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**'One Great Republic'?
Republican Revival and Civic Polyculturalism
in Europe's Emerging Polity**

by

Kostas A. Lavdas

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Professor Kostas A. Lavdas. Dr. Lavdas is a professor of European politics at the University of Crete, Greece. He was educated at Panteion-Athens, the University of Manchester, L.S.E. and M.I.T. and has written extensively on Greek politics, EU politics and policy, political theory, and comparative political analysis.

Kostas A. Lavdas is Professor of Political Science and Director of the Crete Centre for Political Research and Documentation (KEPET) at the University of Crete, Greece, where he was Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs (2004-2006) and Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences (2003-2004). He was born in Athens in 1964 and studied political science, political sociology, public policy and international relations at Panteion-Athens, the University of Manchester (UK), L.S.E. (UK) and M.I.T. (USA). He has published extensively in English, German and Greek on European politics, Greek politics and policy, comparative interest group politics, regional conflict in Southeastern Europe and republican political theory. He has taught and researched at various European and American universities and research centers and at the National School of Public Administration in Athens. From 2004-07 he served on the Board of the Hellenic Centre for European Studies, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Board of the Centre for Educational Research, Ministry of Education, Athens. Author of *The Europeanization of Greece: Interest Politics and the Crises of Integration* (Macmillan, 1997), *Politics, Subsidies and Competition* (with M. Mendrinou) (Edward Elgar, 1999), *Formation and Development of the European Communities* (in Greek) (Hellenic Open University, 2003), and *Interests and Politics: Interest Organization and Patterns of Governance* (in Greek) (Papazisis, 2004). Co-editor (with D. N. Chryssochoou) of *European Unification and Political Theory: The Challenge of Republicanism* (in Greek) (Sideris, 2004). He is the author of numerous articles in international scholarly journals (including *European Journal of Political Research, West European Politics, Journal of Political and Military Sociology, Politics*) and book chapters in published volumes in English, German and Greek (including *The Political Economy of Privatization, Verbände und Verbandssysteme in Westeuropa, Εκπαίδευση και Εκπαιδευτική Πολιτική*). He has served as a referee for international scholarly journals (including *European Journal of Political Theory, Political Studies, Ethnic and Racial Studies*) and for the Economic and Social Research Council of the United Kingdom. During 2007-2008 he holds the Constantine Karamanlis Chair in Hellenic and Southeastern European Studies at The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, Massachusetts, USA.

'One Great Republic'?

Republican Revival and Civic Polyculturalism in Europe's Emerging Polity

KOSTAS A. LAVDAS[1]

> To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield
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> Alfred Tennyson, *Ulysses* (1842)

> There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
>
> Than are dreamt of in your philosophy
>
> William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (1601)

Introduction

Even as they failed to lead to a defining *constitutional moment*, Europe's extensive *constitutional debates* became yet another piece of evidence testifying to the EU's increased relevance as an emerging political system. By 2007-2008, when the Constitutional Treaty was pronounced dead and the Reform Treaty stood in its place, constitutional debates had reached a critical turning point. They now involve substantive as well as procedural issues, inviting us to reconsider the normative dimensions of the European project. The challenge for EU constitutionalism is to harness the potential of Europe's republican traditions, utilising that potential for the emerging Euro-Polity. At the same time, diversity in today's Europe goes beyond national differences to embrace a variety of cultural and spatial dimensions. As stated in the Berlin Declaration of 2007, the EU is enriched by 'a lively variety of languages, cultures and regions'. How are we to

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combine a robust (republican) grounding for constitutionalism and a celebratory affirmation of differences (including those emanating from multicultural coexistence)? I suggest that, in today's EU, one way of approaching the question of democracy (and of its possible futures) is by looking at the political system of the European Union as a liberal republican construction in the making. In addition, Europe's political constitution would have to embrace *civic polyculturalism*, which is a new facet of the pluralist condition. While recognizing the indeterminacy inherent in the new politics of multiple commitments and complex identities, the challenge for empirically informed normative political theory is to go beyond what is evident in Europe's experimentations with democracy, to embrace latent but crucial potentialities.

'One Great Republic'? Europe in the International Milieu

It was Edward Gibbon who, in the third volume of his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1781), made the observation that contemporary European affairs should be approached in terms of 'one great republic' emerging amidst the uneasy, fluctuating balance among the states of Europe (Headley 2008: 200-201). Citing reasons to support his thesis that it would be unlikely for Europe to suffer a reverse and decline such as ancient Rome suffered, Gibbon put forward the argument that the 'manners of Europe' were becoming increasingly dominant in the 'civilized world', while – at the same time – technological and scientific advances meant that before the barbarians may conquer, they 'must cease to be barbarians'. A 'republic', in that context, implied a political order that was pluralistic and, at the same time, built around a core set of political values: political liberty, civic duty, limited but effective and responsible government. It was the remarkable amalgam of these features that made the metaphor possible and – to some – plausible in the first place.

Yet, as John Headley (2008) suggests, Gibbon's triumphalist vision of a 'Europeanized' affairs of the world cannot conceal an undercurrent of anxiety: the balance sustained by 'temperate' competition among the various parts of Europe's 'great republic' may prove to be fragile, it may lead to added tensions, it may even result in conditions no longer conducive to the reproduction of those 'manners of Europe'. In the absence of a Kantian underlying logic of a teleological project of humanity leading towards Eternal Peace, in opposition to – or rather with the help of – competition and

antagonism, the whole idea of a European Republic becomes a rather tentative one. What are the core features of the idea? The 'manners of Europe' and the balance among the 'polished nations', coupled with the outward reach of 'European civilization' (i.e., colonization), 'inspired by the pure and generous love of science and mankind'. In other words, a distinctive political culture of European international relations.

