“UNDER THE SAME SUN”
THE ROOTS OF COSMOPOLITANISM IN STOIC WORLDVIEW

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Abstract

Cosmopolitanism understands human not just merely a member of particular social cultural community, but as the citizens of the world. This notion is deeply embedded in the history of various civilizations in the world, and one of them is in ancient Greek, namely the Stoic philosophical tradition. The Stoic philosophers connect the idea of cosmopolitanism with the idea of universal law, universal justice and universal reason. All of this ideas are based on their notion of nature, which is very important for human to achieve good life. Cosmopolitanism based on this tradition can shine a new light on various global challenges, such as the refugee crisis that happened in various parts of the world.

Keywords: Cosmopolitanism, Stoic philosophy, Universal Law, Universal Reason, Universal Justice, Nature.
**Introduction**

Scorpions, one of the greatest rock bands in history, wrote a song with the title *Under the Same Sun*. The lyrics directly express the notion of cosmopolitanism:

“I saw the morning, It was shattered by a gun, Heard a scream, saw him fall, no one cried, I saw a mother, She was praying for her son Bring him back, let him live, don't let him die, Do you ever ask yourself, Is there a Heaven in the sky, Why can't we get it right, Cause we all live under the same sun, We all walk under the same moon, Then why, why can't we live as one.”²

All living beings in the world live under the same sun and the same moon. All have the same basic needs as human being. However, social identities then are created, which often being used as justification for racism and various types of discriminations. Human are divided between countries, territories and citizenships. The awareness that all living beings are basically one under the same sun is also vanished.

The refugee crisis that happens in Europe opens the eyes of the world on the importance of citizenship. The rights of a person as a human can only be protected fully only when he or she is part of a certain political legal entity, such as a nation or state. When there is crisis that threatens this political legal entity, such as civil war, then the rights of this person become uncertain. This situation threatens also the life of this person with various human rights violations that lead to sufferings and even death. In this context, the question on the meaning of citizenship in the globalized world becomes important. Is a person only protected when she or he is part of a certain state?³ Or there is other point of view to understand this, so the risks of human rights violations because of political uncertainties can be minimized?

Cosmopolitan, or global citizenship, offers an answer to these question. This view understands human not merely a member of a certain political or legal entity, but as a citizen of the universe. This view is embedded deeply in various cultures around the world. One of the most prominent traditions that have rich discussions on this topic is Stoic philosophy. Stoic philosophers focus their philosophy on the questions of good and fulfilled life. Their central concept, despite of various arguments and debates between them, is the freedom and indifference in front of various situations in life, such luck or despair. With this freedom, a person can achieve stable state of mind, which also means sustainable peace.⁴ The role of model of life in Stoic philosophy is nature itself, which basically is always indifferent in front of various events. Sustainable peace

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² Copyright Scorpions “*Under the Same Sun*”
of mind can be understood as the good life itself, which is the main purpose of human life, according to Stoic philosophy. The notion that nature is the highest role model will be the foundation of cosmopolitan arguments in Stoic philosophy.

At first, this article will describe the idea of cosmopolitanism in Stoic philosophy. Next, it will connect also the basic idea of cosmopolitanism with the idea of justice in Stoic philosophy. In this context, universal justice and universal law can be seen as the logical consequence of the cosmopolitanism. There will be some critical remarks on several arguments in Stoic philosophy. This article ends with conclusion.

In the Same Cosmos: Stoic Idea on Cosmopolitanism

Stoic philosophy has influenced the development of modern philosophy and modern science. It has also influenced the modern way of thinking and worldview, which are embedded deeply in the habits and daily behaviors of modern people. According to Stoic philosophy, all people are naturally equal. They are mainly the citizens of the universe before any social identities, such as race, religion, nationalities and genders, are stamped on their sense of self. It means also, naturally, all people have the same rights and access to justice and welfare.

The concept of cosmopolitanism, which means literally world citizen, was developed earlier than the birth of Stoic paradigm. Stoic paradigm is started as philosophy, which was founded by Zeno on circa 335-265 BC. However, in this Stoic system and philosophical reflection, the concept of cosmopolitanism found its genuine essence. The traces of cosmopolitanism in ancient Greek philosophy can be seen directly on the arguments of Diogenes the Cynic and the atomist philosopher, Democritus. Both emphasize the importance to remember the true identity of human, namely as citizen of the entire kosmos (world).

