreasonable to deny that, say, the inhabitants of Bangladesh have a greater stake in decisions about how to deal with anthropogenic climate change than the residents of the United Kingdom. Similarly, it seems clear that legislation about disabled access to public spaces has greater impact on people with disabilities than on the rest of a country's population. To the extent that there is *some* reasonable agreement on stakes, the proportional approach can get off the ground.[71]

In sum, there are good reasons for thinking that the democratic ideal need not be uniquely operationalized through equality in decision-making. Equality in decision-making is a plausible operationalization of that ideal only against a background of equal stakes. However, when stakes are unequal—as they are in the global realm—the democratic ideal is not mute. From the perspective of the all-affected interests principle, the ideal requires us to include in the decision-making process all those whose important interests are affected, giving them a say roughly proportional to their stakes. Since, as already argued, there are decisions to be taken at the global level that affect everyone's important interests at least to some degree, from an all-affected interests perspective, a global $demos_C$ exists, hence global democracy is desirable.

In light of the arguments offered so far, I conclude that the first interpretation of the slogan "no global demos, no global democracy" is incorrect. There is a global $demos_C$ on the most plausible accounts of the relevant compositional criteria (all-subjected and all-affected), therefore global democracy is desirable.

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b. There Is No Global Demos$_P$, Therefore Global Democracy Is Infeasible Now

Recall that, from a performative point of view, a demos is a collection of individuals that exhibits the capacity for democratic agency. If a group of individuals have this capacity, they can be incorporated into a democratically organized group agent, and make it function well. To say that there is no global demos$_P$, then, is to say that, if a global democratic structure were to be imposed on the world as it is today, it would not function well.

Versions of this argument have been put forward by numerous scholars. Central to their scepticism is the conviction that, when it comes to the global realm, the condition of *internal cohesion* necessary for democratic agency remains unmet. As Robert Keohane notes, humanity at large is not a group of "people who share a sense of common destiny and are in the habit of communicating with one another on issues of public policy."[72] Similarly, theorists like David Miller, Sarah Song, and Mathias Risse have observed that the peoples of the world currently lack the mutual trust, shared principles, and common interests that allow democracy to function at the domestic level.[73] In light of this, they have declared global democracy presently infeasible.

Importantly, this infeasibility carries an "undesirability" corollary. As liberal nationalist and republican thinkers have argued, lacking a robust global demos$_P$, attempts to bring about a global democracy are destined to lead to impoverished, unstable forms of political engagement, while undermining the richer participatory practices currently found at the domestic level.[74]

It seems hard to argue against these skeptical claims. The peoples of the world have not only different languages, ethnicities and religions, but also different political cultures and value systems: not all of them, for instance, share a commitment to fundamental individual rights. As mentioned earlier, without such a shared commitment, democratic arrangements are unviable. What is more, given the nature of contemporary international politics, different peoples are unlikely to sufficiently trust each other—and for good reason—to allow for the establishment of a well-functioning, meaningful global democracy.

Note that the problem does not disappear by scaling down our understanding of global democracy. As I mentioned at the outset, advocates of global democracy do not necessarily defend a democratic global government replicating domestic political structures at the global level. Some (in fact most) more modestly campaign for democratically governed supra-national institutions addressing global concerns, such as international trade and financial regulation, and the management of climate change. These, one might be tempted to think, are issues on which the level of agreement is sufficient to allow for the existence of a global demos$_P$, and hence of a well-functioning global democracy.[75]

On reflection, this seems unlikely. Imagine a democratically organized Global Climate Management Organization (GCMO). Bangladesh and the Maldives islands are about to be submerged, and a decision has to be taken about how to address the situation. A democratic vote sanctions the adoption of the "polluters pay" principle, resulting in the USA being obligated to accept millions of refugees from the soon-to-be-submerged regions.[76] This scenario is almost unthinkable in the world as we know it today.[77] And even if we could imagine this decision being reached, the USA would in all likelihood refuse to comply with it. Even issue-specific global democratic organs would not function under present circumstances.

This is not to deny the existence of a variety of democratizing trends, so to say, within the international arena. As John Dryzek points out, these include transnational social movements, internet-based deliberations about international affairs, pressures to expand the circle of accountability of NGOs and international organizations, elections taking place at a supranational level (e.g., in the European Union) and so forth.[78] Although these phenomena might be interpreted as evidence for the increasing democratization of the global arena, they do not as yet prove the existence of a global demos$_P$ in the more demanding sense discussed here.[79] After all, only a small subset of the world's population is involved in the relevant "democratizing activities."[80] In light of this, Richard Falk and Andrew Strauss's claim that global "civil society is now capable of founding the Global Peoples Assembly," i.e., a global democratic political structure, appears overly optimistic.[81]