It is a political culture that has nurtured a multilevel republican conception of the world, a conception which was already transcending at a theoretical level the inside-outside distinction during the very phase of the historical emergence of that distinction and even before its consolidation. As Daniel Deudney (2007) has argued, what can be construed as a republican security theory has its roots in approaches that aimed at the simultaneous avoidance of the extremes of hierarchy and anarchy. There are some pretty demanding requirements, though. On the one hand, domestic republicanism needs to be protected from external threats and domination. On the other hand, however, too strong an international projection of a republican polity's power might be equally risky for domestic institutions. Republican security theory is attentive to the domestic implications of imperial dominance, which usually destroys republican arrangements.[2] This is, of course, an observation that – applied in a different framework – was famously advanced by Thucydides in his analysis of the implications of the Peloponnesian War for domestic (Athenian) democracy. As the war conditions became chronic and peace appeared more and more elusive, the Athenian polity was transformed. Instead of a polis, Thucydides tells us, Athens gradually became a militarist system: as a result of the war, 'Athens resembled in fact rather a fortress than a polis' (see, *inter alia*, Connor 1984).

But Deudney's observation is valuable in that the point he wants to make is a more particular one. Beginning in the early eighteenth century, several observers used the analogy between the political patterns of Europe as a whole and particular republican political systems. 'Despite a wide recognition of Westphalia as a turning point, Enlightenment theorists commonly called it a type of ''republic'' rather than the ''Westphalian system''. Calling this new situation a species of ''republic'' conveyed that Europe was not an anarchy and it was not a hierarchy' (Deudney 2007: 139). This is no longer a normative rehearsal of the republican theme. It goes to the heart of contemporary

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[2] Taking France as a paradigmatic case of domestic republican arrangements, protracted warfare of an imperialist nature did lead to un-republican transformations. In fact, within France, the colonial wars led to

concerns in IR theory. Indeed, according to Deudney, enlightenment republican theory was the first international system theory: 'the Big Bang of international theory' (Deudney 2007: 157). Of course, probing international theorizing from Kantian and republican prisms (Onuf 1998) has led to worthwhile normative hypotheses and frameworks of understanding. At a fundamental level, though, republican security theory shares many concerns with Realism, while eschewing its pessimistic worldview. Security problems are real, difficult problems. They will not simply go away as a result of changed perceptions, enlightened socializing processes, or sheer good will. But they can sometimes be effectively mastered with the help of appropriate practices and appropriate structures (Deudney 2007: 270-271).

This applies to republican security thought on both sides of the Atlantic. Strangely enough, recent over-simplifications in regards to the state of the transatlantic relationship have tended to forget the republican dimension. Indeed, schematic accounts of perceived differences between 'Kantian' Europe and 'Martian' America (e.g., Kagan 2002)[3] have failed to address the implications of what *is* distinctive in Europe's political culture of IR, namely the early and recurring conception of the European states system not in terms of a Westphalian system but in terms of a republican metaphor. The same, *mutatis mutandis*, applies to a second case of over-simplification, which is almost a mirror-image rendering of the first one. We refer to the litany of publications aiming to elucidate the EU's tentative steps in the direction of security and defense from the empirically unfounded prism of 'balancing against' perceived US hyper-power.[4] Both misunderstandings – considering the EU's economic, civilian and normative image (soft power) in terms of a peculiar post-Cold War Kantianism and reading the EU's timid attempts at acquiring a minimal security capacity (hard power) in terms of an attempt to balance against US dominance – share a view of Euro-Atlantic relations which remains oblivious to the deep-rooted significance of the shared republican tradition.

It follows that the attempt to apply republican theory to the emerging EU political system cannot escape a complex, dual focus: the emergent republican properties of the EU polity and the republican dimensions of the world of states and other actors of which

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a decline in republican thought, a rise in French nationalism, and opposition to assimilation (see Conklin 1997).

[3] On this approach see, *inter alia*, Lindberg (2004) and Paterson (2007: 1-12).

[4] For a particularly useful discussion of the limitations of recent neo-realist interpretations of the ESDP see Howorth (2007).

the EU is now a part. Neither rigid hierarchy, nor unpredictable anarchy: the negotiation of shifting modalities of coexistence and cooperation gives credit to the liberals' institutional emphasis while at the same time eschewing over-simplification of what is an inherently 'conflictual, too' predicament (at the minimum because of scarce resources coupled with the burden of inherited ideological and other preconceptions). Seen from this perspective, the ddebate on Europe's international identity should not be allowed to gloss over the difficult issue of the relations between Europe's internal dynamics and fragmentation and the Union's outward image, action, and soft-power projection. We cannot develop a theory of the EU as a political system and then 'work out on the side' the issue of its relation to the world it inhabits. We need an approach that focuses on the EU as an emerging polity that calls for a prism which is attentive to the interactions between the polity-building and world-inhabiting facets of the emergent entity.[5]

An emerging Polity

In the midst of constitutional anxiety, the 50th anniversary of the Rome Treaty (1957) found Europe's integrationist experiment at a crossroads. Even before the successful conclusion of the negotiations on the Lisbon/ Reform Treaty (2008), one could argue that Europe at 50 had been a successful experiment in regional integration. But has it been a successful experiment in discovering new forms of democratic governance? The *referenda* resulting in the rejection of the Constitutional Treaty by the French and Dutch citizens indicate that the EU is, at the minimum, a politically salient entity. But we need to go further. In today's EU, one promising way of approaching the question of democracy (and of its possible futures) is by looking at the political system of the European Union as a liberal republican construction in the making. The main thrust of the argument is the need to rediscover 'civic Europe' through the lens of liberal republicanism, by raising the question of how to use latent potentialities in order to transform the EU into a democratic association of free and equal citizens who respect diversity while upholding certain core republican values.

