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Normative Evolution in Europe:

Small States and Republican Peace

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Abstract

Understanding today's EU requires a prism which is attentive to the interactions between the polity-building and world-inhabiting facets of the emerging polity. We cannot separate developing a theory of the EU as a polity from determining its placement in the world. Norms of cooperation become crucial in this endeavour: as they search for credible tools to interpret and master a changing Europe in a changing world, actors distil their experience in close and repeated cooperation with a view to enhancing their knowledge of and influence over complex games of advanced hyper-dependence. The normative underpinnings of today's European construction can be approached in three steps. First, drawing inspiration from Thucydides, we demonstrate that the norms that count are neither religious in origin nor based primarily on custom and tradition. Next, we point to the significance of small states in norm development by explaining that the norms in question have been influenced by the practices and rationalizations associated with small-states behaviour, adaptability and survival. Finally, we suggest that the norms in question have evolved in interaction with a powerful current in Euro-Atlantic political thought and sensibility: republicanism. The paper identifies two main sets of norms in today's EU: one stemming from previous experiences within the international system and the other developing with the new polity-in-the-making.

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Normative Evolution in Europe: Small States and Republican Peace

1. Introduction

In the last few years, the European Union's distinctive role in international affairs has found increasing political and academic recognition, continued to suffer attacks on its effectiveness, and been challenged by US transient unilateralism. Paradoxically, though, the question about what underpins the Union's civilian image, and how to explain its peculiar projection of a mix of economic/ regulative/ normative/ military presence, and how we got here, remains elusive.

In this context, small states in Europe have witnessed a remarkable combination of traits: their relative standing on the international scene has been strengthened (as a result of EU membership and its amplifying effects for a member's voice) while norms they have championed (emphasis on the civilian and cultural projection of identity, on international law and institutions, and so on) have to a large extent become distinguishing features of the Union's own international identity. Do small states utilize, and do they profess to utilize, different (or at any rate distinct) sets of norms? If so, what has been the influence exercised by such norms on EU politics? This paper argues that most aspects of 'soft power' owe much to normative traits associated with small-state behaviour in Europe. This is not the place to rehearse the familiar distinction, elaborated by Nye, between 'hard power' and 'soft power' (Nye 2002). In short, soft power is an international actor's ability to attract others to its goals and ways and make them want what it wants. As a special case of soft power, Manners (2002, 2006) and others advanced the notion of the EU's 'normative power', based on its economic, political, and other civilian features. Various criticisms aside (e.g., Sjursen 2006), Manners' insight that the earlier notion of a 'civilian power Europe' carried with it both Cold-War connotations and neo-colonial undertones

was to the point, as was his view that 'the EU and its actions in world politics demand a wider and more appropriate approach in order to reflect on what it is, does and should do' (Manners 2006: 184). This approach complements nicely Hoffmann's view of the EC/EU as a 'magnet', capable of attracting others to its ways by being a role model and by offering the prospect of membership (Hoffmann 1995). The principle of 'conditionality' (including political conditionality) during accession negotiations enhances the EU's ability to influence the applicant states' preferences and institutions.

This paper argues that, to account for the normative particularities of the EU's internal operation and international role, we need to broaden the choice of conceptual tools at our disposal. Understanding today's EU requires mastering the new challenges facing politics without losing sight of the European construction's early objectives: maintaining peace in Europe and contributing to an open international political economy. It requires a prism which is attentive to the interactions between the polity-building and world-inhabiting facets of the EU as an emerging polity. Norms of cooperation become crucial in this: as they search for credible tools to interpret and master a changing Europe in a changing world, actors distil their experience in close and repeated cooperation with a view to enhancing their knowledge of and influence over complex games of advanced hyper-dependence.

Why do norms of international behaviour change over time? Slavery now appears abhorrent, while aggression across recognized borders has become unacceptable. In view of the interactive practices of Europeanization, on the one hand, and the reflective nature of the more advanced forms of normative thinking, on the other, an understanding of normative change requires us to delve deeper into the normative underpinnings of today's European construction. The underpinnings in question can be better grasped in three steps. First, the norms of cooperation that count are neither religious nor based exclusively on custom and tradition; second, the norms in question have benefited from the practices and rationalization associated with small-states behaviour, adaptability and survival; third, these are norms that have evolved

in interaction with a powerful current in Euro-Atlantic political thought and sensibility: republicanism. Today's 'normative power Europe' is the result of a unique combination of a republican tradition of international thought and practice and the evolution of normative traits associated with small-state behaviour and small-state survival in Europe.