In sum, our discussion has, at least provisionally, validated the claim that *there is no global demos$_P$, therefore global democracy is infeasible now.* But from this we are not warranted to conclude that global democracy is not an ideal worth pursuing. Recall that a necessary condition for an ideal to be worth pursuing is non-infeasibility. This condition is met when an ideal is not proven incompatible with the limits of human nature as we know them, as well as not proven inaccessible from the *status quo*. Establishing that an ideal is infeasible *now*, then, does not automatically render it unworthy of pursuit. This leads me to the third interpretation of the skeptical slogan.

c. A Global Demos$_P$ Cannot Come About, Therefore Global Democracy Is Altogether Infeasible

The third version of the slogan implies that a global demos$_P$ is (i) incompatible with human nature or (ii) inaccessible from where we are (or both). In what follows, I consider each possibility in turn.

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Incompatibility with human nature. Three main arguments have been put forward purporting to demonstrate the incompatibility of a global demos$_P$ with some basic constraints of human nature.

Argument 1: The demos$_P$ and the nation state

The first draws a strong connection between the demos$_P$ and the nation state, suggesting that the former can only exist within the latter. There are two variants of this argument: one emphasizes the limits of human solidarity, the other the importance of popular sovereignty and "domestic" civic education in the formation of the demos$_P$.

Solidarity. Scholars have argued that, for a democracy to function, members of the demos need to be united by feelings of *solidarity* of a certain kind, and be willing to make sacrifices for each other.[82] But if the boundaries of the demos stretch too widely, so the argument goes, the necessary solidarity will be *psychologically* unachievable.[83] Global democracy is thus unrealizable.

There are (at least) two reasons for doubting this argument. First, while it is certainly true that a democratic system could only work in the presence of some mutual trust and a minimal level of agreement on matters of principle, *solidarity* does not appear essential.[84] Most contemporary, reasonably well-functioning democratic societies are so big that it is difficult for people to develop anything like a strong sense of solidarity towards all of their fellow citizens. To be sure, it might be easier to make friends or understand one another with a fellow national than with a foreigner, simply by virtue of the greater commonality in background experiences. But note that I am here talking about co-participation in a democratic system, not about friendship. For the former, as opposed to the latter, solidarity does not seem essential.

Second, even if solidarity were essential to a healthy democracy, the suggestion that it uniquely develops along geographical/national lines loses credibility in an increasingly globalized world. Solidarity is typically fuelled by commonality of circumstances, and the more the world becomes interconnected, the more such commonality cuts across borders. For instance, a jobless Spanish citizen in the aftermath of the financial crisis is likely to feel greater solidarity towards a US citizen in a similar position than towards a wealthy Spanish banker. This being the case, the suggestion that transnational or global solidarity is impossible appears ill-grounded.

Popular sovereignty and civic education. A second, related line of argument, pursued by Lea Ypi, holds that only within democratic *states* can people develop the motivational preconditions for realizing common political projects.[85] This is thanks to these states' combining popular sovereignty and civic education. The former gives legitimacy to political decisions, the latter "creates" citizens, namely active political agents with a strong sense of collective responsibility. Crucially, both popular sovereignty and civic education are particularistic in nature. They are the products of particular historical developments, within particular political communities; it is their historical particularism that explains their ability to motivate people in the pursuit of common projects. Rephrased in the terms of the present discussion, the view suggests that a demos$_P$, a necessary ingredient of effective democratic agency, may only emerge within specific state-like political entities, as a result of specific histories.

This is an interesting argument, but despite first appearances, it does not support the view that a global demos$_P$ is altogether impossible. If I read the argument correctly, it states that effective political agency must start from where we are, so to speak. Nothing precludes the possibility for civic education within states to assume a more explicitly postnational, cosmopolitan dimension.[86] Indeed—as Ypi herself seems to think—nothing precludes states from "transforming themselves" along cosmopolitan-democratic lines, *from within*.[87] What the view emphasizes is the bottom-up, particularistic nature of the *formation* of effective political agency. The view therefore implies that a global demos$_P$ can only emerge starting from existing political units and their current political practices. It does not imply that a global demos$_P$ is incompatible with basic facts about human nature.

Let me now turn to the second reason for scepticism about the feasibility of a global demos$_P$.

Argument 2: The demos$_P$ and global pluralism

John Rawls, partly following Immanuel Kant, is skeptical about the possibility of a *free* agreement, global in scope, on principles of political morality. On this view, liberal-democratic institutions, whether domestic or international, inevitably lead to the development of competing moral and political doctrines. From this it follows that universal convergence on moral matters could only be achieved coercively, by a global despotic government which, to put it in Kant's words, "after crushing the germs of all goodness, will finally lapse into anarchy."[88] Is this argument convincing? It is hard to establish whether it is.

