Article

The Cosmopolitan Future: A Feminist Approach

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Abstract: This study questions the "clash of civilizations" thesis. Referring to the cosmopolitanization process as defined by Beck and Sznaider (2010), I analyze the cosmopolitanization of feminism, that is, the gradual recognition of "the others' others", the women, through the evolution of their political rights—the right to elect and be elected—at a global level. In this context, the descriptive representation of women, their substantive representation, and their voices within civil society in the North and the South highlight the fact that feminism is undergoing a process of cosmopolitanization, albeit in a slow and sporadic way. I present this argument from a postcolonial feminist perspective and base my research on NGOs' data and on data provided by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and UN-Women. First, I analyze the cosmpolitanization process as applied to feminism. Then, following Beck and Sznaider (2010), I describe how this process is articulated 'from above' (top-down cosmopolitanization), referring to electoral data from around the world and to international law. Further, I relate to the cosmopolitanization of feminism 'from below', referring to feminist theories, cyberfeminism and the global civil/feminist society. In conclusion, I discuss the common future of feminism and cosmopolitanism.

"At the beginning of the 21st century the conditio humana cannot be understood nationally or locally but only globally. 'Globalization' is a non-linear, dialectic process in which the global and the local do not exist as cultural polarities but as combined and mutually implicating principles. These processes involve not only interconnections across boundaries but transform the quality of the social and the political inside nation-state societies. This is what I define as 'cosmopolitanization': cosmopolitanization means internal globalization, globalization from within the national societies. This transforms everyday consciousness and identities significantly. Issues of global concern are becoming part of the everyday local experiences and the 'moral life-worlds' of the people."

—Ulrich Beck, The Cosmopolitan Society and Its Enemies ([1], p. 17).

1. Introduction

In a particularly significant book published in 2000, *Can We Live Together? Equality and Difference*, the French sociologist Alain Touraine posed one of the most relevant contemporary questions—the possibility of living together in equality and difference [2]. Touraine discussed the problem in the context of a globalized society in which communities attempt, by withdrawing into themselves, to assert their identities against the encroachment of this process; in which inequalities are enhanced and conflicts are accentuated; and in which hostility toward the 'other' is growing, especially toward those with a different color, creed, or culture [3–5].

Sixteen years later, it might seem that at the level of the global village the answer to this question is more negative than ever. Some would say that living together is more like a clash of civilizations, nourished by economic gaps, political schisms, terror and cultural confrontations, in which the religious substrate plays a central role [6–9]. This clash purportedly manifests itself most forcefully with regard to the status of women and the various modes of exclusion that put them beyond the pale of humankind, "imparting sometimes to civilized countries" (that is, Western countries) the "moral duty to liberate women" who still live in a state of "barbarity", by force if necessary [10–12].

In contrast to this approach, this article aims to demonstrate that an analysis of worldwide developments can lead to a different conclusion. I use as an illustration the political sphere and its global transformation as a result of women's "politics of presence" [13–15] in the second decade of the twenty-first century. In this context, the descriptive representation of women (that is, an increase in the number of women elected, so their number better reflects the composition of the electorate), their substantive representation (women's political representation that advances human rights, as reflected in the Beijing Platform for Action [16,17]) and their voices that are heard within civil society highlight the fact that feminism is undergoing a process of cosmopolitanization. As amply demonstrated, this process is fueled by commitment to action-oriented networking among women, in the form of participative membership or representative organizational structures, across boundaries of class, race, ethnicity, religious and cultural identity and sexual orientation—both within states and across geopolitical divides [9,18–24].

Beck and Sznaider describe cosmopolitanization as a lived experience that is connected to globalization and is based on the recurrent routines and experiences of daily life through everyday encounters with what was initially perceived as culturally alien (including new links of friendship and kinship, consumption patterns, media images and reports, music, arts and sport, labor migration and tourism), significantly transforming consciousness and identities. Thus, according to Beck and Sznaider, cosmopolitanization is not always programmed or perceived as such but it enables the progressive recognition of "the other" and connects the individual to humanity without having to deny his or her roots or identity [25]. In other words, cosmopolitanization as a lived experience often implies some individual and collective change, which is itself often unintended: Encounters with cultural diversity, entanglements with alterity, may not always be a sheer pleasure but people must develop a habitual readiness to cope with them. So, the daily experience of diversity fosters the ability to alter life scripts pre-written by any community—of faith, tradition, religion, or culture—and to draw selectively on a variety of different cultural repertoires.

