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WHAT'S NONVIOLENCE TO DO WITH THE EUROPEAN UNION?

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Abstract

Nonviolence has an established tradition in several disciplines, including political theory, international relations and political science. We explore the potential of nonviolence as analytical and normative framework for the study of European integration and European Union (EU) politics. At the outset, we introduce the basics of nonviolence and define our approach to this concept. We then apply it to three critical issues concerning the nature of EU power, the democratic deficit and the narrative of integration. We find that our framework re-defines the core dimensions of the problems of power and democracy, assists in imagining the EU in non state-morphic ways, and provides innovative ways to put praxis at the roots of the integration process and its narrative.

Keywords: Democracy; European Union; Narratives; Nonviolence; Power.

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1. Introduction

The European Union (EU) is experiencing deep discontinuity – a critical juncture in the language of political science. It is not just a matter of institutional and policy performance, it is the overall project of European integration as we know it that is under pressure. In this challenging context, however, the EU has also shown resiliency. Whatever position one takes on the critical juncture facing the EU, the so-called ‘crisis of the integration project’ is actually an ecology of the following issues.

Firstly, there are fundamental questions of power as capacity for purposeful action and capacity to influence the behavior of other players in a way consistent with one’s preferences. The EU seems incapable of producing the power needed to solve acute political puzzles and policy dilemmas as well as incapable of generating sufficient legitimacy for this power when a goal is achieved. Consider how the EU institutions have tackled until now migration, foreign policy, and the promotion of peace and human rights - outside and inside its member states: no-one can detect a distinctive and unambiguous capacity and quality (that is, power for what final goals) of this power.

The second critical issue in the ‘crisis’ landscape is democracy. Of course, this topic has its own connection with the issue of power – after all they belong to an ecology of issues as we mentioned. But in recent years the long-standing problem of the democratic deficit has become compounded by the fact that democracy as praxis and project is under attack in member states. This is shown by the debate on democratic backsliding (Kelemen and Blauburger, 2017)– thus the multi-level challenge for democracy is twofold. Democratic theorists have looked into new frameworks like demo(i)cracy that evokes new ways forward for the democratization project within the context of multi-level governance (Nicolaidis, 2013). However, this healthy debate among democratic theorists has not percolated into a set of feasible political steps and messages that could be communicated with clarity to the citizens of the EU.

The third issue is about ‘the’ narrative. It opens up the question of ‘European integration for what?’ Indeed, this is the teleological question on the *finalité* of integration. True,

there have been periods of time in which the EU has thrived with pragmatism and incrementalism exactly by avoiding this hard question. In the current context however, the narratives of disintegration, Brexit and wrong policies produced by the technocrats sitting at the European Commission, so popular among citizens, have to be balanced by a narrative that shows where the EU is headed, assuming we can manage to fix it. The European Commission has a website dedicated to the search of a new narrative for Europe (Barroso, 2013). In the world of political science, there has been an intensification of studies on policy narratives, myths and historically situated national discourses on integration (Manners and Murray, 2016; Lacroix and Nicolaïdis, 2010). Deep down, this third issue uncovers the problem of connecting resiliency, the policy responses to economic and monetary problems in the Euro area, and the negotiations over Brexit to a set of causal ideas that resonate in the minds of citizens as proper historical project. During its founding years, the EU had a historical project of sorts: it centred on peace. Yet, what is the historical narrative today?

Given this compounded nature of ‘the crisis’, it is not surprising that a leading journal like *Journal of Common Market Studies* has made at least two recent attempts to capture the theoretical nature of this discontinuity. In one case with a special issue on the conventional wisdom(s) under challenge (vol.52/6), in another with a collection of papers illustrating dissenting, critical, silenced theoretical voices on Europe and integration (vol.54/1).

Encouraged by these efforts to widen the peripheral vision of integration scholars, we contribute to the debate by suggesting a new research agenda. Nonviolence is the new lens we deploy to observe the EU and draw lessons. More precisely, we deploy nonviolence as analytical and normative framework. We first explain our approach to the concept of nonviolence, then introduce some stylized facts pointing to the presence of nonviolence within the EU. A presence that has not yet been noticed by the community of social scientists in the field of EU studies. One caveat to bear in mind is that in this contribution we do not talk of nonviolence as theory or, even more specifically, theory of integration – at this stage, as we explain in section 2, it is sufficient to consider nonviolence as framework.

