**SOC 576 Cultural Aspects of Migration, Urbanity and Gender**

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**Position paper**

**Daniel Chernilo**

**Chernilo, D. ‘Cosmopolitanism and the question of universalism’**

In *Cosmopolitanism and the question of universalism*, Daniel Chernilo states that the development of a cosmopolitan stance is social sciences in the past few years stands on the basis of the notion of universalism, which he together calls cosmopolitan universalism. Furthermore, he examines the four most common critiques of universalism and attempts to refute them.

The four criticisms go as follows: 1) that universalism is originally a western, and thus not a universal idea; that universalistic approach is unable to capture the notion of social change; 3) that universalism favours certain imperialistic ideas; and finally 4) it carries no empirical evidence. Chernilo argues that the idea of universalism occurred elsewhere than in Greece as well and that Ancient Greece cannot be considered Western anyway; that universalism itself is an answer to social change. He answers the latter two criticism with the help of Kant´s universal morality, claiming that no moral and universal idea can discriminate a certain group of humankind, and that the abstract character of universalism does not deny it being an intrinsic part of the notion of humankind.

Chernilo makes a fair attempt to contextualize the most recent development in the discourse of social sciences within the history of Western thinking, so that it seems enrooted within its thought tradition and as a natural and the only possible outcome of past development. His attempt to support the idea of universalism stand on firm arguments; however, the general criticism that cosmopolitanism and universalism alike face is that of Western ethnocentrism, which is impossible to refute while still using only examples of Western thought. Maybe it is not in power of one person to go beyond the Western tradition; but defending the Western stance only through Western arguments will not be of much help.

Chernilo, D. (2012) ‘Cosmopolitanism and the question of universalism’, in Delanty, G. (ed.) *The Routledge Handbook of Cosmopolitanism Studies*, London, Routledge: 47-59