Beck and Sznaider also describe cosmopolitanization as a dual process [25]. As a top-down process (international law, international organizations, global discussion forums, global cities), cosmopolitanization may be found in various social structures and in the way they transform normative discourses and construct people's lives. As a bottom-up process, cosmopolitanization is expressed through civil society and various human interactions that result from, inter alia, the media, migration and global mobility (see also: [22], pp. 145–76; [19,26–30]).

Cosmopolitanization is therefore a process that reflects the emergence of new approaches to a variety of issues, discourses and practices, which are themselves reflections as well as matrices of the "cosmopolitan feeling which rests on the sense of being part of a common humanity" ([31], p. 5).

To present my argument on the cosmopolitanization of feminism, I adopt a postcolonial feminist reading "[that] is interested...in recognizing the ability of people of diverse backgrounds to be the subject of their own history" ([11], p. 10) and consequently contributes to the de-Westernization of the universal subject by fostering the dehegemonization of the knowledge produced by privileged elites [32–36].

My research is based on global data such as that provided by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) [37],[1] the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) [38] and UN-Women [39].[2] This data enabled me to refer to the political representation of women and their transformative actions as social participants at the political level, as well as to feminist norms that are developing at the global level and that, in recent decades, have aroused increasing attention from governmental and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) as integral parts of women's human rights, over and above the territories defined by state borders [16,21,26].

The article is divided into four parts. In Section 2, I try to define more clearly the meaning of cosmopolitanization as it applies to feminism. To that end, I point to the fact that norms, attitudes, and practices regarding women's equal political rights to elect and be elected are becoming self-understood in the social and mental structures throughout the global village. In Section 3, I describe this process and how it is articulated from above (top-down cosmopolitanization), referring to among other things, electoral data from around the world and to international law which now guarantees the political rights of women. Section 4 analyzes the cosmopolitanization of feminism from below, through the civil society and how this process reflects the lived experience of different women at different social intersections and their agency as political participants in promoting their human rights. Finally, in Section 5, the conclusion, I discuss the common future of feminism and cosmopolitanism.

After these clarifications, I now proceed to analyze the top-down and bottom-up cosmopolitanization of feminism.

2. Which Cosmopolitanization?

The numerous works that discuss cosmopolitanism and cosmopolitanization contain different definitions and typologies of these concepts and of their significance, at both the ideological and the sociological levels, in ethics, politics, urbanism, culture, consumption and law (see [22], pp. 145–76; [24,28,29,40]). Among the plethora of definitions and typologies, I refer here to "institutionalized cosmopolitanism", which Beck and Sznaider describe as the common basis of all evolutions [25]. According to this approach, at the level of concrete human reality—and not at the level of the moral or political ideal—world society today reflects a cosmopolitan condition that becomes institutionalized as societies interconnect in the wake of globalization, creating at times a new global and hybrid awareness of their future. At the global level, this means that global standards, norms and models that are embedded within organizations, laws, conventions and social systems acquire a taken-for-granted status over time and influence decision makers, as well as society as a whole. To illustrate this argument, Levy and Sznaider point to the globalization of the human rights regime and its impact on both international politics and state-society relations [30].

The other aspect of "institutionalized cosmopolitanism" is that it is internalized in the consciousness of (ordinary) people, as Beck and Sznaider explain: "The question, then, is: how should we operationalize this conception of the world as a collection of different cultures and divergent modernities? Cosmopolitanization should be chiefly conceived of as globalization from *within*, as *internalized cosmopolitanism*" ([25], p. 389, emphasis in the original). Thus, internalized cosmopolitanism refers to how individuals interconnect through their universal humanity so that diverse norms, behaviors and practices gain acceptance and become normative in everyday life. In that process, people of different origins interact across cultural lines and create a society in which diversity is accepted and rendered ordinary [41].

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[1]　Created in 1889, the Inter-Parliamentary Union is an international organization of representatives from state parliaments. Promoting inter-parliamentary dialogue at the global level, it works toward peace and cooperation between peoples and seeks to strengthen representative institutions.