We claim that as soon as we adopt nonviolence as a framework, or lens, these facts gain coherence and reveal important trajectories of integration. Further, we apply our

framework to the ecology of issues we have described: power (section 3), democracy (section 4) and narrative (section 5). Within the context of power, nonviolence sheds light on the ambiguous and ultimately flawed connection between power and violence. It is nonviolence, not violence, that produces the type of power that may best serve the EU of today and tomorrow. The nonviolent approach to power goes beyond people's power and refocuses on the power of each individual, but it also connects the individual, its moral responsibility, and society. This brings us to democracy: here nonviolence points towards omni-cracy, the power of all. Put differently, the nonviolent vision heads towards an infinitely open society with its own forms of accountability. With regards to the narrative for Europe, nonviolence, perhaps to the surprise of some of our readers, does not offer its own teleology, grand narrative or ideal. In terms of final outcomes, it is silent. Yet, the nonviolent narrative of the EU offers an approach to the history of integration that is attractive. In the conclusion, we reflect on the implications of this research agenda and its connections with theories of integration.

2. A concept and a framework

The aim of this contribution is to introduce a new research agenda anchored to nonviolence and show how our framework grapples with the three issues of power, democracy and narrative. Before we can do that we firstly have to define the concept of nonviolence. The first step in constructing a concept is often the demarcation between the concept we have in mind and what the concept is not – otherwise we stretch the concept.

Thus, what is definitively NOT nonviolence? Conceptually, nonviolence is not the opposite of violence nor is it pacifism (Jahanbegloo, 2014; Prabhu and Rao, 1996; Atack, 2012). This is the reason why in specialised literature the term is often spelled nonviolence instead of non-violence. There is a triadic relationship between violence, nonviolence and cowardice. If the choice is between addressing something bad with a violent action or not doing anything, it is better to choose violence, because doing nothing means that there will be harm. In these cases doing nothing is cowardice (Prabhu and Rao, 1996). It follows that nonviolence is more than the pure absence of violence – physical or other. Nonviolence is a force that assists individual and political communities in their search for stable solutions to conflict. This force is grounded in the

acknowledgement of the consequences of our actions. It follows Karma yoga, or selfless action, the practice taught by Krishna to Arjuna in the third book of the Bhagavad Gita. Physically responding to an act of evil may or may not be the best response, violence is of secondary importance in karma yoga. What matters is the karma of our action – the “spiritual or ethically operational residue of every act” (Nagler, 2007: 311) - whether we are trying to get some immediate benefit or we are acting responsibly towards the implications of our actions for others and for the future.

The concept of nonviolence is all about yoga – hence action. It is not a doctrine about moral superiority or what is good or bad. The only condition is selfless action. Gandhi preferred the term *ahimsa*, which means non-harm or non-injury ‘to all living things in thought, word and deed’ (Atack, 2012: 5). Yet, In Sanskrit *ahimsa* does not have a negative connotation – like nonviolence has, being introduced by the prefix ‘*non*’. It means action: “none can renounce action out of a foolish attempt to avoid harm” (Klausen, 2014: 183). For our purposes, the best translation of *ahimsa* is ‘the force unleashed when the desire to harm is eradicated’¹. *Ahimsa* is therefore a force that some of us could immediately consider a form of power, especially due to the political turn given to its meaning by Gandhi.

Indeed, Arendt (Arendt, 1970) argued that the opposite of violence is power – she does not refer to nonviolence in her analysis of violence. In a sense this chimes with what we are saying about nonviolence. In fact, nonviolence produces power, being selfless action that takes into account the consequences of doing or not doing something for stable conflict resolution. This is the power of one – what Nagler calls ‘person power’ (Nagler, 2014). Person power occurs when a mind becomes independent and refuses to be obedient to unjust legal or social norms. The power of many – what Gene Sharp would call ‘people power’ (Sharp, 1973), occurs when citizens wage nonviolent conflict together. Incidentally, this shows the radical difference between a pacifist and a nonviolent mind. For the former the absolute value is peace. For the latter nonviolent conflict has a prominent role.

Having defined the concept– with apologies to specialised readers who are aware of the colossal literature on nonviolence – we will now explain what nonviolence has to do

¹ See the definition of *ahimsa* provided by the Metta Center: <http://mettacenter.org/definitions/gloss-concepts/ahimsa/> (last accessed on the 12 June 2017).

with our contribution. We are aware of the debates around the meanings of terms like ontology, theory, and framework (Carstensen, 2012; Stanley, 2012). We cannot possibly engage with this debate given our word allowance. Therefore, we make a simple claim: that nonviolence is an analytical and normative framework can and indeed should be applied to the EU. Analytically, this framework allows us to see some empirical processes of European integration under a new light – this is why before we used the metaphor of the lens. Exactly because we adopt this lens, we can see processes that otherwise would be neglected by other lenses, and we can associate a precise meaning to these processes. Given these limited purposes, we do not need to compare nonviolences with other lenses and with theories of integration – these tasks can be usefully left to future contributions in the field. Thus, to clarify one more time, we are not saying that nonviolence is better than this or that theory, but we still claim that it is a feasible and productive way to approach to EU and in particular the three problems of power, democracy and teleology.