To begin with, we do not have clear evidence of the impossibility of full agreement about justice at the global level. The good news, though, is that such an agreement is simply not needed for the existence of a global demos$_P$. Recall that the cohesion conditions for a demos$_P$ do not require *full* agreement about political morality. If such an agreement were available, there would be little need for democracy in the first place. Instead, the viability of a demos$_P$ presupposes *some* agreement on fundamental principles. The claim that such agreement can never obtain, except through global despotic imposition, is a hard one to defend.

Empirically speaking, a commitment to democratic ideals has proven compatible with considerable pluralism.

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As discussed in the work of John McGarry and Brendan O'Leary, for example, the experiences of countries like Canada and India show that the prospects for the stability of multi-national, highly diverse democratic federations are better than often thought.[89] To be sure, existing multi-national federations are orders of magnitude smaller than the envisaged world community. Although we should not be too quick to extrapolate from the "regional" to the "global," these positive experiences cast doubt on the claim that pluralism makes a global $demos_P$ unviable.

This form of pluralism-driven scepticism appears all the less well founded at a time when the international community is increasingly converging on a set of principles, such as *jus cogens* and human rights, constituting a common ground on the basis of which decisions about international political morality have to be made.[90] Of course, this does not mean that a global $demos_P$ already exists—something I have excluded in the previous subsection—but it does undermine the assertion that international pluralism makes a global $demos_P$ impossible.[91]

ARGUMENT 3: THE $DEMOS_P$ AND EPISTEMIC BURDENS

Finally, a third reason why a global $demos_P$ might be thought to be infeasible, given human nature as we know it, invokes the epistemic burdens individuals would have to carry in a global democracy. Democracy can only properly work if members of the demos are sufficiently well informed about the decisions that have to be made, their grounds and implications. As Robert Dahl and, more recently, Thomas Christiano have pointed out, keeping up with the complexities of domestic political systems is already hard enough; keeping up with those of a global political system, in which it is felt that one's own contribution is even less weighty than domestically (due to the size of the electorate), will be epistemically and motivationally close to impossible.[92]

This is a serious worry, and one that already applies to domestic democracies.[93] At the domestic level, some of these epistemic difficulties have been mitigated by the professionalization of politics. Party systems and professional politicians process and digest information, forming judgments about what to do, which citizens can then either endorse or reject.[94] Some of the relevant information is passed on to citizens, but not all of it is, so as to render the task of making up one's mind more manageable for those who have not chosen politics as their profession. Could something similar exist at the global level?

Even though we are far from a state of affairs in which global politics is fully professionalized, like Daniele Archibugi and David Held, I see no reason for categorically excluding this possibility.[95] It is not obvious that the coping strategies applying at the domestic level could not be employed, *mutatis mutandis*, at the global one.[96] Of course, nothing like global political parties yet exist, but there are many social movements and organizations (e.g., Greenpeace, Amnesty International, the WWF, and so forth) that play at least a subset of the roles performed by domestic political parties in relation to particular global concerns. The potential strength of such parties, and their capacity to mobilize political will, should not be underestimated.[97] Take, for instance, voting in the European Parliament. This has for a while followed party lines, rather than national affiliation.[98] If this is the case at the European supra-national level, then we may plausibly think that a similar phenomenon *could* also occur at the global one, if the relevant global democratic institutions were available.[99]

In sum, there appears to be no in-principle insurmountable obstacle to the formation of (global) political parties (with local sections), each advancing particular ideological agendas concerning how global institutions ought to be organized.[100] The existence of such parties would significantly reduce the epistemic and motivational burdens falling on the members of a global $demos_P$.

Inaccessibility. So far, the claim that a global $demos_P$ is incompatible with the limits of human nature has not proven convincing. But what about its accessibility? Could it be argued that a state of affairs in which there exists a global $demos_P$ is inaccessible from where we are? This argument would be a hard one to make.

With the advance of globalization, matters of international concern are increasingly figuring in and influencing domestic political processes.[101] International norms often frame or even determine political decisions within individual states.[102] Citizens slowly, but increasingly, take an interest in international affairs, be it in relation to the UN, NGOs, the World Bank, the IMF, and other international organs. If we continue on this trajectory, the formation of a global $demos_P$ is a long-term possibility, and certainly not one that has *been proven* inaccessible.