The failure to ratify the Constitutional Treaty, when French and Dutch citizens rejected it in their respective national referenda in 2005, brought to the fore a host of

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[5] Traditional prisms, however, may prove particularly stubborn. Despite monetary union, the emergence of European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP), the new powers acquired by the European Parliament, and

concerns and anxieties over the Union's political prospects. Pondering about the implications of the French and Dutch referenda, Europhiles belittled the criticism of the EU project inherent in these results as an offshoot of domestic grievances. On the other hand, Eurosceptics have been too quick to dismiss actual progress in a number of crucial EU policy areas. In fact, most of the actual aims set by the EC/EU treaties have gradually been achieved. The disappearance of internal borders and the creation of an internal market have been completed to a large extent. The same applies to the free movement of persons and, perhaps most important of all, the monetary union. Progress has been slower in the areas of social policy, justice and home affairs, and foreign policy and defense. But the real gaps and the actual *lacunae* are not so much to be found in the treaty-specified policy areas as they are a question of the perceived distance separating actual performance of European institutions and the political expectations invested in them.

In fact, the Constitutional Treaty had developed as a response to two distinct sets of challenges. The first was of a practical nature. A palimpsest of successive attempts at reform, the EU body of treaty provisions was in need of a new codification and simplification. The second challenge was more directly political. The attempt to relaunch integration required a set of legitimating symbols and political reference points. In tackling this challenge, the elites responsible for the final form of the Constitutional Treaty may have miscalculated the actual parameters of the tacit consensus available in their electorates. The Treaty was putting the standard too high in symbolic terms (presenting itself as a European Constitution) while at the same time reproducing in minute detail a number of economic and monetary policy provisions. European citizens failed to develop a sense of civic attachment to the larger polity and, hence, an independent source of 'input-oriented' (social) legitimacy through free public deliberation. Have we in Europe learnt our lessons from the experience?

Following the rejection of the Constitutional Treaty by France and the Netherlands in 2005 and a two-year period of reflection, it was decided in June 2007 to proceed with a new Treaty. The relation between the new Treaty and the abortive constitutional text is a matter of some dispute. In her Speech to the European Parliament on 27 June 2007, the Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel noted that the agreement reached retains the substance of the Constitutional Treaty. According to Merkel, with the Reform

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so on, certain introductory textbooks and booklets still present the EU as an intergovernmental organization

Treaty the EU takes full account of citizens' fears of an alleged 'European superstate', i.e., of surrendering too much of the nation-states' identities. That is why EU leaders decided to refrain from laying down state-like symbols and designations in the Reform Treaty. At the same time, however, the Reform Treaty contains advances for the European Union's capacity to act, going in some areas even further than in the Constitutional Treaty (e.g., on climate protection, energy solidarity, on the conditions for enhanced cooperation, particularly on justice and home affairs, or on introducing a European citizens' initiative – as envisaged in the Constitutional Treaty). Last but not least, the German Presidency succeeded in brokering an agreement regarding the Charter of Fundamental Rights, which will be legally binding. The United Kingdom, with its own legal tradition, has decided to follow a different path on this issue.

As Commission President José Manuel Barroso explained in his statement to the European Parliament, while one may criticize the various opt-outs and many would have wished to avoid them, 'diversity is a central feature of the European Union and sometimes it requires political and institutional compromises. I prefer to have specific opt-outs for specific countries than to be forced to lower the level of overall ambition of the Treaty. The crucial point is that, despite our diversity, we remain united regarding fundamental goals, fundamental values and fundamental principles' (Barroso 2007).

Indeed, the Intergovernmental Conference (ICG) 2007 succeeded in producing a draft Reform Treaty which aims to modernize and simplify the preexisting treaties while salvaging a great number of the Constitutional Treaty's aims and provisions. The Reform Treaty drawn up by the ICG was approved during the European Council in Lisbon (18-19 October 2007) and, after the member state governments have signed it, it will have to pass the ratification process in all 27 EU countries. It is hoped that the new Treaty will come into force before the next European Parliament elections in June 2009.

Apart from reforming, modernizing and simplifying the complex set of treaty provisions, the Reform Treaty has the ambition of reinforcing the democratic nature of the EU. It aims to accomplish this in four ways. First, it offers a more elaborate account of what European citizenship means. Second, the new Treaty gives legal force to the Charter of Fundamental Rights, which will be a central part of the system of checks and balances in the EU political system. Third, the role of the European Parliament in the

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(e.g., Wilkinson 2007: 80-81).

legislative process of the Union is strengthened. Finally, the fourth democracy-related measure introduced by the Reform Treaty regards the rights of national parliaments, which will reinforce the principles of accountability and subsidiarity. But the question remains: does the new institutional attempt to consolidate and reinforce a European polity provide substantive incentives for European citizens to get more involved? Does it engage the normative dimensions of Europe's rich fields of political debate?

'Like an Old Book of the Middle Ages'…

From one perspective, today's EU appears to be an inscrutable palimpsest uttering its *dicta* in an obscure jargon, an arrangement enshrined in ever newer agreements continually superimposed over preexisting structures. 'He resembled an old book of the Middle Ages, full of errors, of absurd traditions, of obscenities; he was extraordinarily composite'. This description, by Marcel Proust (*Temps perdu*), of one of his more ambiguous, complicated and composite characters (Charlie Morel), would fit nicely today's EU.