Nonviolence as used here is thus an analytical framework: we use it to analyse and capture empirical dynamics within a coherent meaning. This is not a theory in the sense of providing causal explanations that one thing happens as a result of another thing occurring. In this respect, nonviolence is different from integration theories that explain why member states pull sovereignty and build certain institutions that generate a set of outcomes. We do not make claims of a causal nature.

As well as an analytical framework, nonviolence has also a normative quality. We hasten to say that the normative dimension is not a catalogue of what ought to be. Its normative core arises out of beliefs in human nature and reality. The ontology of the *homo nonviolentus*, being grounded in karma yoga, is different from the ontology of the *homo oeconomicus*. This brings in normative statements about appropriate action. The aim of these normative propositions is to add to, to contribute to, to integrate a complex reality where change is the main characteristic.

So what does nonviolence add to an unstable reality? It adds a *phronesis*, an evolving practical wisdom which does not quite separate ‘is’ from ‘ought to’ (Mantena, 2012a; Mantena, 2012b), built on past and present successes and defeats. In the end, we draw on nonviolence to develop explanations and ways of approaching the critical issues –

not to justify a philosophical mind-set. This is the limitation of our contribution, but hopefully also its strength.

3. Nonviolence and Europe

As mentioned, the objective of our contribution is not to publish a succinct handbook of nonviolence 1.01 and show to the readers its tools and applications. We hope that with the minimal conceptual background we have introduced we will be able to tackle directly the three issues of power, democracy and narratives. Before we do that, we need to justify the claim that nonviolence adds and integrates phenomena that already exist within the EU. The point is that without nonviolence-as-framework, we cannot recognise their importance and meaning.

Indeed, we do not need to make the abstract case for nonviolence because nonviolence has already been present in the deep forces that led to integration in Europe. Neglected as it may have been, nonviolent practice has been a pillar of the European struggle for democracy for a long time. Even the war of liberation fought within the wider context of World War II has important strands of nonviolence. Europe, indeed, provides endless examples of civil resistance to the Nazi and fascist dictatorships (Sémelin, 1993). For instance, Danish citizens engaged in nonviolent struggle by non-cooperation with the Nazis until the end of the war (Ackerman and Kruegler, 1994). Norwegian teachers resisted heroically against the Nazi takeover of education. The German women of Rosenstrasse managed to free their Jewish husbands from the Gestapo, preventing their deportation. A peasant, named Franz Jagerstatter from a small Austrian village, is now celebrated as a hero because he refused to take-up arms for the dictatorship, paying with his life (Putz, 2009). There are many similar examples of nonviolent throughout Europe that historians keep discovering.

After WWII, nonviolence developed in many different directions. Indeed, the work of many European intellectuals and activists² went hand-in-hand with real nonviolent

² Gandhian influence in Europe started already in the 1930s, when the philosopher Aldo Capitini emerged with his fully-fledged theory of nonviolence. In Spain, Gonzalo Arias (1926-2008) and Llorenç Vidal (1936) fought against Franco Dictatorship. Arias went to prison for a petition for free elections; for defending conscientious objection, denouncing torture and opposing the politics of harrying against Gibraltar. Vidal founded the DENIP, the School Day of Nonviolence and Peace, and as “Ambassador of Peace”, spread a different and less-violent culture with actions and poetry. Lanza del Vasto and his Ark Communities proposed radical alternative ways of living together in many different countries. The work of the philosopher Jean-Marie Muller offered alternative ways to view education; and the historical

revolutions which freed several countries from authoritarian regimes, from Portugal to Czechoslovakia, from Poland to the Baltic States and Eastern Germany (Roberts and Garton Ash, 2009). Even in the darkness of the violence and ethnic cleansing of the Balkan war, nonviolence-as-practice resonated with its Sanskrit meaning of ‘force more powerful’ with the Otpor Movement that ousted Milosevich (Popovic, 2015), and with the struggle in Kosovo (Clark, 2015). A few years later, the nonviolent revolutionary spirit moved eastwards, in particular, to Georgia and the Ukraine. Arguably the most recent example is the Euromaidan Revolution of 2014 in which citizens died to remain anchored to the European project.