Robert Goodin has gone so far as to suggest that the advent of global democracy is almost inevitable since, as a matter of empirical regularity, once the circle of accountability starts to expand—as we are slowly witnessing in the world today—it continues to grow and almost never contracts.[103] Alexander Wendt has similarly suggested that the "logic of international anarchy," coupled with agents' struggle for recognition, will necessarily lead to the creation of a non-sinister world state.[104] Kant himself, despite his fears of global despotism, conjectured that human beings' "unsocial sociability"—i.e., their twofold tendency to cooperate within society and threaten society's stability through the desire to act only "in accordance with [their] own ideas"—would eventually lead to the creation of a "world federation."[105]

These claims about the necessity of a more-or-less democratically organized world state have been met with

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considerable criticism, and for good reason.[106] They are conjectural, and based on controversial teleological assumptions about the "logics of," respectively, accountability expansion, international anarchy, and human nature. Even though proclamations of inevitability are insufficiently well-grounded—and arguably insufficiently attentive to the role of human agency in bringing about social change—they certainly cast doubt on the assertion that global democracy is inaccessible. These arguments may not genuinely show that global democracy is inevitable, but they do set out various paths through which it *could be accessed* from where we are.[107] In light of this, the claim that a global $demos_P$ is demonstrably inaccessible also stands on shaky ground.

But what if the worry isn't one about accessibility *simpliciter*, but one about moral accessibility specifically?

d. A Global $Demos_P$ Cannot Come About Without Excessive Moral Costs, Therefore Global Democracy Is Morally Inaccessible

The last interpretation of the skeptical slogan says that a global $demos_P$ is accessible, but "getting there" would involve such high moral costs as to make the fight for global democracy not worthwhile. Although I have not (yet) seen this argument explicitly made in the democracy literature, here is how it might unfold, inspired by Thomas Nagel's remarks on the problem of global justice.[108]

A $demos_P$ always comes about through conflict and struggle against a central, despotic power. Individuals with different interests and values may then all come together in the fight against arbitrary rule. On this view, it is the common opposition to unaccountable power that creates the cohesion conditions for a $demos_P$ to exist. This means that, before a global $demos_P$ can come into being, a global despotic power has to emerge. Given the risks associated with such a concentration of power at the global level, it is doubtful that the path to global democracy is one worth pursuing. Is this argument convincing?

I believe not. The main reason for this is that nothing necessitates the particular path the above argument suggests.[109] Another possibility, and one backed by a more sustained investigation, is suggested by Daniel Deudney. Deudney argues that the risks associated with violence-interdependence under anarchy have regularly pushed different communities to come together under a higher-order system of government. Given this historical regularity and the extent of security threats in an era of nuclear weapons, we should not be too surprised if a non-despotic global government eventually came into being.[110] Extrapolating from Deudney's argument, the peoples of the world might come together to form a "global demos" through recognizing the necessity of a higher-order governmental structure to manage the security threats of an otherwise anarchical international order, rather than through common opposition to a global despotic power.

Alternatively, we could envisage the "bottom up" emergence not so much of an all-powerful democratic global state, but of a network of democratically organized governance institutions. As argued by transnational deliberative democrats, like John Dryzek, although global government is not here,[111] there are multiple, somewhat decentralized mechanisms of transnational governance—e.g., in the areas of trade, finance, and environmental regulation—against which claims for democratization are increasingly made.[112] For example, the Occupy movement, denouncing the steep inequalities generated by capitalism, may be seen as a "kernel" of global democracy: it expresses transnational demands for greater accountability of global capitalism, and represents a first step towards democratizing the global economy.

Whether a global democracy would eventually take the same shape as domestic democracy—in the form of a global state[113]—or that of a looser system of democratically organized governance networks is something I am in no position to assess. As I have mentioned at the beginning of this work, there is a plurality of institutional proposals, each based on different models of democratic decision-making. Some emphasize deliberation and the role of activists/civil society,[114] others insist on the importance of electoral mechanisms and supranational institutions.[115]

Setting these differences aside, my arguments, taken together, show that global democratic processes addressing issues of common concern are desirable, morally accessible, and not infeasible. Admittedly, nothing in what I have said positively demonstrates that global democracy *will* come about, or *how* it will come about. As I have suggested at the outset, however, precisely indicating the path from here to the ideal is not necessary to establish that an ideal is worth pursuing. So long as the ideal is desirable, not infeasible, and morally accessible, it has normative power over us.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I wish to briefly summarize my findings, indicate how they position themselves vis-à-vis existing discussions of global democracy, and respond to an objection "realists" about international politics are likely to raise, thereby pointing to the broader implications of my discussion.

I have addressed here the question of whether global democracy—broadly construed—is an ideal worth pursuing. I have looked at four different interpretations of the slogan "No global demos, no global democracy," and concluded that none of them implies that the ideal of global democracy should be abandoned. Global democracy is desirable—from both an all-subjected and an all-affected perspective—and no version of the "no global demos" thesis convincingly shows that it is infeasible or morally inaccessible (refer to figure 1 for a summary of the structure of my argument).