Yet from another perspective, today's EU is a complex phenomenon that touches upon an increasingly relevant set of political issues while encompassing certain latent but crucial potentialities. Indeed, more than any other formation beyond the nation state, the EU has being able to assume properties that increasingly make us think of it as a 'state' – in the sense that it has become a complex set of institutions affecting our lives and, accordingly, force us to think that we need ways of influencing institutions that take decisions for us on the supranational level as well as at national, regional, local and neighborhood levels.[6] In other words, it is increasingly becoming evident that the politically relevant terrain for citizens is also to be found on the EU level. Furthermore, in its workings the EU has institutionalized a complex learning process of change and adaptation. Both dimensions – the increasing relevance of the EU level for peoples' control over their own lives and the enduring learning processes of institutional workings at EU level – testify to the need for an approach that would capture the dynamics of change 'from a diplomatic to a political arena', 'from policy to polity', or 'from democracies to democracy' (see Lavdas and Chryssochoou 2007). On the other hand, the EU appears to be a *sui generis* formation. It defies any easy notions as to how it is

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[6] On this particular dimension of today's EU see, for example, the analysis of Stoker (2006: 153).

organized in relation to other polities. In other words, our point of departure in examining today's EU is that the issues it has to confront are increasingly political issues familiar in the realm of the state, while its formation and outlook appear historically unique.

In this way we reach a turning point where we need a more explicit account of the normative dimensions of our approach. Linking normative theory and analytical studies makes a lot of sense, provided we are in a position to harness the normative vision to facilitate the search for real-world potentialities. Precisely because its aim is to tackle real-world potentialities, the normative dimension has little to do with utopian musings. In recent years, new republican understandings have sought not only to revive, but also to nurture a paradigm of social and political organisation for the EU, founded upon republican notions (for an overview see Lavdas and Chryssochoou 2006). In its basic conception, a *res publica* aims at three primary objectives: justice through the rule of law; the common good through a mixed and balanced constitution; and liberty through active citizenship encouraged by institutions which guarantee undominated choice (the concept of freedom as non-domination).[7]

Before turning to the republican vision of Europe, let us consider some recent attempts to cast new light on the emerging Euro-polity. Being until recently a multilevel decision-making system focused primarily on bureaucratic policy-making and problem-solving, the EU has been able to project a combination of relative effectiveness coupled with an elusive politicality. As a result of the prominence conferred to institutions such as the European Commission, the rather muted quality of continuous technocratic policy-making has the effect of eluding traditional perceptions of a profound politicality. It is possible that Scharpf's notion, that the EU is becoming 'that "middle ground between cooperation among nations and the breaking of a new one" may be a good starting point (Scharpf 1988: 242). Yet, progress toward a European demos should not be equated with the possibility of a new form of regional statehood, let alone nationhood (Chryssochoou, 2001). Through processes such as the ones examined in the literature on Europeanization, the increasingly complex interlinking of domestic and EU politics leads to continuous adaptations in the development of co-evolving institutions.[8]

In this context, Wolfgang Wessels talks of an 'ever closer fusion' of public instruments from several levels linked with the respective Europeanization of national

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[7] On the concept of republican freedom see the ground-breaking work of Pettit (Pettit 1997, 2001, 2002).

actors and institutions. In this view, the EU needs to be assessed as part of the evolution of West European statehood (Wessels 1999). What is meant by 'fusion' is something more advanced than a pooling of sovereignties: a 'merger' of public resources located at several state-levels, as responsibilities for specific policies are diffused. The EU polity is a new form of governance for Philippe Schmitter (1996), lacking as it does a locus of clearly defined authority, a central hierarchy of public offices, a distinct sphere of competence, a fixed territory, an overarching identity, a monopoly over legitimate coercion and a unique capacity to impose its decisions. Schmitter's notions of what this 'new' might imply (the idea of 'consortio' and the idea of a 'condominio') project visions in which the territorial and the functional domains become disentangled in the formation of new forms of a regional political order.

In their attempt to capture the complexity of the EU, Richard Bellamy and Dario Castiglione have employed 'a pre-liberal conception of constitutionalism that identified the constitution with the social composition and form of government of the polity' (Bellamy and Castiglione 1997: 11). This theoretical viewpoint aims 'to disperse power so as to encourage a process of controlled political conflict and deliberation … moving them thereby to construct and pursue the public good rather than narrow sectional interests'. In this 'neo-Roman' interpretation, the EU becomes a 'mixed commonwealth' as suggested by MacCormick (1997), whereby the subjects of the constitution are not homogeneous, but a mixture of political agents that share in the sovereignty of the composite polity. As Bellamy and Castiglione suggest, 'the polycentric polity that is therefore emerging is a definite departure from the nation state, mainly because it implies a dissociation of the traditional elements that come with state sovereignty: a unified system of authority and representation controlling all functions of governance over a given territory' (Bellamy and Castiglione, 1997: 443).

In this way we reach a point where the boundaries between the analytical and the normative become somewhat blurred. We are therefore in need of a more explicit account of the normative dimensions of our approach. Linking normative theory and analytical studies (such as EU studies) makes a lot of good sense, provided that we are in a position to harness the normative vision to facilitate the search for real-world potentialities. It is true that the EU has not developed 'a new base of sovereignty' able to transcend state

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[8] See, *inter alia*, the early analyses by Ladrech (1994) and Lavdas (1997).

sovereignty, contrary to earlier predictions. The interplay between co-ordinated interdependencies and diffused political authority suggests that the EU is not part of a linear process toward a federal end. Rather, it is about the preservation of those state qualities that allow the component parts to survive as distinct constitutionally organized polities, whilst engaging in a polity-formation process that transforms their traditional patterns of interaction.