[2]　This new entity groups together various existing UN bodies such as the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), and the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues (OSAGI). For further details, see UN-Women 2016 [24].

Therefore, as applied to feminism, which is understood here as the movement and ideas that promote women's human rights, cosmopolitanization in the political sphere means that the rights and duties of women in this sphere—such as to elect and be elected—become institutionalized in social structures as well as in the mental structures of individuals as self-understood principles of society at various levels.

3. Top-Down Cosmopolitanization of Feminism: Representation and International Law

3.1. Descriptive Representation

With regard to descriptive representation which reflects the composition of the electorate, what is emerging is not a clash of civilizations but rather a cosmopolitan reality that expresses the universality of women's right to vote and be elected. It is superfluous to recall the long struggle by feminists around the world to obtain the right to vote, as citizens in their own right in the modern era [42–44]. It is however, important to emphasize that what seemed unthinkable barely a century ago and in certain countries, barely five years ago (for example, the right to vote was granted to women in Saudi Arabia only in 2011) has become a "given", a common feature of political structures. Furthermore, a quick perusal of Table 1 shows that this phenomenon has been accelerating since 1997, the year when data on the descriptive representation of women in parliaments around the world first began to be compiled on the Internet by the Inter-Parliamentary Union [45]. Indeed, such representation more than doubled and grew from an average of 10.1% in 1997 to 22.8% in 2015, in contrast with the much slower increase of less than 1% between 1975 and 1995 ([46], p. 20). Of particular interest is the fact that regions that should reflect a clash of civilizations between the West and "the others" [14,18] are those in which the acceleration of the descriptive representation of women is the most marked: During this period, representation grew from 10.1% to 23.3% in Sub-Saharan Africa and from 3.3% to 19.1% in Arab countries. In this respect, the world is far from experiencing a clash of civilizations and closer to a global rapprochement regarding this political practice.

Table 1. Descriptive Representation of Women in Parliament (Lower Chamber): Regional and World Averages, 1997–2015.

Regions	Percentage of Women 1 January 1997	Percentage of Women 1 December 2015
Nordic countries	36.4%	41.1%
Europe + Nordic countries	13.8%	25.7%
Europe without Nordic countries	12.3%	24.2%
the Americas	12.9%	27%
asia	13.4%	19.3%
Sub-Saharan Africa	10.1%	23.3%
Pacific	9.8%	13.4%
Arab states	3.3%	19.1%
total	10.1%	22.8%

Source: IPU 2016 [45].

In addition, a growing number of women are being appointed president or prime minister in Latin America, Africa, Europe and Asia. According to the IPU (2014) data [37], on1 January 2014, 5.9% of the heads of state (HS) were women, that is, 9 out of 152 and 7.8% of the heads of government (HG) were women, that is, 15 out of 193. This evolution is evident in the following countries: Argentina (HS/HG), Bangladesh (HG), Brazil (HS/HG), Chile (HS/HG), Costa Rica (HS/HG), Denmark (HG), Germany (HG), Jamaica (HG), Liberia (HS/HG), Lithuania (HS), Malawi (HS/HG), Norway (HG),

Republic of Korea (HS), San Marino (HS), Senegal (HG), Slovenia (HG), Thailand (HG) and Trinidad and Tobago (HG).[3]

Similarly, women ministers are becoming less rare, though they are still a minority: As of January 2015, 17% of government ministers were women and most of them oversaw social sectors, such as education and the family. Nevertheless, in various parts of the world there are governments without even one woman [24,37].

3.2. Substantive Representation

Furthermore, at the level of substantive representation of women, that is, at the level of political representation that makes a difference and advances women's human rights, the representation of women by women is increasing in the world, albeit very slowly and unequally. Many studies show that elected women in parliamentary democracies generally try to influence legislative priorities so that they take into account the concerns of women in general, even if the interests of the poorest and most marginalized women are often neglected. Their activism is expressed in their fight against sexual violence and their attempt to place on the legislative agenda issues such as parental leave, day-care centers, women's health, migrant and refugee women, the right to physical autonomy and integrity, women's access to water, land, credit and technologies including pensions and equality in the various spheres of public life: work, politics, army and media [14,18,46–48].