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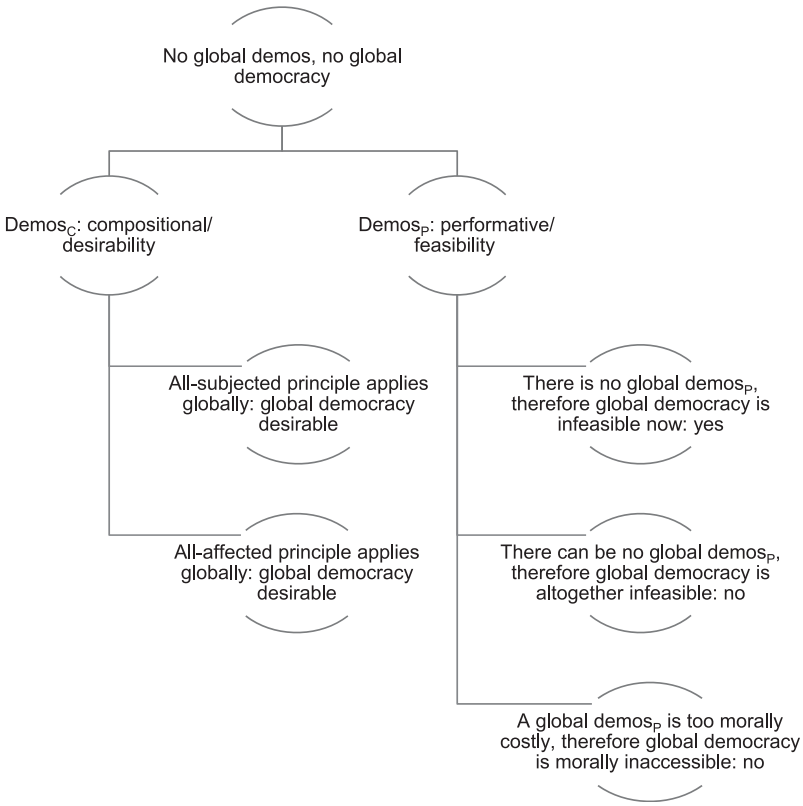
Figure 1
Analysis of the "no-global-demos thesis"



My argument, however, also suggests that, given the current state of the world, the pursuit of global democracy must be carried out with caution. Democracy has important preconditions, which are lacking at the international level. As we have seen, these include a certain level of mutual trust, ideological cohesion and convergence of interests among individuals. The fulfillment of these preconditions is typically reflected in the domestic constitutions of liberal-democratic states. Shared constitutional principles express the "public political culture" binding together members of the demos "performatively understood."[116] The lack of a global demos$_P$, with a shared political culture, implies that the pursuit of global democracy needs to be accompanied by the strengthening of the international rule of law, and the creation of those conditions (valuable in and of themselves) that would allow global democratic arrangements to flourish.[117]

By acknowledging that global democracy has important preconditions, the view I have presented accommodates the concerns of those critics of global democracy, like Miller and Song, who nevertheless argue for the establishment of a (non-democratic) global rule of law, determining which exercises of international power are permissible and which ones are not.[118] Just like them, I readily admit that forms of international "affectedness" or "subjection" which lead to the foreseeable underfulfilment of genuinely fundamental rights should be straightforwardly outlawed, as a matter of "international constitutional constraints." Unlike them, however, I also emphasize that, beyond securing certain fundamental guarantees, people reasonably disagree about how the global order should be organized. As I have argued earlier, controversial but important normative political questions—e.g., about trade, finance, climate change, and immigration—need to be decided in line with the commitment to equal respect, that is democratically.[119] Resort to constitutional guarantees is thus not an alternative to democracy beyond borders, but one of its preconditions and complements.

These qualifications bring my defense of global democracy close to the "progressive realist" stance defended by William Scheuerman. Like me, and unlike global-democratic skeptics, progressive realists are not opposed to, or deeply pessimistic about, the advent of global democracy. However, unlike global democratic enthusiasts, they do not assume that democratizing reforms alone "can effectively create their own social and political presuppositions."[120] Until those presuppositions

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come into being, attempting to establish "global democracy" will indeed be "illusory" if not dangerous. A plausible defense of global democracy, I have suggested, cannot neglect to acknowledge this fact.

This assertion is likely to invite the following objection. If global democracy is only a distant possibility, and its advent by no means guaranteed, why invest intellectual energy in theorizing about it? Would it not be better to focus on short- and medium-term reforms of the international arena aimed at fostering peace, security, and non-democratic forms of accountability?

Two considerations can be advanced in response. First, if global democracy is indeed desirable and not infeasible, theorizing about it matters on *normative* grounds. By abandoning global democracy as a worthy object of discussion because of its alleged "utopian character," we would in all likelihood worsen the prospects of it ever being realized. Pessimism about, and disengagement with, global democracy may well turn into self-fulfilling prophecies.