As Dimitris Chryssochoou explains, while the formative theories of integration focused on questions of 'who governs?' and 'how?', they failed to ask an equally crucial question: 'who is governed?' (Chryssochoou (2001). This has prompted a more explicit examination of the normative dimension in EU studies, inaugurating a series of debates following the development of constructivist discources in international relations. From this viewpoint, the EU is taken as an entity of 'interlocking normative spheres' (Baňkowski *et al.* 1998).

A nearly-forgotten European perspective

Thus far the discussion has involved Europe's current predicament set against the background of an attractive yet distant historical understanding of Europe's potential. It is time to look more closely into the ideas and the different strands that constitute the intellectual background in question, paying particular attention to a certain renaissance enjoyed by a certain version of one of its main strands. It is the recent revival of republican political thought that will form the focal point of our analysis.

To begin with, reviving a republican tradition is a complicated enterprise. As Piet Mouritsen (2006) reminds us, there *were* no such things back there as 'liberalism' and 'republicanism'; what we are dealing with is clusters of internally coherent arguments, values, and employments of concepts. In fact, 'liberalism' as a political epithet was used first in Spain to describe the dominant group in the Cortes in the conflict-ridden years after 1810 (see, e.g., Herr 2000: 198). Nor was the political class that strove to convert Spain into a liberal parliamentary monarchy viewed by other actors in early 19th century Europe in a way that manifests any ideological lens. The British minister wrote at the time that Spain was ruled by 'ragamuffins of the first order, bragging coxcombs, indifferent pupils of second rate actors of the Theatre Française' (Carr 2000: 205).

Ascribing ideological labels *ex post* is an enterprise that requires caution and, above all, a self-conscious approach to intellectual history.[9]

On the other hand, it is indeed the case that the contemporary indeterminacy of ideological coherence and/or signification does not preclude subsequent attempts at making sense of the past in terms of conceptual clusters. Quentin Skinner (1998) and others have shown that tracing the genealogy of these clusters facilitates reflection on the historicity of our own present concepts and political arrangements. In the very act of defining and delineating traditions of discourse we make choices, informed by present political and normative concerns. The next step, then, is to ponder the question: which version of 'republicanism'? Liberty and civic engagement have been interpreted and combined in a number of ways. Drawing in part on Roman as well as Renaissance visions, concepts of liberty, of balancing the separate powers and of civic engagement became key points of reference in the search for the good polity (see Schwarzmantel 2003).

Eagle-eyed in authority, classical (Roman and Renaissance) republicanism distilled the wisdom of a well-ordered but stern polity in which citizen participation was an end in itself, as was citizen commitment to the collectivity. We need to be aware of that when discussing notions of classical republican liberty. We are also reminded that classical republicanism gave priority to one's political community: it is to the 'fellow citizen', not humanity, that one was responding when forging bonds of political morality (Oldfield 1990: 8-9). As Maurizio Viroli notes, in his defense of a patriotic-minded republicanism, 'theorists of the early Italian republics equated civic virtue with the love of country, and they described true love of the republic as a passion that translated into acts of service and acts of care' (Viroli 2002: 13). Without entering the debate on whether a kind of 'reflective patriotism' (or Viroli's cultural patriotism, for that matter) chimes well with a more sophisticated version of republicanism, we suggest that from our angle, the perspective of a quintessentially liberal era, republicanism may function as a useful prism only if it can be robbed of some of its features. Features such as the notion of the intrinsically good republican institutions and the idea of civic virtue as an end in itself. By contrast, our interest in civic virtues (exemplified, for example, in recent discourses on political culture) is not in terms of the constitutive ends of politics: we may consider

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[9] In the words of Ghita Ionescu, Locke would have probably considered it an insult had he known that we

one or another virtue as valuable because, as Morrow notes, we approach it as 'a means of sustaining political systems that are valued for reasons other than their capacity to promote virtue' (Morrow 1998: 37). As Miller suggests, different people may give political engagement different weight according to their political values. It is not necessary for citizens to 'regard political activity as the *summum bonum* in order to adopt the republican view' (Miller 1995: 448).

Liberal republican approaches need to distance themselves from two important features of classical republicanism: (a) the 'strong' approach to the constitutive role of civic virtues in the good polity, and (b) republican hostility towards 'factions'. Ultimately, the challenge for contemporary republicans such as Philip Pettit[10] and Quentin Skinner[11] is to develop a pluralist, rather than a populist republicanism, in which tolerance would be guaranteed in diverse, multicultural societies. This refurbishment of republicanism reflects a concern with the making of a political ordering founded upon the notion of 'balanced government' and 'undominated' choice. But the latter is not sufficient for promoting liberty, as liberty is constituted by the appropriate legal institutions of the republican state (Pettit 1997: 106-109).

This touches on one of the main differences between a liberal and a classical republican view of liberty and rights: the theory of the natural rights of man is absent from early-modern republicanism, the advocates of which consider that rights are historical, sustained and made possible by appropriate laws and customs. When such laws and customs are absent, rights are not rights but moral claims: Machiavelli, in this vein, 'spoke only of liberty as a good that individuals may enjoy if they have good political and military institutions, if they possess a sufficient degree of civic virtue, and if they have the good luck not to live too close to powerful and aggressive neighbours' (Viroli 2002: 7). In other words, 'whereas the liberal sees liberty as essentially pre-social, the republican sees liberty as constituted by the law which transforms customs and creates citizens' (Brugger 1999: 7). The work of Philip Pettit, in particular, opens the door for new approaches from the perspectives of political philosophy, political psychology and political analysis, aiming at a comprehensive elucidation of the links between subjective will-formation and republican institutional settings (Pettit 1997, 2001, 2002). In this