This paper, then, introduces a grander project: it sketches a framework for the evolution of norms, in which conditions, ideas, and actors play different roles at different stages.[1] Applying this framework, it seeks to identify in political thought influential views on normative international patterns, aims to locate actors that have played key roles in helping particular norms acquire prominence, and it subsequently tackles norms of reciprocity as they become institutionalized in EU politics and policy. Accordingly, the paper first tackles norms and normative patterns (section 2). It then turns to (a) the contribution of Thucydides in clarifying the crucial point that the norms that count are neither religious in origin nor based primarily on custom and tradition (sections 3-4), (b) the role of small states in norm development in Europe (section 5), and (c) republican traditions of theorizing cooperation and peace (section 6). On the basis of the preceding analysis, the paper then proceeds – by way of offering a glimpse into a project in progress – to illuminate aspects of the normative operation of today's EU (section 7). Finally, the concluding section (8) pulls together the threads of the argument, in an attempt to suggest a tentative framework for the study of the EU's 'normative power'. We identify two main sets of norms in today's EU: one stemming from previous experiences within the international system and the other developing with the new polity-in-the-making.

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[1] My views on norm evolution and, in particular, on norm prominence have been influenced by Florini (1996: 363-389).

2. Norms, agency, and conditional rationality

Debating norms requires a consideration of the relations between the rational character of human action (the *homo oeconomicus*) on the one hand and its normative character on the other. The latter aspect has been the research domain of a norm and culture-based model of human action (put forward in modern social science by Durkheim, Parsons, and others).

In matters social, political, economic, technical, or aesthetic, it is expectations that make the role of norms so crucial (Lavdas 2004). Norms serve to regulate activity and, 'although we are not always conscious of them, we soon become aware of their power to regulate behaviour if we break one' (MacKenzie 2009: 12). Of course, tackling norms is not the same as discussing moral issues. We need to be constantly reminded of the differences between 'values' and 'norms' (see, *inter alia*, Grimm 1985). Debating values means debating conceptions of the good life, in accordance with which we ought to live. On the other hand, norms express expectations on the various settings of social action. They orient social action towards certain patterns, thereby reducing the complexity of social interaction, increasing predictability and specifying certain limiting routes out of an apparently endless repertoire of social action and interaction (Henecka 1985: 60-65). We comply with norms for a variety of reasons. Since norms refer to a number of areas of human endeavour (technical, aesthetic, economic, civic, and so on), reasons for compliance vary. They will depend on (a) the subject matter, (b) the particular constellation of factors encouraging compliance, and (c) the actors' objectives in the short, medium and long-term. The weakening of norms entails acute problems in social interaction.[2]

Certain norms acquire a binding codification, thereby turning into legal norms, laws, rules, and regulations. Indeed, relations between legal and other norms provide us with one of the most fascinating topics for analysis in the area of social, economic, and political interaction (Grimm 1985: 607-609). But because norms in general are

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[2] Indeed, Emile Durkheim's concept of *Anomie* refers to the absence or the extreme weakening of norms, a situation in which patterns and expectations of social action appear to be confusing and/or irrelevant.

relative to temporal and spatial variation, focusing on norms opens the door for a discussion which eschews the binding dimensions associated with the analysis of values (Rorty 1987: 26-66).[3] In fact, as we will see in the next section, when we investigate norms in the work of Thucydides, norms have originally been associated with custom and religion. Suffice it to note, at this point, that the contextual *and* contingent quality of most political truths renders the search for norms an even more crucial endeavour. We concentrate on the exegesis of patterns with transient force, drawing on a pragmatist approach to normativity in order to moderate the unavoidable role of binding institutions. We may agree on a set of norms even if we do not share the same values.

Hence the question of how norms are to be applied to specific situations and the question of how values are to be applied to specific situations need to be approached differently. When it comes to norms, it is vital for our understanding to try to ascertain how they arise in the first place. Different types of norms may arise following different trajectories. Norms governing economic behaviour may emerge from interactions and get their shape in a process of historical formation or they may be dictated from the political system, their application being a matter which will depend on the prevailing politico-economic relations. On the international level, economic norms develop as a result of complex interactions between technical, economic, and political variables. In the post-Cold War world, the role of the American hyper-power presented US administrations with opportunities as well as constraints: the US faces tensions between system management responsibilities and specific national interests (Litwak 2007). The Bush administration post 9/11 stressed the latter, ultimately failing on both counts.