It is in this sense that we claim that nonviolence has been one of the most resilient pillars of the construction of the European project. But the story is not limited to movements and civil resistance. It can also be seen within institutional history. In the last few decades, nonviolence entered into the official documents of the EU. Indeed, the EP resolution of 8 May 2008 on the Annual Report on Human Rights in the World 2007 argued that ‘nonviolence is the most appropriate means of ensuring that fundamental human rights are enjoyed, upheld, promoted and respected to the full’ (European Parliament, 2008). One year later, the report ‘Nonviolent Civic Action in Support of Human Rights and Democracy’ expanded on the ways the European Union can shape its external actions in a nonviolent way (European Parliament, 2009).

There is of course a large amount of literature on the case studies we have described, covering individual countries like Serbia or the Ukraine. This field is generally known as civil resistance (Roberts and Garton Ash, 2009). Yet, even though some theorists of nonviolence have occasionally dealt with the implications for integration in Europe (Galtung, 1973), the literature is silent on what this neglected history means. This is our task for the next three sections – to show how this stock of nonviolence tackles the critical issues that make up the crisis of integration.

4. Civilian Power Europe as Self-Rule

The chronic lack of power at the European level has been worsened by recent critical events. We argue that the problem is the dominant conception of power as military

research by Semelin shed light on a different and less-violent past. Nonviolence also features in Catholicism, e.g. the work of Jean Goss and Hildegard Goss-Mayr, lobbying for conscientious objection during the Second Vatican Council and contributing to the International Fellowship of Reconciliation.

(Schilde, 2017; Howorth, 2017). This was yet again the key concern of the Rome Summit as expressed in point 4 of the Declaration, whereby strengthening its common security and defence is seen as critical in re-launching Europe within the world (European Council, 2017).

The lack of a European army has definitely been an issue since the 1954 rejection of the European Defence Treaty. There is no doubt that there are paradoxes involved in not having an army (Giumelli and Cusumano, 2014).

However, the reduction of power to 'military power' is questionable. The crisis situations in which the EU is called for action cannot be solved by the military alone. The hybrid war in the Ukraine; the attempts of democratisation of the Arab Spring; the migration crisis; and even terrorism. All of these require a more complex response, and a different kind of power.

Nonviolent techniques, tactics and strategies are much more than simply a superior moral alternative to war, or even a functional substitute. They already represent the reality of modern conflicts. Nonviolent techniques are deployed by Russia in the Baltics (Radin, 2017) and Ukraine (Bartkowski, 2015), and by China in the South East China Sea (Bartkowski, 2015); in the processes of decolonisation and democratisation all around the world, from Western Sahara to Egypt, from Tunisia to Georgia; people are fighting ISIS non-violently (Popovic, 2016; Braley and Popovic, 2015); European countries like Lithuania rely on civil disobedience as way to defend the country (Miniotaite, 1996).

These events are the sign that Europe has to deal with (and master) a different kind of power which is developing across nations. Here we see nonviolence bringing us to the roots of power. These roots lie in social and political relationships among human beings. Already, Gene Sharp observed the social quality of power. For this theorist of nonviolence, power is not a monolith. It is plural, and it "is always based upon an intricate and fragile structure of human and institutional relationships" (Sharp, 1980: 24). There are many social loci of power: authority, human resources, skills and knowledge, intangible factors, material resources and sanctions. This certainly has limitations (Atack, 2012; Martin, 1989), but it brings attention to something other than military power. Another theorist of nonviolence, Iain Atack, argued that power is not a commodity or an entity to be seized, controlled, or even owned: it lies in human

relationships, in any social and political practice. Thus, changing any kind of unequal and oppressive social practice is changing and exercising power (Attack, 2012).

Who are the key players in this more complex and diffuse approach to power? This links us to the second reduction of the present debate on the power of Europe: the reduction of power to ‘the power of institutions’ (whether European or national). Institutions are certainly fundamental but they produce effects via human agency. It is reductive to see them solely as the channel for Market Power Europe (Damro, 2012) or even Liberal Power Europe (Wagner, 2017). Following Duchêne, institutions can serve the vision of ‘civilian power Europe’(Duchêne, 1973). Yet, Duchêne’s vision has captured the imagination of theorists of integration exactly because European *institutions* can influence other actors without military force. Less has been done on the *civilian* part of Duchêne’s programme.