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now call him a 'liberal' thinker! (Ionescu 1988: 233).
[10] See the influential work by P. Pettit, in particular his *Republicanism* (Pettit 1997).
[11] See the classic statement by Q. Skinner, *Liberty before Liberalism* (Skinner 1998).

version, participation is not taken as a democratic end-in-itself, but rather as a means of ensuring a dispensation of non-domination by others (non-arbitrary rule). In short, the rule of law, opposition of arbitrariness and the republican constitution are constitutive of civic freedom. The citizen learns to regard them as such and by his/her praxis realizes and expands their potential. The role of civic education is critical in this context. We need a republican education for citizenship which will encompass much more than classical civic virtues: citizens need to become aware of multiply reiterated interdependencies, realize the civic potential of institutions but also develop civic self-restraint (Honohan 2006).

The notion of 'balanced government' is also central to republicanism. It may still be useful for us in today's Europe. It is forged in two related ways: negatively, by associating the constitution of 'a proper institutional balance' with the prevention of tyranny; and positively, by ensuring a deliberative mode of civic rule, whereby 'the different "constituencies" which made up civil society would be encouraged to treat their preferences not simply as givens, but rather as choices which were open to debate and alteration' (Craig 1997: 114). Liberty was expected to be best preserved under a mixed form of polity through certain constitutional guarantees, with no single branch of government being privileged over the others. Here, republicanism strikes a balance between civic participation and the attainment of the public good, by allowing for 'a stable form of political ordering for a society within which there are different interests or constituencies' (Craig 1997: 116). A republican form of EU governance refers to the range of normative qualities embodying the construction of a civic space, where citizens share among themselves a sense of a 'sphere of spheres' (a civic virtue element that is a valuable resource for the polity) and a regard for good governance (a training ground for civic learning), at the same time as they take part in different public spheres. The republican account of liberty and mixed government can contribute in a constructive manner to the problems of constructing a European polity. With reference to the debate on the incorporation of the Charter of Fundamental Rights into the Treaty, it has been shown that the discussion is pregnant with frustrated potentialities, indicating the need for a more extensive, if thin, institutional public space through which to expand civic competence and engage citizens in a European demos (Lavdas and Chryssochoou 2006).

Given the absence of an engaging European civic demos - assuming that an economic or a legal demos already exist - republicanism emanates as a means of disentangling 'the issue of participation in an emerging polity from the cultural and emotional dimensions of citizenship as pre-existing affinity and a confirmation of belonging' (Lavdas 2001: 4). The point is that some elements of the real and symbolic *res publica*, may sustain a degree of political motivation *vis-à-vis* the EU and its relevance for peoples' lives while also allowing for other and more intense forms of motivation and involvement at other levels of participation. But given the lack of organic unity among the member demoi, the republican challenge, in line with that of multiculturalism, is one of institutionalizing respect for difference and group rights, whilst sustaining 'a shared sense of the public good' (Bellamy 1999: 160). This is more likely to emerge through Pettit's third concept of freedom (freedom as non-domination), as it encourages a viewpoint which combines 'the recognition of the significance of the pluralism of cultural possibilities for meaningful choice and a framework based on a minimal set of shared political values' (Lavdas 2001: 6). To the extent that Europe cannot motivate action by engaging with emotions and sentiments of community, European civicness calls for a different approach. The question is how to disentangle the issue of participation in the EU from the cultural and emotional dimensions of participation based on pre-existing affinity and confirmations of belonging.

But since most aspects of active citizenship can be reduced to either 'emotional citizenship' or the expression of rational and deliberative capacities, the question is how to strengthen the latter in a context where the weakness of the former presents opportunities (people are more likely to adopt detached positions) and constraints (people are less likely to take an interest in participation in the first place). One expects various asymmetries to have developed between member polities with different state traditions and diverse historical patterns of multicultural or monocultural legitimations of rule.

Republican Unity and Civic Polyculturalism

The very fact of increased immigration often leads to conceptions of market citizenship, with foreigners empowered as economic actors. From a different perspective, it has been argued that a 'transnational citizenship' would imply the acceptance of dual nationality (in the receiving and in the sending country) (Baubock 1994). Established models of

national citizenship become problematized, however, especially when the roles of immigrants with long-term presence in the land converge with the issues and the grievances of other (often pre-existing) groupings in societies. Even if 'state thinking' continues to dominate debates on citizenship and identity, approaches to European citizenship need increasingly to come to terms with the rich and complex realities of multiple cultural allegiances (Bellamy *et al*. 2004).

We can go further. Far from representing a fractured Europe, a certain version of multiculturalism may be an opportunity for rethinking the links between commitment, civicness and political relevance. Indeed, under certain conditions, the challenge of multiculturalism represents a certain promise for the European polity, opening up possibilities for multiple commitments within a civic European space no longer fractured exclusively by the sort of emotional-*cum*-utilitarian identity that was national citizenship (Lavdas 1999, 2001). A particular strand of multiculturalist theorizing, associated with the work of Will Kymlicka (1995, 2007) and others, is crucial in this respect: it aims to elucidate the conditions for multicultural coexistence while remaining sceptical of *both* naive relativism *and* 'anything goes' epistemology. The reading which associates the value of multiculturalism with its ability to enhance possibilities for meaningful choices (which differs from uncritical commitment to inherited group values), enables a view which aims to combine the recognition of the pluralism of cultural possibilities for access to meaningful choice and a framework based on a minimal set of shared political values. We must note that the latter remains crucial, as it can help us avoid the traps of naïve relativism, whilst focusing on arrangements and institutions that help citizens increase control over aspects of their own lives. Within this framework, a multitude of commitments may develop emotional engagement and enhance opportunities for meaningful choices. The fundamentally pluralist condition of *civic polyculturalism* aims to capture the realities of multiculturalism without in any way denying the basic adherence to certain minimal political values (Lavdas 2001, 2007). From this view also, a European civic space emerges as an answer to Europe's current concerns about the centrifugal and socially exclusionary reflexes of embedded heterogeneity.