The Sophist in earlier times argued that the nature of human is the same, although they have various backgrounds. The fundamental characteristics and needs of human are naturally and basically the same. The biological principles that govern the life of human are the same everywhere. Zeno, the founder of Stoic paradigm, goes further by argues that all human should live in one universal community based on the common good for all people. This idea can be seen as the seed of supra national organization, such as United Nations, which has functions to govern international affairs that include two or more countries.

However, this one universal community of mankind must be governed not just by force, but also by Logos. This concept is central not just in ancient Greek philosophy, but also in modern philosophy and modern science. It has several meanings, namely reason, language and the divine. Stoic thinker uses Logos to refer to the cosmic understanding of God as the order of the universe. Every human, without exception, have access to Logos. This access makes them

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6 See Kant, (1795), Zum ewigen Frieden. Ein philosophischer Entwurf, Koenigsberg, bey Friedrich Nicolovius.
possible to think and be aware about their self. It is also the source of philosophy and science.  

Seneca, one of the most prominent Stoic philosophers, argued that there are two kinds of citizenships. The first is the citizenship of particular nation, and the latter is the citizenship of the kosmos. The first has certain territorial boundaries, but the latter has no borders and boundaries, except the kosmos itself. Roman Stoic philosophers, such as Marcus Aurelius and Cicero, formulated the concept of brotherhood of man. This brother is based on universal reason. It means the organizing of social and personal life always refers to reason. This is possible because human is basically a rational being. The logical consequence is the creation of world state based on rational regulations.

Justice and Cosmopolitanism: Stoic Reflection

There is also a deep connection between the universal access to reason and the moral principles, especially the principle of justice. The concrete connection will later be formulated as the natural law. The idea of natural law will define the modern conception of human rights, namely as the inalienable rights of all human being, without exception. The government cannot do anything to take these rights, because it is inherent in the meaning of humanity itself. Stoic arguments have also a big influence on Christianity, especially the concept of Logos as the divine and cosmopolitanism, which is interpreted by Christian thinker as universal community of believer across races, nations and states.

The discourse on globalization and world citizenship in 21st century is also highly influenced by the Stoic, which emphasized very strongly on the importance of cosmopolitanism. On this notion, Plutarch wrote,

"... that our household arrangements should not be based on cities or parishes each one marked out by its own legal system, but we should regard all men as our fellow-citizens and local residents, and there should be one way of life and order, like that of a herd grazing together and nurtured by a common law."

There are two points in this description by Plutarch. The first is the alignment between the needs and interests of a person as a member of particular groups

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and at the same time as the citizens of the world. There should be no contradiction between both terms. The second is the idea of radical equality between people regardless of their respective social and cultural backgrounds.

In ancient Europe, the idea of cosmopolitanism was developed through the expansion of Roman Empire. This empire saw itself as the center of civilized world. With this identity as the ancient super power, it wanted to expand its culture to the various edges of the world. This way of thinking was not new at that time. The drive for expansion and the will to become ruling super power in the ancient world by the Roman Empire was a direct inheritance from the Greek Empire, which was ruled by Alexander. Ancient Greek Empire was also interested in the cultural expansion of the Greek culture and philosophy to its conquered lands. In this context, it can be said that cosmopolitanism is often used as justification for expansionism and subjugation of weaker nations.12

In the context of Roman Empire, the politics of expansionism is combined with the spreading of rule of law (Roman law) in the conquered nations. Foreign people came to the Roman court of law to plead for their cases and to get justice on their matters. With this situation, the conception of justice in the ancient world was also expanded.13 This concept of justice needs a philosophical and moral foundation, and cosmopolitanism, which is developed coherently by the Stoic thinker, serves that purpose. Within this marriage between politics of expansionism, administration of international justice between conquered nations, and the need for philosophical foundation of these systems, cosmopolitanism grew as a paradigm in ancient Europe.