Yet again we need nonviolence to provide clarity on these ‘civilian’ qualities. For instance, Tewes, talking about Germany, introduced the idea that civilian means civil as non-state (Tewes, 2001). Civilian power includes democracy, it “refers to the rights of individuals and society vis-à-vis the state”, focusing on “rights, on legitimacy, and on the democratic values that come with them” (Tewes, 2001: 11). In 2006, Ian Manners, revising his own approach to normative power Europe, introduced what was missing from the 2002 article (Manners, 2002): the citizens. Unfortunately, he did not give free rein to the potential of such intuitions (Manners, 2006: 184)³. This chimes with the debate on civilian power Europe, where very rarely do we see civil resistance in a prominent position, or even mentioned (Roberts and Garton Ash, 2009: 6).

Nonviolence starts from the granular power of agency, of any human being. Every human being holds an important and yet underestimated power in any social and political relationship: the power to say “no”. Power is therefore seen through the lenses of consent theory: the power of X in a community depends not on military endowment or law, but on the consent attributed to other members of the political community to X.

³ He rightly noticed that Duchêne referred in his chapter to Marion Dönhoff, who was part of the German Resistance Movement and later civil activist, and to her idea of political peace (against nuclear peace), to “the way in which every day acts and cultural example help to transmute conflict into peace through civil activism and collective action” p. 185. Yet, there is much more than this. Duchêne used Marion Dönhoff’s phrase on political peace vs technical peace of nuclear. Yet, Marion is an example of much more. She fought against Nazism at university, for instance with leaflets, in a way that reminds of the Scholl brothers. She helped in the 1944 plot to assassinate Hitler, in the same group with Bonhoeffer. Later, she worked a lot for reconciliation between west and east, for peace. In other words, she represents that particular world which this article is trying to take into account.

This is ‘power of the powerless’ (Havel, 1985), but we can scale it up to an institutional level. All governments depend on the voluntary assistance, cooperation and obedience of their citizens (Sharp, 1973; Atack, 2012).

This is not a new theory. La Boetie talked extensively about it already in the XVI century, in his *Discourse on Voluntary Servitude*. Yet, what has changed is the organisation, the potential and the consequences of this idea. The amount, quality of nonviolent handbooks, training and organizations on the ground has never been so high. The number and quality of techniques used to disobey has never been so effective. The number of regime changes is already impressive. And yet, populism is also grounded in the idea of giving back power to the people. However, as citizens can shake the foundation of any institutional project, they can also participate, monitor and support institutions that guarantee stable conflict resolution.

The focus on consent and citizens leads us to the third reduction – power reduced to destruction (power over). But power can also be exchange (power with) and power to project values abroad. Since we cannot simply think that one day EU troops would have the same destructive power of, say, US troops, this raises the question of the aim of power.

Some of our readers will be shocked by the granularity and basic simple truth of this statement, but for nonviolence the aim of power is to improve: to rise from passivity to freedom. Recall what we said about nonviolence ‘adds to’, hence it is constructive instead of destructive. This is with regards to a true change in rulership (Dallmayr, 2017: 124), which would not immediately focus on creating a new institution. It creates a form of governance that Gandhi called *swaraj*, self-rule (Gandhi, 1997; Parel, 2016). Governance is learning to rule ourselves (within and without Europe), abolishing not so much external threats, but, more fundamentally, our internal impediments. The urgent issue is building up autonomous communities with new social and political practices; governance should be about empowering and connecting these communities. Institutions came at the end of this causal chain, not at the beginning.

The above-mentioned 2008 EP report has the merit of linking nonviolence to rights and the liberation of individuals and communities (European Parliament, 2008). Yet, there is more. Using nonviolence as normative framework, we argue for a widening of our peripheral vision to diplomacy as ‘citizens’ or ‘multi-track diplomacy’ (Kavaloski,

1990), as well as diplomacy supporting civil resistance (Kinsman and Bassuener, 2008). Nonviolence offers a way to transform the very experience of waging conflict, enriching and changing the lives of those involved (Galtung, 1996). It supports a bottom-up perspective on fighting invasions (Sharp, 1985; Burrowes, 1996) and even terrorism (Ram and Summy, 2007; Popovic, 2016; Martin, 2002). It fosters a different quality of peacekeeping (Nagler, 1997) and offers socially-robust ways to build bridges between parties in conflict⁴.

Indeed, someone has already written on the European Civilian Peace Corps⁵ (Barbiero, 2011), an evolution of the Gandhian idea of a peace army, called Shanti Sena. This vision was first proposed by MEP Alexander Langer in 1994. Yet, 12 years later Manners realised that the attempt to build civilian organisations, such as the European Peacebuilding Agency and the European Civil Peace Corps, had been largely ignored (Manners, 2006: 189).