Second, and perhaps more interestingly, theorizing about global democracy and theorizing about short-/medium-term reforms of the global arena are complementary, rather than mutually exclusive, exercises. On the one hand, as I have already suggested, an awareness of the practical challenges of global reform—including of short-term reform—can ensure against naïve global-democratic enthusiasm, which is potentially counter-productive to the cause of democratizing the global arena. On the other hand, theorizing about short-term reforms without keeping in mind our "ultimate goal" may lead us astray. For while some such reforms might take us further in the direction of a globally democratic world, others might hinder its realization.[121]

For example, Grant and Keohane helpfully discuss a number of "accountability devices" operating within the international arena, but which fall short of participatory, democratic standards.[122] Among them are "reputational" accountability mechanisms, by which international actors that fail to abide by key normative principles—e.g., they violate basic human-rights standards, they take unfair advantage of their bargaining power—may come under severe criticism and suffer significant losses as a result. Examples that immediately come to mind (in part also discussed by Grant and Keohane) include campaigns against the use of sweatshop labour by international corporations, protests against WTO agricultural subsidies, and the Occupy movement against unfettered, unaccountable free-market capitalism. Enhancing these forms of accountability, by building an ever-stronger civil society, may be of value not only in and of itself, but also with a view to consolidating the preconditions for the establishment of democratic procedures beyond the state. Enhancing reputational accountability requires greater transparency in world politics, which is itself a prerequisite of well-functioning democratic decision mechanisms.[123]

By contrast, the strengthening of other types of international accountability may be undesirable if considered in the light of an ultimate, global-democratic goal. For instance, as Grant and Keohane explain, what they call "supervisory accountability" typically applies only to weak states which, in periods of crisis, are willing to submit to the dictates of international institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF, in exchange for all-important financial support.[124] Given that these institutions themselves fall short of full democratic standards, and perhaps disproportionately represent the interests of global capital and powerful Western nations, making states more accountable to them could arguably constitute a step *away* from a possible global democratic future—at least until these institutions are themselves restructured in a more democratic way. Keeping the ideal in sight, then, can help us select among short-term feasible reforms of the international arena.

In sum, while I side with global democrats in thinking that global democracy is, in general, an ideal worth pursuing, I also believe that its pursuit should be carried out "intelligently," bearing in mind what its preconditions are, and moving incrementally towards their establishment. A somewhat myopic focus on those (missing) preconditions has led some critics to reject the ideal of global democracy altogether. Unlike those critics, I am willing to think beyond the establishment of those conditions, and envisage the factual possibility and normative desirability of a somewhat-distant globally democratic future.

Notes

1 See Brady, Beckfield, and Zhao 2007.
2 See, e.g., Goldberg and Pavcnik 2007.
3 See Gallagher 2009.
4 See Blake and Smith 2013 for an overview.
5 Rixen 2011.
6 Ronzoni 2009.
7 Keohane and Victor 2011.
8 Buchanan and Keohane 2006.
9 As Miller 2010a, 148, has pointed out, this is not a clear-cut distinction, and most models of global democracy contain elements of both views.
10 See Weiler 1995; Grimm 1995, 292–97 for discussion.
11 Etzioni 2013.
12 Miller 2010a; Risse 2012, 342; Dahl 1999; Axtmann 2002; Song 2012; for a review see Archibugi 2004, 461ff.
13 Keohane 2006, 77. For a broader, very useful overview of different challenges to global democracy see Tinnevelt and Geenens 2008.
14 Miller 2010a.
15 Keohane 2006, 77.
16 Cf. Scheuerman 2011, ch. 4.