To balance the rise of Roman Empire, there had to be a universal law not just for the Romans, but for all the conquered nations. Cicero, one of the greatest thinkers in ancient Western philosophy, emphasized this point in his writings.14 In this context, it can also be said that Cicero pioneered the concept of rule of law, which will be the basic notion in the modern democratic state. Law, in this context, does not only define what is legal and what is not, but interferes also in term of moral, namely the concept of right and wrong. This kind of law is not a particular law that is embedded in certain culture of worldview, but universal law, which is valid for all human, despite their various backgrounds. Cicero’s argument rests on the basic argument from Aristotle on human, that human is basically a political being.15

There is a deep connection between the spirit and basic notion of cosmopolitanism on the one hand, and the ontological foundation of universal law and universal justice on the other hand. Both stands firmly on the belief that human have a universal nature.16 The classical debate in the political philosophy on the concept of justice is also answered, that justice is not merely a social

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15 Wattimena, Reza A.A., Demokrasi: Dasar Filosofis dan Tantangannya...
construction based on certain particular values and world view, but it is something natural and, thus, also universal. The nature of justice is connected to the nature of human. In the view of Stoic paradigm, both share the same nature, namely Logos, or universal reason, itself. Cicero wrote,

“Law is the highest reason, implanted in Nature, which commands what ought to be done and forbids the opposite. This reason, when firmly fixed and fully developed in the human mind, is Law. ... the origin of Justice is to be bound in Law, for Law is a natural force; it is the mind and reason of the intelligent man, the standard by which Justice and Injustice are measured.17

Nature has a universal blueprint that has a certain patterns and laws. It exists also in the human mind in the form of a conscience. This conscience guides human life with directions for their own survival. Education, in this context, is a systematic way to understand this law of nature, which exist inside the human mind itself, and then use it as a foundation for laws that guide social, economic and political life. This idea is coherent with the educational world view that existed in ancient Greece. Education is not a process to provide people with information, but a process of remembering what they already know in their own mind as conscience and as Logos itself. Conscience is the true nature of human. It provides various virtues to help a person achieve a good life.18

Cicero’s elaboration on law as universal form that can be found in the human mind connects directly with his idea of cosmopolitanism. He wrote

“Further, those who share Law must also share Justice; and those who share these are to be regarded as members of the same commonwealth. If indeed they obey the same authorities and powers, this is true in a far greater degree; but as a matter of fact they do obey this celestial system, the divine mind, and the God of transcendent power. Hence we must now conceive of this whole universe as one commonwealth of which both gods and men are members.”19

The world is a global community that has the same foundation, namely universal Logos, which contains universal laws, virtues and justice. This global community crosses various cultural, religious, national and other man made social and cultural backgrounds. It is ruled by the same universal laws and justice, which exist inherently in nature.

Cicero, according to my interpretation, is still trapped in the anthropocentric worldview.20 He sees human as special living being, which possesses rationality. No other living being has the same ability. However, this argument must be placed in its context, namely the anthropocentric worldview that was dominant at the time of Cicero. On the other hand, theocentric worldview is also dominant in Cicero’s argument. In this context, theocentric refers to the way of thinking that places Gods (Roman Gods-Polytheism) at the

17 *De legibus* I vi 18-19, Cicero On the Laws.
19 *De legibus* I vii 22-23 Cicero On the Laws.
center of argument. Cicero imagines the universal commonwealth of Gods and men, which is based on universal law and universal reason. The seed of cosmopolitanism can be seen directly on this line of thought from Cicero.

Xirogianni formulates three important critical questions for Cicero’s line of thought. First, is human really the only living being that has ability to think rationally? In other words, Xirogianni questions the anthropocentric tendencies not just in Cicero’s argument, but also to the basic assumption of ancient Greek philosophy, especially Stoicism. Second, the foundation of Cicero’s argument on the commonwealth between Gods and men based on universal law and reason is the existence of the Gods. If this assumption is suspended or questioned, how can this ideal commonwealth be justified? Third, the basic assumption of Stoic philosophy is that human has the access to universal rationality that exists inherently in the nature. If this is true, how can the conflicts between human be explained? How can big crimes, such as genocide, torture and ethnic cleansing, be explained, when human is seen as the rational living being that has access to universal law and universal reason?21

From the Stoic perspective, universal reason can be accessed by a living being that has both memory and intelligence. In this context, few animals have both faculties. With memory and intelligence, a living being can create abstract to understand its environment. This is only possible, when it has a faculty of imagination. Cosmopolitan awareness needs all these three fundamental faculties, namely memory, reason and imagination. It requires a person to transcend their habits of thinking, which usually are limited to their close relatives, such as families, races and nations.22 Of course, it is almost impossible to know, if certain animals are capable of doing this kind of abstraction, or not. However, it is for sure, that the development of cosmopolitan awareness requires also the development of memory, intelligence and imagination. This is also the focus of cosmopolitan education.