The multitude of commitments can be understood as developing in different contexts within which infrastructures of communication and political criteria develop and reach a degree of temporary consolidation. In today's EU politics, such discursive

contexts constitute different public spheres with points of partial overlap (Lavdas and Chryssochoou 2006). This is in accordance with the view that in today's pluralist setting, participation and political engagement depend on the issues at stake: citizens select issues in relation to which they choose to involve themselves (Ackerman 1991). The juxtaposition of domestic pluralism and EU-level governance result in a complex set of issues in relation to which political engagement patterns may convergence or diverge. Ultimately, this renders EU polity-building both more difficult and more consequential.

The multiple and partially overlapping public spheres indicate that Europe's political order possesses the modalities for achieving a single deliberative polity with multiple *demoi*. It has been unable as yet to realize the potential. By pointing at a mixed sovereignty regime, republican theory makes the point that the EU rests on a primarily political constitution. This civic conception contributes to the making of a European political order whose distinguishing characteristics combine liberal-democratic norms and the continuous search for an inclusive civic space whose common points of reference do not negate the diversity of people's various commitments and aspirations. Such a European political order will be facilitated by appropriate practices at the national level (through policy inclusiveness as well as civic education) which will equip citizens to be actively involved in the processes of European and global governance (Chryssochoou 2007). Accordingly, a European *res publica* rests on citizens capable of reaching deliberative decisions to promote certain public goods, whose relevance extends beyond the processes of electoral politics. It is not just any kind of union set up 'for narrowly instrumental purposes', but a civic association based on virtue-centred practices to serve the common good, where freedom and the acceptance of diverse viewpoints come first (Lavdas and Chryssochoou 2007). This conception of a European res publica recognises the value of diversity for the enrichment of the possibilities for self-government. At a more fundamental level, it recognises that the idea of self-government requires a balance of both the procedural right to participate in politics and a concern to protect substantive rights (Brettschneider 2005).

This amounts to an attempt to identify and endorse a core of shared civic values, even as they have to be minimal and to recognize the constitutive role of diversity in today's Europe. Or, as Jan-Werner Müller more recently suggested, a core 'constitutional morality' based on moral principles of cooperation. Principles that we can discover in the

actual process of EU constitutionalization as it has unfolded through real-world politics, disagreements, debates and compromises (Müller 2007: 119-139). In real-world politics, one expects various asymmetries to have developed between member polities with different state traditions and diverse historical patterns of multicultural or monocultural legitimations of rule (Lavdas 1997).

The multiple and partially overlapping public spheres indicate that Europe's political order possesses the modalities for achieving a single deliberative polity with multiple *demoi*. It has been unable as yet to realize the potential. By pointing at a mixed sovereignty regime, republican theory makes the point that the EU rests on a primarily political constitution. In practical terms, we may trace the implications of this political constitutional order in several instances in recent European politics and policies. To give one example, it has been shown that the debate on the incorporation of the Charter of Fundamental Rights into the Treaty is pregnant with frustrated potentialities, indicating the need for a more extensive, if thin, institutional public space through which to expand civic competence and engage citizens in a European demos (Lavdas and Chryssochoou 2006). Or, to turn to recent enlargement processes, the political parameters of 'conditionality' imposed on applicant states manifest a core of strong political values, operating as filters alongside economic and technocratic yardsticks. To use an altogether different example, the attempt to 'shame' Austrians for the inclusion of Jörg Haider's Freedom Party in the government of Austria, an attempt that ultimately backfired, was an example in the mobilization of a form of supranational militancy legitimized through reference to both political morality and political memory (Müller 2007: 113).

A 'Republic of Europeans' is, in essence, a republic of commitment. It is a civic conception that contributes to the making of a European political order whose distinguishing characteristics combine liberal-democratic norms and the continuous search for an inclusive civic space. An emergent civic space, whose common points of reference complement the diversity of people's commitments and aspirations. Such a European political order will be facilitated by appropriate practices at the national level (through policy inclusiveness as well as civic education) which will equip citizens to be actively involved in the processes of European and global governance (Chryssochoou 2007). A republican education for citizenship is, however, a complex project in today's conditions of diversity and intense interaction (Honohan 2006). There is a transcendental human

dimension involved in this aspect of educating citizens which escapes the narrow confines of any political community. Education aiming at enhancing the capacity for independent moral judgment (Ackerman 1980) is at the heart of any serious attempt to link political education and a just political system.

In Conclusion: A 'Republic of Europeans' in a Liberal Milieu

This essay put forward a liberal republican approach which, unlike earlier forms of republican thought that focused on a basically homogenous political community, can accommodate and even embrace a certain version of multiculturalism and group rights. The essay has suggested that political debate in today's Europe bears the marks of multiple and partially overlapping public spheres. Despite the absence of a single public sphere, let alone a single *demos*, the partially overlapping fields of these spheres indicate that Europe's political order possesses the characteristics and the potential for achieving a new and worthwhile political modality. A modality that will be considered in the future as another European contribution to the history of political sensibility: a single deliberative polity with multiple *demoi* (Lavdas and Chryssochoou 2007). In this context, the main added value of a republican vision for Europe, the very notion of 'a Republic of Europeans', is twofold. On the one hand, it reminds us that EU institutional development should also be examined from the perspective of the delegation of authority in some form. On the other hand, it encourages notions of a complex and composite polity built around a core set of minimal but powerful civic ideas. A 'Republic of Europeans' is, ultimately, a republic of commitment: to a certain core of civic values, to the fundamental 'pluralist condition' in regards to practically everything beyond a minimalist shared core of civicness, to a model of international coexistence and cooperation that eschews both hierarchy and anarchy.