In recent years it has also been noted that (some) women ministers are continuing to pursue a feminist discourse in North America, Europe, Africa and Latin America. They even pursue this discourse and the ensuing political decisions when they become heads of the executive—head of state or head of government—as in the cases of Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, Liberia; Michelle Bachelet, Chile; and to a certain extent Dilma Rousseff, Brazil ([14], pp. 80–99; [18], pp. 137–56; [49]).[4] Angela Merkel, one of the world's most powerful women ([14], p. 149), is also to be included in this category for changing the gendered nature of the German cabinet, partly by appointing ministers to portfolios outside their traditional gendered assignment [51,52]. Moreover, given that women constitute 36% of the new cabinet of the United Kingdom, Prime Minister Theresa May, it seems she also belongs in this category [53]. So does Hillary Clinton, who may become the first woman president of the United States and who is and has always been a feminist and a human rights defender [54]. Thus, at the level of women's representation by women it seems that a (very slow) change is taking place that may augur a process of cosmopolitanization of such representation.

3.3. International Law

In this top-down evolution, the role of international judicial bodies and of the UN in particular, is vital. This role was reinforced partly by the establishment of various institutions in the aftermath of World War II such as the Commission for the Status of Women and the Division for the Advancement of Women, both founded in 1946. The role of the UN was also reinforced by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 10 December 1948, which clearly calls for equality between men and women [55]. Since then, the UN and its various structures have worked for the worldwide promotion of women's rights by establishing norms, procedures and practices on a global scale for equality between men and women in the private and public spheres. In this process, the political sphere has had a pioneering role. Indeed, the Convention on the Political Rights of Women, which was adopted on 20 December 1952 and which affirms women's right to vote and to be eligible for election, was the first international norm formulated by the UN.

The political domain was consistently emphasized in subsequent UN contexts, including the four world conferences on women organized by the UN (Mexico, 1975; Copenhagen, 1980; Nairobi, 1985;

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[3]   Only elected heads of state have been taken into account.
[4]   Cf. also: [50].

Beijing, 1995) and the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted on 18 December 1979 by the UN General Assembly.[5] In addition to being an international convention on women's rights, CEDAW lays out a program of action for member countries that aims to guarantee the exercise of these rights. As Frances Raday points out, "It is notable that the Convention is openly committed to the goal of eliminating discrimination against women and does not assume a guise of gender neutrality" ([21], p. 512). In addition, the fourth world conference on women, the Beijing Conference (1995), drew on the convention to create its program of action, which defined measures—at the local, national and international levels—for the advancement of women's human rights, including of course, women's political rights [21,48,57–59].

As Byrnes and Freeman argue, though CEDAW's impact is variable, there is considerable evidence that the convention has contributed to increasing women's enjoyment of the right to equality in many countries ([60], p. 2). One reason for that impact may be the fact that CEDAW, its institutional interpretation and its development at international and domestic levels are aware of the different lived experiences of women and have been committed to understanding and addressing intersectional discriminations, that is, the ways in which gendered disadvantages are experienced differently according to the shifting intersections between various social categories, such as gender, race, class, disability and sexual orientation [17,21,22,61].

The importance of political equality between women and men has also been emphasized by UN Women, which was founded in 2010 as an entity of the UN and is "dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women." As explained further, "a global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide." Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka of South Africa is today (2016) the executive director of UN Women (Michelle Bachelet, the president of Chile, was the first) and works under the direct authority of the UN Secretary-General, with the rank of Under-Secretary-General [39].

Nevertheless, it is undeniable that women still encounter widespread violations of their human rights, including various forms of violence: domestic violence, human trafficking, prostitution, sexual mutilation, rape, infanticide, and tradition-based aggressions (including forced marriage, ill treatment, and so-called honor killing). The violation of women's human rights also has a less spectacular, but just as widespread and systematic, form in civil, professional, and political inequality. And yet it is impossible to ignore international law, even if it is often unable to guarantee enforcement of its proclamations. Imperfect as it may be, international law provides leverage for pressuring governments, mobilizing the media and public opinion, opposing policies that negate the rights of all human beings, and institutionalizing cosmopolitan norms and the "right to have rights" in the global village [62].