We stress that the European Shanti Sena is only one aspect under the larger perspective. Europe has an enormous yet still undervalued power, the power of its citizens to end all the many internal quarrels and hatred, building up what Gandhi would have called *swaraj*, self-rule. This is the real ‘civilian power Europe’: the possibility of creating a self-determining Europe based on the daily exercise of people power by its citizens. This is not just a vision, it entails an alternative *experience* of power, with citizens at the centre, learning day by day to rule themselves. It is the learning exercise and the experience that François Mitterand evoked in his prophetic speech at the EP on 17 January 1995. Mitterand spoke of liberating Europeans from the tyranny of their past, their prejudices and their history: “What I am asking you here is almost impossible, because we have to defeat our past. And yet, if we don’t defeat it, it must be known that the following rule will prevail, Ladies and Gentlemen: Nationalism is War!”. (<http://audiovisual.europarl.europa.eu/Assetdetail.aspx?id=fa1f5f84-f323-40ce-8153-dfe96bbeee67>)

⁴ For instance, the EU is active in global health diplomacy. Health care diplomacy represents a powerful bridge between countries and people if its aim is to achieve the autonomy of people via infrastructures and networks.

⁵ See the two feasibility studies on the establishment of ECPC: Robert P., Vilby, K., Aiolfi, L., and R. Otto, *Feasibility Study on the Establishment of a European Civil Peace Corps*, (Channel Research, 29 November 2005); Gourlay, C., *Feasibility Study on the European Civil Peace Corps*, (Brussels: International Security Information Service, 2004).

5. From Democracy to Omnicracy

The conception of power described above has the potential to project the EU as civilian power. Yet, the EU suffers from a long-lasting democratic deficit, and there is no demos. Further, the quality of a European democracy is in danger or at least in crisis (Papadopoulos, 2013). How does our framework deal with these problems?

Nonviolence does not require the formation of the EU demos. The power of the European citizens is immense exactly *because* they are different. The issue is how we might best differ not *against* one another, but *for* one another (Wang, 2013). Thus, no demos: a pre-political community sharing a certain culture, language, traditions and symbols is not a necessary condition. Citizens don't have to share the same political institutions. Yet, at the same time, no demoi: the relationship changes the different parts, the different demoi, which in a nonviolent turn begin working closely, with and for one another. Nonviolence does not unify demoi with an alternative rigid doctrine.

Let us demonstrate these claims step by step, starting from nonviolent practice to support democratic institutions and to 'democratise democracy'. At the very least, nonviolence provides a suite of tactics and strategies to protect democracy from the return to authoritarian regimes as well as from the deterioration of democracy. With the danger of illiberal models of democracy in Eastern Europe (Zakaria, 1997), it is vital to have nonviolent capacity and know-how to act. In extreme cases of democratic danger, civil disobedience is the 'revolutionary moment' counting on the moral obligation to disobey to unjust laws. Further, nonviolence provides a menu of collective action when there is a coup d'état (Sharp and Jenkins, 2003; Taylor, 2011), and even when subversive criminal organisations are dominating, such as the Mafia in Italy (Beyerle, 2014).

Civil disobedience actually improves the quality of democracy when directed against well-defined cases of grave injustice (Rawls, 1971). Thus, civil disobedience is one of the "stabilising devices of a constitutional system" (Rawls, 1971: 383); it is the "Litmus test for the appropriate understanding of the moral foundations of democracy" (Habermas, 1985: 101). When there is strong disagreement, civil disobedience may empower citizens as 'guardians of legitimacy' against 'authoritarian legalism' and any abuse of the majority principle. This translates, for instance, in the many grassroots movements against corruption we have observed (Beyerle, 2014).

Beyond techniques and repertoires of action, nonviolence is also a framework of action, a *praxis*, which shapes and invents new social and political practices. These practices make up nonviolent citizenship. This is important when dealing with the debates concerning the EU democratic deficit. Yet again, nonviolence allows us to look at the issue from a different perspective. Here, the key is not one of citizenship as status, but one of quality (of citizenship), following Tully's argument that nonviolence brings 'diverse citizenship' (Tully, 2008). Rights are corroborated, enacted by a praxis of, following Gandhi this time, *sarvodaya* – which means 'the uplift of all'.

To overcome the EU democratic deficit then, legal rights are only one dimension. When observed through the framework of nonviolence, the deficit does not lie in rules and institutions; it lies in practices. We have seen a response to the deficit with nonviolent practices emerging in core areas of democratic life, such as education (Wang, 2013) health (Alter, 1996), economics (Ghosh, 2012; Schumacher, 1993) and science⁶.