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17 For defenses based on this principle see, e.g., Held 1995; Goodin 2007; Arrhenius 2005.
18 Goodin 2010.
19 Falk and Strauss 2000; Held 1995; Archibugi 2008.
20 Keohane 2006, 77.
21 I mean, specifically, "worth pursuing for their own sake." An ideal may also be worth pursuing because its pursuit allows us to realize goods other than those embodied in the ideal itself. Here I am not concerned with the latter sense of "worth pursuing."
22 Gilabert 2011; Lawford-Smith 2013.
23 For instance, the ideal of a crime-free society is strictly speaking not realizable (given the law of large numbers), but it is nonetheless worth pursuing, since it is possible to get closer and closer to it. Thanks to Christian List for suggesting this example.
24 What exactly this involves depends on the particular account of the burden of proof one adopts. A plausible account will have to tally with our intuitions about what qualifies as feasible or infeasible.
25 Lawford-Smith 2013.
26 For a formulation of similar conditions see Buchanan 2004, 61; Gilabert and Lawford-Smith 2012.
27 Beitz 1983, 595.
28 I owe this label to Buchanan 2004, 61. Technically, this desideratum should be called moral non-inaccessibility (as it is a combination of desirability and non-infeasibility). Since this label would be rather clumsy, I shall refer to it using the expression "moral accessibility" instead.
29 Räikkä 1998.
30 Gallie 1955.
31 The different meanings of "apply" will be discussed shortly.
32 For an overview see Christiano 2008a.
33 See, e.g., Dworkin 2002, 186; Arneson 2004. I am here setting aside epistemic democracy.
34 See, e.g., Christiano 2008b; Waldron 1999; Valentini 2013.
35 Beitz 1989; Dahl 1989, ch. 6.
36 List and Koenig-Archibugi 2010.
37 Their main aim, in the cited article, is to set out a conceptual framework for thinking about the demos performatively understood, based on the theory of group agency. As will become apparent later in my discussion, I partly—but not exclusively—draw on this framework in my own characterization of the demos from a performative point of view.
38 I here set aside discourse-theoretic approaches to defining the demos, because they hold that the demos itself should be democratically or politically established: there is thus no purely theoretical account of what the demos is/who belongs to it. See, e.g., Benhabib's 2011 notion of "democratic iterations," Fraser's 2009 notion of "meta-democracy," and Bohman's 2007, 92, account of how demoi are constituted. Thanks to Markus Patberg for drawing my attention to this.
39 Another criterion is what List and Koenig-Archibugi 2010, 81, call "affectivity," according to which the demos_C is constituted by those who share the same nationality or cultural ties. This criterion is not a plausible way of fleshing out what it is for a decision to *apply* to someone, hence I do not discuss it here. For a critique of it see Abizadeh 2005.
40 See Näsström 2011; Song 2012 for discussion.
41 Abizadeh 2008; Abizadeh 2012; Beckman 2009, 47ff.; see, e.g., McMahon 1994, 12; Näsström 2011; Owen 2012, 145.
42 Abizadeh 2012, 878 n.25; cf. Song 2009.
43 See Abizadeh 2008; Abizadeh 2010.
44 Näsström 2011, 118–122; Abizadeh 2012; Owen 2012.
45 Held 1995, 17; Marchetti 2008, 81; Näsström 2011, 123.
46 Arrhenius 2005; Goodin 2007. For discussion of the principle see Dahl 1970, 64ff.; Whelan 1983; T. Macdonald 2003.
47 If, instead of defining affectedness in relation to stakes, we defined it in relation to the *status quo*, the principle would become ill-specified. Different people may be affected by different decision options in the same decision problem, and so the set of actually affected people (relative to the *status quo*) is dependent on the resulting choice. Scholars who understand affectedness relative to the *status quo*, but are aware of this problem, opt for what they call the "all possibly affected interests" principle. These two formulations ("all-affected interests," with a stake-based notion of affectedness, and "all possibly affected interests" with a *status-quo*-based notion of affectedness) are equivalent. On this see Goodin 2007, 52–53. Thanks to Christian List for discussion of this point.
48 For example, T. Macdonald 2008 adopts a version of the principle according to which a say should be granted to those whose *capacity for autonomy* is impacted by certain decisions.
49 Nozick 1974, 269. I am grateful to Arash Abizadeh for raising this objection.
50 On constitutional constraints see Rawls 1996; Dworkin 1986, ch. 10; Barry 1995, ch. 4; Fabre 2000; cf. Habermas 1996, sec 3.1 on private vs public autonomy.
51 I here do not commit myself to any substantive account of what interests are important, and which ones qualify for protection via constitutional constraints. Different theories will interpret these parameters differently, but convergence should be expected in a core set of cases. For discussion see Valentini 2013.