Cicero, in this context, proposes an interesting and at the same time controversial argument. He understands all human body parts as the foundation for the existence and development of human mind. And with this mind, human can understand the essence of universal Logos and universal law. Based on this understanding, human can also act accordingly to respond to any kind of situations.23 Of course, this argument invites a lot of critiques from various points of view. One of the strongest opposition argues that this is the trace of rationalistic perspective on human, which emphasizes the importance of reason in compare to other faculties. The over emphasize of reason in understanding human will jeopardize the multidimensionality of a person, which contributes greatly not just to the personality development of a person, but also to the development of civilizations.

Cicero emphasizes several times that human tendencies toward justice, reason and cosmopolitan awareness are inherently natural in the nature of

23 De legibus I ix 26 Cicero On the Laws.
human being itself. Justice and reason are not man-made creation. It exists in
the nature of all living being. This view is parallel with the notion of cosmopolitan
in Oriental worldview. Based on this notion, Cicero argues that the universal
community of men is possible, because men share the common universal
nature, even though they come from different social, cultural and economic
backgrounds. It means also that human have the same rights and obligations,
and through the power of their intelligence, memory and imagination, they can
develop their self, and live with the cosmopolitan awareness, which is inherently
embedded in their nature.

Human rationality, according to Cicero, is also supported also by various
biological parts and epistemological capabilities in the body. Even though human
has various social, cultural, political and economic backgrounds, they move with
the same epistemological capabilities, which are supported by biological
anatomies. First, they have the same ability to gather sense data through the
five senses. Second, they have the same ability to be stimulated by various
factors in reality. Third, human have the same innate ideas to form various
types of knowledge. These arguments support the argument from Cicero that
rationality is universal, despite of differences that exist in human society, such
as differences in terms of culture, language, ways of thinking, etc. The
universality of rationality is the basis for cosmopolitan awareness, which is a
very important part for cosmopolitan experience. This kind of awareness cannot
be taught purely on intellectual basis. It needs a direct experience of unity.

Cosmopolitan awareness is a human virtue. It already exists in the nature
of human. However, because of partial and narrow socialization process in terms
of education and social interaction, this virtue stays within a person without ever
becoming a reality. What they need is a guidance to develop this embedded
virtue. With the proper guidance, every person can realize their natural virtue,
namely the cosmopolitan awareness. This guidance comes from the right teacher
who shows the correct path that explains the nature of reality as it is and not
just the reality that is conceptualized by religion, philosophy, culture and
science. There are at least two possibilities. The first is that this guidance comes
from a person. The second is that a person can learn everything just by
observing the nature as it is, not through their biases and prejudices. Nature,
according to Cicero and the Stoic philosophers in general, is the greatest teacher
for knowledge and wisdom.

In nature, human can find the true meaning of justice and reason. A
person who can understand the correct way of the nature can at the same time
understand the true way of justice and reason, which are ultimately the one and
the same. The social and political justice is an expression of this natural justice
that is based on universal reason. The social and political justice is realized
through the law that expresses justice and fairness towards people. It is the
result of social convention that can be changed according to the needs of the
people. However, the universal justice and reason that exist in nature is eternal.

24 De legibus I x 28 Cicero On the Laws.
25 De legibus I x 28-30 Cicero On the Laws.
26 (De legibus I xii 33) Cicero On the Laws.
27 See, "Equality and Justice in Early Greek Cosmologies", Classical Philology 42 (1947) 156-78
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It becomes some kind of blue print of social and political justice and law that are created by social convention. In this context, the influence of Plato’s metaphysics in Stoic conception of justice can be seen clearly, especially in the writings from Cicero. When a law does not express the natural and universal justice, then it can be said that this law has lost its political legitimation. In other words, the people do not have the obligation to obey it.