This praxis is not destructive towards existing institutions, but it is definitely the reason for continuous reform, even radical change. Taking political parties as an example, the re-construction of democratic quality means radical critiques, such as Weil's *On the Abolition of all Political Parties*, but also innovative experiments in political accountability, such as the 'anti-political politics' of Konrad and Havel in the East, leading to civic forums. Socially-grounded associations like the COS (Centres for Social Orientation) organised by Capitini (Capitini, 1950; Capitini, 1999) prefigured, in the 1950s, open popular assemblies organised to discuss administrative, political and social problems. Other examples of radical institutional change is the formation of nonviolent parties, such as the German Green of Petra Kelly (Kelly, 2001) and the Radical Party of Marco Pannella and Emma Bonino (Radaelli and Dossi, 2012); and arguably innovations in direct democracy (Hessel, 2010).

The result of such diverse citizenship, of the praxis of nonviolence, is the creation *de facto*, in the actions (behaviour and practices) of everybody, of the *Omni* - The issue is not whether there is a demos or many demoi, but whether there is an action of openness or of closure. In this action, EU citizens are building up a new reality; these practices

⁶ On the relationship between nonviolence and science, the reference is The Seville Statement on Violence, <http://www.unesco.org/cpp/uk/declarations/seville.pdf> (last accessed on the 26 September 2016).

represent the power of everybody, of the omni⁷. At its roots, this is an infinitely inclusive project. For this reason Aldo Capitini called this democratic project *omnicracy*, the power of all (Capitini, 1999).

6. A Nonviolent Narrative for Europe

In this section we deal with the contribution of nonviolence to the EU narrative. Some elements of this contribution emerge from our previous discussion of the force of civilian power and the new perspective on democracy. There are already foundations of a new narrative. But we must now elaborate more systematically. A narrative has *structural* elements (the chronology, the actors and the plot) as well as a dimension concerning *identity* (Manners and Murray, 2016): we shall deal with both in this section.

At the outset, consider the current political debate in Europe – we will move to the scholarly literature in a minute. Politicians and parties are divided among those who appeal to national identity and those who search for a common identity, history, and, arguably, religious foundation for European integration. Perhaps the most visible moment in this controversy was in the early 2000s when politicians debated whether the European constitution should include references to Christianity. Nationalism misses the point that integration cannot simply be the domain of international diplomacy and that sovereignty is conditional in an inter-dependent world. Yet it is wrong to think about the EU as a big state. It is this wrong state-morphic vision of the EU (Majone, 1996) that leads us to assume that the fuel of European integration ought to be culture, history or religion – or a blend of the three, in the name of a European narrative supposedly supporting the emerging ‘European identity’. Strong federal projects are based on political values and rules, not on assumptions about culture and history. Nonviolence allows us to develop a narrative for Europe that is not state-morphic because it does not replicate the assumptions about history, culture and religion that ground nation-states in their identities.

To support this claim, we need arguments from the academic debate. In the literature, a prominent theme is the narrative of Europe as a peace project (Birchfield et al., 2017).

⁷ Here we turn upside-down People’s Europe as outlined in the latest State of the Union Speech. Indeed, Nonviolent Europe does not start from the rights (provisions of workers and workplace rights), and in particular it does not conceive of citizenship as a status. The key is to empower a new praxis, a citizenship not by stealth but by action.

There are studies that evaluate to what extent this has been true, both externally (Lavenex, 2017; Ludlow, 2017) and internally. Yet, this (perhaps temporary) success is already showing cracks: the purpose of the EU is becoming less and less intelligible to younger generations, and it is less and less persuasive.

Where do we look for the ‘People’s Europe’, recently re-launched in the latest State of the Union address? Another strand of the literature points to the political effects of narratives (Manners and Murray, 2016). Interestingly, in their analysis of EU narratives, Manners and Murray argue that the chronicle of the EU as a peace project is obsolete.

Hence the challenge for ‘Nonviolent Europe’ is: can this narrative go further than a peace project? Let us proceed step by step. To begin with *structural* elements, a nonviolent narrative connects liberation from totalitarian regimes across European nations and at different times in history - from Germany to Poland, from Portugal to Lithuania. It can be also connected with the efforts to find stable conflict resolution in the wake of the fall of Communism and in troubled areas, as shown by the conflicts in former Yugoslavia. An important dimension of this narrative structure is that its end point is not an EU super-state with its own identity cancelling out national identities. This kind of Europeanism is bound to be limited to the minority, it will never gain the support of a broad and consistent number of EU citizens.