4. Bottom-Up Cosmopolitanization of Feminism: The Role of Civil Society

Cosmopolitanization from below is a local, national and global process engendered by the feminist actors of civil society—including scholars, NGOs, interest and influence groups, civil associations, social networks and social media—that seek to promote women's human rights and bring about

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[5]　The convention's program of action for equality is spelled out in 14 articles. The convention covers three aspects of the status of women. It lists in detail the civic rights and legal status of women but it also—and this is what distinguishes it from other human rights treaties—relates to procreation and the impact of cultural factors on gender relations. The implementation of the convention is supervised by the Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The committee's mandate and how it is to follow up the implementation of the convention are defined in its articles 17 to 30. The committee is made up of 23 experts nominated by their governments and elected by member countries on the basis of possessing "high moral authority and being eminently competent in the domain to which the Convention applies." At least every four years, the member countries must present to the committee a report on the measures they have adopted for implementing the provisions of the convention. At the annual session of the committee, its members analyze the national reports together with representatives from each government and study with them the domains in which the country concerned should introduce new measures. The committee also issues general recommendations on questions related to the elimination of discrimination against women. To date (2016), 189 of the 193 existing countries have ratified the convention. The United States and Palau have signed but not ratified the treaty. The Holy See, Iran, Somalia, Sudan and Tonga are not signatories to CEDAW [56].

political change. In this process, a cosmopolitan space is formed. At its center, the notion of women's human rights evolves and is transformed through a continuity of exchanges and interactions between the numerous feminist bodies of the North and the South, sometimes succeeding in giving a voice even to the most underprivileged women, such as women with disabilities, refugees, migrant workers, migrant farm workers and sex workers. In this context, problems, identities, strategies, methods and world perception vie with each other, often bitterly. Women's human rights are thus continuously subject to revision, reinterpretation and redefinition, in accordance with different affiliations and stances but are always based on the principles of equality and human dignity. They are contextualized in order to be respected, as demonstrated in the global struggle against violence toward women, waged from below in accordance with various feminist strategies [63]. This feminist space recognizes the right to be different. However, it distinguishes itself from the relativism associated with the multicultural approach which, on the pretext of respecting differences, exacerbates them and sacrifices the rights of individuals, particularly of women, in order to reproduce and preserve an imagined, imposed "authentic collective identity" ([3–5,9,19,63]; [22], pp. 171–74).

4.1. Feminist Theory

Cosmopolitanization from below, thus defined, has evolved in the last four decades, thanks first of all to the pluralism of feminist theory. Struggling to make their voices heard, feminist scholars [9,14,18] have developed diversified theoretical approaches, creating critical spaces where the concerns and issues of the vast majority of women in the world are articulated, including those that do not refer to the white, heterosexual, middle class of Western countries. This process is prompted by the intersectional theoretical and methodological approach, anchored in Black feminist and postcolonial feminist theory, which deconstructs the disempowerment of marginalized women and points to the interactions between diverse forms of subordination and to how these interactions are reflected in different structural opportunities for different groups of women (cf. [32–36]). The intersectional approach has also been progressively incorporated more comprehensively into international antidiscrimination law, including CEDAW, so as to better address multiple forms of discrimination (though for the moment, it is not always fully integrated into a substantive equality approach and is not articulated consistently across the UN human rights system) [64,65]. In this context, issues that were taboo now appear on the global feminist agenda and are also taken up by political participants. These issues include the education of girls; access to land, credit and drinking water; inheritance rights; the impact of conflicts on women; genital mutilation of women; hierarchization according to age; dowries; maternal mortality; child marriage; forced marriage; polygamy; abortion of female fetuses; eating disorders such as anorexia; labor migration; and women asylum seekers. These developments have led Sylvia Walby to state, in referring to factors in the evolution of feminist theories, that women's human rights have taken on a hybrid rather than a uniquely Western character, even at the level of international institutions such as the UN ([17]; [63], p. 536). It follows that the theoretical wealth that has characterized feminism in recent years constitutes one of the factors in its cosmopolitanization from below. This wealth is the reflection of complex exchanges and of the differences and similarities that exist between different ways of thinking and different strategies that challenge structural imbalances in the production and distribution of knowledge. Thus, it can be argued that these encounters, instead of leading to a clash of civilizations and culture wars, have led to the global cross-fertilization of women as political participants.