The implementation of cosmopolitan notion based on Stoic philosophy will bring at least three consequences. First, the concept of refugees will be automatically obsolete. Under the cosmopolitan paradigm, there is no such thing as refugees. Human, despite their various social and cultural backgrounds, has the same fundamental nature as living being and also as the citizen of the world. Second, the concept of national borders will also become obsolete. Under the cosmopolitan worldview, the existence of national borders cannot be justified, because it creates an illusion of differences and separation between humans. Without proper management, these differences and the sense of separation will create conflicts and wars. Third, the existence of borderless world and global citizenship will change dramatically defense policies of various nations. This situation will certainly create a new security dilemma, that if there are no borders between nations, how can the danger of global terrorism be effectively and efficiently prevented? Will there be a more secure world, when all the borders between nations are vanished? These questions demand most certainly more research.

Critical Remarks

Stoic philosophers, especially Cicero, offer a new way to understand human being in the social context. For them, the main loyalty of a person must not be limited to social and cultural identity, but must be expanded toward the whole world, namely as the citizen of the world. This notion is formulated during the expansion of Roman Empire that encompassed various countries in Southern Europe, Middle East and North Africa. However, there are at least three fundamental arguments from the Stoic philosophers that can be criticized further. First, the whole notion of Stoic cosmopolitanism is still trapped in the anthropocentric world view. It means that the human still exists at the center of universe as the standard to measure and to understand everything. This notion is very dangerous, because it places the whole natural ecosystem outside human communities as secondary. This notion also ignores the interdependence character of reality. The biggest danger is the destruction of natural ecosystem for merely the narrow interests of human existence.

Second, the stoic philosophers are still trapped in the ideology of order. It is the belief that a certain order must exist in order for life to exist and thrive. Some thinkers believe that this order is natural, that it exists in the nature as given. The whole living being must obey the natural laws that exist in this order for survival. Other thinkers argue that this order must be created through human actions, such as war, domination and political decisions. Stoic notion of cosmopolitanism uses the first argument that natural order is the source of universal law and justice. The question is, is this order really exists in reality, as

28 Compare to Wattimena, Reza A.A., 2017, Perspektif: Dari Spiritualitas Hidup...
their position, or is it the creation of human mind through various speculations, analysis and abstractions? Immanuel Kant, a modern German philosopher, argues convincingly in his book *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* that order is one of the categories of reason that exist in the human reason, which helps in the context of creation of knowledge. In other words, the category of order does not exist in nature as objective reality, but as one of the conditions of possibility for human knowledge.\(^{29}\) This critique can be placed also in front of the Stoic notion of natural law as the source of cosmopolitan awareness.

_Third_, the stoic philosophers emphasize the importance of nature as the source of law and reason. It is a blueprint for various laws and policies that are the product of social convention in societies. However, how can nature as a foundation for law, justice and reason really be understood correctly? There are various interpretations of nature, which create debates and discussions that cannot be easily solved. This happens exactly because the uncertainty on the meaning of nature. Furthermore, can nature as concept and epistemological category be understood through pure intellectual exercises? Immanuel Kant understands nature as postulate, namely as a concept that must exist for the sake of the possibility of human knowledge. It does not exist as objective reality outside the human mind.\(^{30}\) Stoic philosophers did not touch this matter deeper. They just assume that nature is the objective foundation of cosmopolitan awareness, universal law, justice and reason.

**Conclusion**

Cosmopolitanism is a view that emphasizes the true nature of human as living being that live, just like Scorpions song, under the same sun and under the same moon. In this context, human is understood not merely as a member of a certain particular social groups, but also as the citizen of the universe. The consequence is the creation of a new borderless world that, from the perspective of Stoic philosophy, based on universal law, universal reason and universal justice. In this context, natural laws become the ultimate standard for social and political system. If there are no borders between nations, the concept of refugees also becomes meaningless. The world is the true home not just for human being, but also for all living beings. Impossible? The world has never seen such experiments inspired by this idea before. They should start it now.


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