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52 List and Koenig-Archibugi 2010, 89; List and Pettit 2011; see also Miller 2009, 208–209.
53 List and Koenig-Archibugi 2010, 96ff.
54 Specifically, List and Koenig-Archibugi interpret "cohesion" in terms of single-peakedness (a technical social-choice notion, which is indicative of group members' sharing the same conceptualization of the issues on the political decision-making agenda), and then go on to show that deliberation might induce it. Here I interpret cohesion less technically, relying—as anticipated—on other theorists' insights.
55 Miller 2010a, 145, emphasis added.
56 See, e.g., Song 2012; Keohane 2006, 77; Risse 2012, 342; Scheuerman 2011, 106–121. Note, however, that studies have shown that societies characterized by religious, linguistic, and ethnic divisions do not appear to be any less democratic than more homogenous polities. See, e.g., Fish and Brooks 2004, cited in Koenig-Archibugi 2011a; cf. Grimm 1995.
57 Tilly 2007, 94.
58 Abizadeh 2008.
59 Miller 2010b.
60 See Abizadeh 2010 for a comprehensive response to Miller.
61 Cavallero 2010, 19ff.
62 Ibid., 17.
63 E.g., Miller 2010a.
64 Goodin 2007.
65 Christiano 2006, 2011.
66 Christiano 2011, 75; see also Christiano 2006, 100ff.
67 Brighouse and Fleurbaey 2010.
68 On this see Miller 2007, 33.
69 I am grateful to Thomas Christiano for raising this objection.
70 Christiano 2006, 100ff.
71 *Some* reasonable agreement does not mean *full* agreement, and the question arises as to how decisions concerning matters for which stakes are reasonably contested should be taken. A pragmatic solution would be to fall back on a principle of equality in decision-making, in light of the impossibility of publicly justifying a specific proportionality criterion. This would make a proportional system look more like one based on equal participation, but would not fundamentally challenge the normative preferability of proportionality. The fact that proportionality is hard to realize in practice does not mean that it is not the normatively correct operationalization of democratic values.
72 Keohane 2006, 77; see also Grant and Keohane 2005, 34.
73 See, e.g., Miller 2010a; Song 2012; Risse 2012, 342; see also Calhoun 2002; Scheuerman 2011, 106–121; Brown 2000.
74 Miller 2000; see also Kymlicka 2001, part IV.
75 Cf. Føllesdal 2011, 104.
76 I owe this example to Daniele Caramani.
77 See the discussion in Scheuerman 2011, 116–119.
78 Dryzek 2011, 215–216.
79 Tallberg and Uhlin 2011.
80 Grant and Keohane 2005, 33–34.
81 Falk and Strauss 2000, 195.
82 See Song 2012, 47ff.
83 Rawls 1999, 112 n.44; cf. Habermas 2006, 140ff.; Habermas 2012, 45ff. Rawls, in particular, alludes to such a psychological principle in relation to the (un)viability of global egalitarian justice. Still, the principle can be invoked, *mutatis mutandis*, against global democracy. See also Lenard 2010, for scepticism about cosmopolitan solidarity.
84 Note that trust and solidarity should not be conflated. One may believe someone trustworthy (e.g., one's accountant) without having feelings of solidarity towards them. Conversely, one may have feelings of solidarity towards others (e.g., one's fellow inmates) without finding them trustworthy.
85 Ypi 2012.
86 Cf. Ferry 2008, sec. III.
87 Something also suggested in Ypi 2012, 148.
88 Kant 1991, 113; Rawls 1999, 36, 127.
89 McGarry and O'Leary 2009, 13.
90 Goodin 2010, 182; Dupuy 2005; Gilabert 2012, 141–151 and 248–249.
91 Goodin 2010; Dryzek 2011.
92 Dahl 1999; Christiano 2006, 104–105. Christiano's version of the objection is not as extreme. In his view, overcoming the difficulties posed by epistemic and motivational burdens at the global level is not impossible, but extremely hard for now and the foreseeable future.
93 The worry is related to the broader concern that democracy can only function when a polity is relatively small, for which the evidence is mixed; see Koenig-Archibugi 2011a, 531; see also Koenig-Archibugi 2011b.
94 For discussion of parties see Ware 1996. Indeed, Christiano himself 2006, 104–105 notes this.
95 Archibugi and Held 2011, 452–453.
96 Patomäki 2011.
97 For a discussion of partisanship see White and Ypi 2011.
98 Votewatch 2011.
99 Føllesdal 2011, 103–104. Of course, the EU is considerably more homogenous than the entire globe (and has its problems even at that). This, in turn, explains my cautious language in this passage.
100 Cf. Falk and Strauss 2000.
101 Cf. Kayser 2007.

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102 Cortell and Davis 1996.
103 Goodin 2010.
104 Wendt 2003.
105 Kant 1991, 44; see also Lu 2012; Pogge 2009 for discussion.
106 Shannon 2005.
107 For a comprehensive list of possible paths see Koenig-Archibugi 2011b, 177–178.
108 Nagel 2005.
109 Koenig-Archibugi 2011a, 527–528.
110 Deudney 2007, 275; see also Craig 2008 for discussion.
111 But see Goodin 2013.
112 Dryzek 2006; Dryzek 1999, 45. See also McGillivray 2000; K. Macdonald 2011.
113 Ulaş 2014 convincingly argues that a genuine cosmopolitan democracy demands a global state.
114 Dryzek 2006; Dryzek 1999.
115 Held 1995; Marchetti 2008; for an overview see Archibugi, Koenig-Archibugi, and Marchetti 2011a. Note that these are broad categories, and there are important differences between the authors I have placed in each of them.
116 Cf. Rawls 1996.
117 Cf. Archibugi, Koenig-Archibugi, and Marchetti 2011b, 12–14.
118 E.g., Miller 2009, 210 and 222–223; Song 2012, 64–65.
119 See Caney 2006.
120 Scheuerman 2011, 113.
121 Cf. Simmons 2010, 35.
122 Grant and Keohane 2005. For critical discussion, see Steele 2011.
123 Grant and Keohane 2005, 39.
124 Ibid., 39.

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