4.2. Cyberfeminism and Online Social Networks

The theoretical efflorescence of the feminist discourse and the cosmopolitanization it nourishes from the bottom up rests largely on the phenomenal expansion of online social networks constructed around feminist and ecological issues as well as issues pertaining to human rights and self-constructed identities. This expansion is part of what is called cyberfeminism (though the term was coined in the early 1990s, it has been subject to multiple and often contradictory definitions and appropriations).

It refers to the feminist appropriation of information and computer technology (ICT) on both a practical and theoretical level and advocates that women participate in creating and defining the present and future of technoculture [66].

As women increasingly use online devices, accessed in the private sphere to express their feelings more openly and to challenge the social order, they also articulate their concerns more freely, exposing repressed social identities and/or subversive opinions and knowledge [67,68]. In that context, some of them also contest the way that the hegemonic Western rhetoric of modernity and globalization has seeped into many of the daily practices of cyberfeminism and has shaped the emergence of feminist issues and concerns [33]. By doing so, they make the 'privileged' women aware that they perceive 'the others' as being in a relation of hierarchical subordination and inferiority [33], often strengthening among the former, the recognition of difference as a maxim of thought and practice.

Moreover, social networks—as spaces of political action—offer a new dimension to feminist projects. Not only do they enable feminist ideas and protests to circulate like those that have already helped shatter the social order, as Randa Achmawi and Fatima Sadiqi note in their discussion of the uprisings in the Arab world [69,70], social networks also raise feminist issues that fill the global communication networks, creating global public awareness and providing platforms on which the global civil society can mobilize energies needed to promote women's human rights [70].

Cyberfeminism is thus one of the new dynamic spaces that enables the global dissemination of feminist political thought and action and as such, constitutes a crucial factor in the cosmopolitanization of feminism from below.

4.3. The NGOization of Feminism

Just as important in the process of bottom-up cosmopolitanization and linked to the factors described above, is the transformation of feminist movements into nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), in short, the NGOization of feminism. It is impossible in the framework of this study to discuss the debate that is raging over this issue and that is so cardinal in women's political activism in the world. However, there appears to be agreement on the fact that the NGOization of feminism is a double-edged process. On the one hand, it enables the various voices of civil society to be heard around the world and in so doing, even strengthens feminism at the political and ideological level. On the other hand, the result of this process seems to be the fragmentation of feminism and its partial de-politicization because, for example, many of the experts and professionals who direct these organizations act in accordance with neoliberal ideology and accord higher priority to presenting a balanced budget than to a radical agenda. Furthermore, these experts do not usually come from the group or social class on behalf of which they are fighting or defining problems but rather from the privileged classes. Moreover, the NGOization often results in the reproduction of North-South inequalities because tensions emerge between feminist organizations that find it easy to operate and those that find it difficult due to lack of funds [71–77].

Apart from this debate however and in connection with the process of cosmopolitanization from below, it is not erroneous to state that NGOization has conveyed the women's human rights discourse to the global village level because NGOs operate everywhere and in every domain related to the lives of women, in both the public and the private spheres. Certainly, as expressed by Desai, "prioritizing the discourse without paying sufficient attention to structural and material resources, as well as to power, is one of the main reasons for the persistence of inequality, which women are victims of in the world" ([75], p. 349). Nonetheless at the same time, the NGOization process has created norms, procedures and practices at the global level. Yuval-Davis describes this process as "feminist cosmopolitan activism" ([22], p. 174) and Reilly emphasizes the fact that patterns of increased NGO activity around UN forums over recent decades signal the emergence of a global civil society, a process in which women's transnational NGO networks are frequently cited as playing a pivotal role ([19], p. 378). This is due to a combination of strategies that create opportunities for bottom-up participation (including popular tribunals and petition drives), fostering intensive lobbying at local,

national and regional levels. As Reilly concludes, "In doing so, participants acquired the knowledge and skills needed to be active 'cosmopolitan citizens' and participate in multilevel governance processes" ([19], p. 378).