The requirements for an effective democracy in the 21st century presuppose but they also transcend electoral democratization. The limitations of the latter make it necessary to consider additional forms of contestation and involvement, including the power to contest public decisions – but to do that, needless to say, in a way that is institutionally provided for and well-ordered (Pettit 1997, 1999). Empirical political analysis has confirmed the argument that effective democracy emerges and survives in a setting marked by participatory resources and self-expression values (Inglehart and

Welzel 2005). As we move from a narrow, electoral definition of democracy to a broad definition of effective democratic governance, the characteristics of the people and the participatory resources become more important: human empowerment is crucial in the consolidation and survival of effective democracy. These lines of research prompt us to reconsider the links between modernization and democracy. 'The major effect of modernization is not that it makes democracy more acceptable to elites, but that it increases ordinary people's capabilities and willingness to struggle for democratic institutions' (Welzel and Inglehart 2008: 136).

This is also important in terms of actual democratization processes in new states or changing regimes. In general terms, elite-level strategies and pacts are not sufficient for the transition to and the establishment of effective democratic regimes in the absence of a degree of support and involvement 'from below'. In fact, as Nancy Bermeo has argued, various forms and degrees of mobilization have often accompanied transitions to democratic government: not all successful transitions from authoritarian rule have been examples of elite-driven pacts and moderation (Bermeo 1999). In particular, the republican prism can be especially valuable here. As Dryzek and Holmes (2000) suggest, the republican politics of civic virtue can and should play an important role in facilitating the democratization process in political systems emerging from authoritarian rule. The point is that democratic consolidation benefits from the cultivation of republican values and norms.

The other side of the coin is equally significant. A citizenry embedded in a republican political culture will not easily abandon democratic legitimacy when faced with crisis. Empirical evidence suggests that people's affinity for particular political positions are surprisingly stable, and that what is often labeled 'polarization' preceding democratic breakdown is the result not of vote switching but of such factors as expansion of the franchise, elite defections, and the mobilization of new voters. In short, democratic collapses are caused less by changes in popular preferences than by the actions of political elites who polarize themselves and mistake the actions of a few for the preferences of the many (Bermeo 2003).

International challenges, economic, demographic, and political changes in the international environment (see Parry 1994) present dramatic challenges for a 'new' Europe. A republic of Europeans, a republic of commitment to a pluralist political system

built around a core of civic values, does not have to a polity that regresses to a presumed European 'distinctiveness' often marked by questionable policy ideas and failed public policies. After all, taking nicely calculated risks is very much a part of the republican tradition of politics, rhetoric, and persuasion (Viroli 2002). Today, re-invigorating Europe's economy, society, and its academic/research structures is a necessary condition for Europe's vitality.[12] Far from being un-republican, a view that continuously strives to reassess the links between European politicality and Europe's position in the world is an heir to the republican security theory. It represents another dimension of the approach that, in order to assess the EU as an emerging polity, calls for a prism which is attentive to the interactions between the polity-building and world-inhabiting facets of the emergent entity. It has to be sensitive to normative potentialities, while at the same time remaining attentive to real-world challenges, problems, and dilemmas.

In this light it should be clear that Europe's political order has not been able yet to realize its republican potential. The political system of the EU seeks to discover new development patterns amidst internal (European) heterogeneity and external (international) liberalism. It is indeed the case that heterogeneity is today a part of the EU's distinctive nature as a mixed commonwealth of entangled sovereignties.[13] Yet this may not necessarily result in a segmented EU citizenry. Instead, it could be a condition for uniting the member publics and their public spheres into a polycultural and polycentric *res publica* in which issues of shared concern become the target of EU-related policies. By pointing at a mixed commonwealth, republican theory makes the point that the EU rests on a primarily political constitution. In addition, Europe's political constitution would have to embrace *civic polyculturalism*, which is a new facet of the pluralist condition. It is a facet of the pluralist condition in which multiple allegiances co-exist, without in any way denying the basic adherence to certain minimal shared political values. Drawing from a normative theory of the political order, this approach aims to assign meaning to a new vision of democratic politics. It is a vision that acknowledges a

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[12] For a particularly insightful approach to this see Alesina and Giavazzi (2006), who put forward six general policy proposals. Theirs is a market-driven approach, concluding that, ultimately, 'Europe simply needs to put in place the right incentives to invest, take risks, work, and do research' (Alesina and Giavazzi 2006: 172). Most of their proposals may be easily accommodated within a neo-republican framework; the rest could ultimately entail a clash with the 'freedom-as-non-domination' proviso and its institutional requirements and guarantees. All of them, however, are very useful as contributions to the much-needed debate on Europe's future and Europe's position in the international political economy.
[13] For extensive analysis of this point see Lavdas and Chryssochoou (2007).

minimal set of core political values. Furthermore, it is a vision that would remain within a great European tradition: the almost-forgotten republican strand of thought, analysis, and political sensibility.

In her Speech to the European Parliament, on 27 June 2007, German Chancellor Merkel reminded us of an old African saying: 'If you want to move forward fast, go alone - if you want to go far, go together.' Provided, I would add, we all share a minimal core of civic values that make it worthwhile to embark on the journey together.

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