The nonviolent narrative actually proceeds from the individual and their relationship with the other – karma yoga being about the consequences of an action for others, for the community, the environment, sentient creatures and so on. In this narrative, governance emerges from individual responsibility, not from a *finalité*. On this dimension of the ‘end point’, nonviolence does much less than the other narratives proposed by ardent Europeanists – from Altiero Spinelli to Jacques Delors. Yet – we argue – it achieves more.

To see this, we turn to *narrative identity*, Nonviolent Europe is not the narrative of small elites. It can be embraced by people of different ages and backgrounds. Memories of champions of this transnational vision, always rooted in individual liberation (not in the EU super-state) should be cultivated by educational projects. Among these champions we find politicians, as well as exemplary figures of civil society. We mention in no particular order Jagerstetter, Palach, Havel, Walesa, Don Tonino Bello, Kelly, Pannella and Capitini.

These models along with the legacy of techniques, actions, practices and spontaneous experiments which are still developing across Europe, constitute a widespread basis on which such a narrative can further develop. It may include some of the recent movements formed during the crisis – and leaderless movements of course, where the meaning of collective action, not the leader, ‘is’ the message. The narrative – we submit – also embraces episodes and movements that flourished and are still blossoming outside the EU. Lego toys used to protest in Siberia against the Russian authority are seen as fastidious by the Russian regime, because they cannot incarcerate toys (Popovic, 2015: 119; O’Flynn, 2012)⁸, but... imagine they are celebrated with an exhibition at the European Parliament! These forms of *narrative engagement* are already quite widespread and diversified within the EU and beyond, they need to be publicly embraced and celebrated.

Finally, the narrative offered by nonviolence offers a precise picture of how *change* happens. Indeed, one of the key and long-lasting points of the nonviolent narrative is the equation between means and ends. Yet, what does it mean exactly? Gandhi brought to the fore a new approach to the dyad of means/ends, which is critical for a new European narrative. Instead of drawing normative guidelines from existing beliefs and constraints, resulting therefore in conservative actions, Gandhian realism starts from reality (Mantena, 2012a: 462). *What is* becomes the more suitable means for an end. Hence ‘what is’ becomes a description linked to an action and its purpose. It is still a description, based on what actually happens around us, but it opens us a process where change becomes feasible. Similarly, what *ought to be* starts by pursuing one end through the right action, on the basis of the best description of reality possible (Mantena, 2012a). In other words, the ends are the consequences, and not general and abstract ideas to implement.

7. Conclusion: Towards a nonviolent research agenda

The European project is facing a compound crisis of power, democracy, and narrative. We have argued that nonviolence provides an analytical and normative framework to address these problems. Admittedly, ours is only a sketch, a presentation of nonviolence. For this reason we adopted the notion of framework rather than

⁸ See <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/feb/15/toys-protest-not-citizens-russia>

‘theoretical perspective’ or ‘theory’. Yet this framework has potential for the EU and for EU studies. The lessons drawn are in fact as important for those involved in politics as they are for those who define the research agendas of the next stage of EU studies.

Concerning power, the current attention towards external impediments to EU action in the world and the military overshadows the potential of citizens freed from internal impediments to forge a civilian power, bringing Duchêne and Manners’s intuitions to their natural conclusion. Concerning the democratic deficit, the obsession with institutional issues and cultural-linguistic differences overshadows the opportunity to democratise the EU via day-to-day praxis and take the first steps towards the goal of omni-cracy. Interestingly, these steps do not presuppose a state-morphic notion of the EU, hence they are not entangled with the questions of whether the EU should become a confederation, a federation or a super-state. Finally, nonviolence is the springboard for a narrative linking past and future, models from different backgrounds and contexts, as well as ‘is’ and ‘ought to’ with a different account of change.

This project does not require billions from the EU budget. Yet it would garner the mobilisation potential released by EU citizens during the crisis in their spontaneous search for change and responses to problems of democratic quality and governance. Further research is needed on how to assemble and scale up the empirical manifestations of nonviolence that we have documented, hopefully in the direction of a nonviolent theory of integration. At the moment, we cannot compare our sketch of a research agenda with fully-fledged theories. It is too early. All we can say today is that nonviolence has an affinity with social constructivism in that it sees ontology as foundational. It also has a family resemblance with the dissenting theories recently illustrated in *JCMS* (54/1), most likely those arguing for a practice turn (Adler-Nissen, 2016). But to carry on with this, we need first to establish whether a nonviolent theory of the EU is possible and makes sense. This is an attractive agenda for future research in this field.

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