This cosmopolitan feminist activism is currently mobilizing feminists around the world to transform the paradoxical situation of women: Although they have mobilized in every corner of the globe and their influence is visible everywhere to some degree, numerous inequalities have not disappeared and some have even increased, because since September 2001, neoliberalism, militarism, terror and fundamentalism have increased in the world [78]. Creating solidarity within differences and for some organizations, adopting the intersectionality approach as a normative framework and guideline for action [79,80], feminists have organized to safeguard the 1990s' achievements in promoting feminist agendas at the global level. These agendas include the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—the international development goals officially established in 2015 to be achieved by 2030, covering 17 key areas of development and 169 targets, including poverty, hunger, health, education and gender equality. One of the key milestones in that agenda is the standalone Goal 5, which gives prominence to women's issues as opposed to continuing to consider them as cross-cutting issues. The SDGs are explained as follows by the United Nations Development Program [81]:

> The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aim to build on (past) achievements to ensure that there is an end to discrimination against women and girls everywhere. There are still gross inequalities in access to paid employment in some regions and significant gaps between men and women in the labor market. Sexual violence and exploitation, the unequal division of unpaid care and domestic work and discrimination in public decision making, all remain huge barriers.

> Ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health and affording women equal rights to economic resources such as land and property, are vital targets to realizing this goal. There are now more women in public office than ever before but encouraging more women leaders across all regions will help strengthen policies and legislation for greater gender equality.

Some feminist organizations that distance themselves from the UN, which they criticize for its neoliberal policies, are also mobilizing together (transnational feminism) and/or joining other global organizations, for example the World Social Forum, though it is often argued that women, gender and feminism are marginalized in that forum's program and content. Thus, it can definitely be claimed that the bottom-up process of the cosmopolitanization of feminism is more important today than ever before ([18], pp. 91–107; [19,22,26,46,82,83]).

5. Conclusions: Cosmopolitanism and Feminism—A Common Future

My study challenges the argument that world society is shaped by the clash of civilizations. Therefore, referring to Beck and Sznaider [25] I have analyzed what I call the cosmopolitanization of feminism through the evolution of the political rights of women to elect and be elected at the global level. This process of cosmopolitanization which enables the gradual recognition of "the others' others"—women—is evident in the fact that at the level of lived human reality, women's political equality is gradually becoming institutionalized. There is a slow but sure evolution of the political 'given' that assures women around the world of their formal right to participation and representation—descriptive but also increasingly substantive—and enables them to make their voices heard at the level of local, national, international and transnational institutions and as part of the civil society in the North and the South.

It appears that this process is also being accompanied by the development of a cosmopolitan feminist memory, which nourishes women's memorized 'us' and redefines men/women relations as well as relations between women at the global level. Thus, this memory reinforces a gendered human

rights ethic in a movement of solidarity and plurality. This memory also transcends the national collective memories that form its base and in accordance with Misztal's injunction [84] regarding the need to learn "what and how to remember", enables a common sharing of the "lieux de mémoire" of global feminism—monuments, historical figures, museums, archives, internet sites or symbols, slogans, events, or institutions (on cosmopolitan memory, see [30,84]).

International conventions are also part of this feminist memory as they simultaneously create and reflect global feminist memory-sites for, as Levy and Sznaider note, "The juridification of political relations is a central feature in the institutionalization of the Human Rights regime and it is sustained by, among other things, self-conscious references to memories of past abuse" ([30], p. 663).

Another aspect of the cosmopolitanization of feminist memory can be seen in international days initiated or recognized by the UN, such as International Women's Day on 8 March, a day of demonstrations worldwide, which provides an opportunity for assessing the status of women in the world; or the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on November 25, declared by the UN in 1999 with the goal of combating violence against women everywhere. "Violence against women" refers here to all acts of violence that cause physical, sexual, or psychological harm, including threats, coercion, or arbitrary prevention of freedom in the private or public sphere [85].

Thus it appears that a feminist analysis of world society leads us not only to refute the ethnocentric, static concept of a clash between civilizations but also helps us understand the "newness of our time" [86], that is, the contemporary process of cosmopolitanization, as well as the development of the cosmopolitan memory that expresses and nourishes it. At this stage, it seems possible to affirm that the knowledge regarding the achievements of global feminism constitutes a permanent and valuable resource for a sociological analysis of the cosmopolitanization of global society and of the different ways in which cosmopolitanism, by penetrating all kinds of cultural practices, is becoming everyday cosmopolitanism, or as Beck and Grande put it, "banal cosmopolitanism" [87].

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