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[3] Since the 1970s, philosophical debates on norms and normativity tend to follow Joseph Raz. His *Practical Reason and Norms* became emblematic of an approach that allows reasons to dominate thinking about normativity. As John Broome put it, 'some authors now believe normativity consists of little else. Raz himself says ''the normativity of all that is normative consists in the way it is, or provides, or is otherwise related to reasons.'' All is reasons. But it is not. Reasons are undoubtedly important, but normativity has other important features, and our preoccupation with reasons distracts us away from them' (Broome 2004: 28). As Professor Broome rightly suggests, we need to look at normativity more widely. The same applies to norms.

Yet different types of norms have something crucial in common: they all evolve because they are subject to selection (Florini 1996). Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) suggest that norm influence can be understood as a three-stage process. The first stage is the emergence of a norm (which in fact means the emergence of a new, transformed/ mutant form of a norm); the second stage involves broad norm acceptance; and the third stage involves internalization. The first two stages are divided by a threshold or 'tipping' point, at which a critical mass of relevant actors adopt the norm (Finnemore & Sikkink 1998: 894-909). What they call a third stage, however, is in fact a level-of-analysis shift within the contours of stage two. An alternative depiction of a norm's life-cycle would involve norm mutation, norm prominence, and the norm getting challenged (Table 1). A new mutation, no matter how favourable to fitness, may require some help in getting established: it is actors that play key roles in helping particular norms acquire prominence. As Florini explains, 'international norm prominence generally occurs either because someone is actively promoting the norm, or because the state where a mutant norm first arose happens to be particularly conspicuous' (Florini 1996: 374).

Table 1. A norm's life-cycle

	Mutation	**Prominence**	**Challenge**
Features of each stage	Norm arises through changes in attributes of existing norms	A critical mass of relevant actors adopt the norm	Increasing numbers of relevant actors question aspects of the norm
Mechanisms	Selection through trial and error OR emulation	Conspicuous actors promote and/or endorse new norm	Competition with other norms

Arguing that actors play a critical role in normative, economic, and political development is not the same as suggesting that the action that counts is always rational. In the first place, the consequences of rational action may depend on perceptions regarding norms and normative expectations. At both international and domestic levels, the role of norms underpinning policy decisions manifests itself at the stages of policy-making as well as policy implementation.

Second, the combination of deliberate action and the intended and unintended consequences of action, some of which become institutionalized, is a force evident in political development. A long litany of writers in cognitive and social psychology challenged the notion that individuals are rational. Reason, like ideology, is at least partially a cultural and historical product. Moreover, it has been suggested that the structure of reasoning may vary across individuals, extending 'to the formal quality of the associations people forge and the kinds of objects they can think about' (Rosenberg 1991: 399). As Kindleberger explains, rational action in economic life 'does not imply that all actors have the same information, the same intelligence, the same experience and purposes', while there is also the fallacy of composition which manifests itself from time to time when 'individual actors all act rationally but in combination produce an irrational result, such as standing to get a better view as spectators in sport or, more dramatically, running for the exit in a theatre fire' (Kindleberger 1989: 243). Cognitive dissonance can be another factor influencing rationality, while the very notion of 'group think' presupposes surrendering individual rationality to collective impulses.

It would appear that the two claims – that agency matters and that agency is not always rational – converge in suggesting that political intervention is at once possible, consequential, and potentially risky. Nor is it the case that rationality can always settle policy dilemmas, once ideology has receded and 'epistemic communities' have a say. Because ideology, like reason, is a process, and because there is an isomorphic relationship between the activity of understanding and that of valuing (Rosenberg 1991: 399), it is the interpenetration of rational calculations and ideological impulses that gives policy norms their particular form and content. In

short, agency matters not because it is always rational; it matters because it interprets. And because it interprets (other actors' actions as well as institutional dynamics) we need a reflective basis for assessing such interpretations in a globalized context.

Discourses on internationalization and on globalization have tended to include phenomena that are novel as well as not-so-novel. It would be beyond the scope of this paper to rehearse the debates. What is significant, however, is the effort – advanced by thinkers such as Karl-Otto Apel – to mobilize philosophical and moral responsibility for the establishment of a novel order of human interaction that could be called 'second-order globalization' (Apel 2000: 137-155). The point here is to encourage a reflective modality that takes into account problems and prospects of humanity on a global level. This can only be achieved by never losing sight of the changing patterns of norms and normative expectations.

3. Disentangling normative patterns: tradition, intellect, and normative change in Thucydides

From the prism of the present analysis, Thucydides' crucial contribution is that the norms that count are neither religious in origin nor based primarily on custom and tradition. At the same time, mainstream neorealist and neoliberal arguments on the static nature of state interests appear to be exaggerated with reference (not just to recent constructivist analyses, but even) to Thucydides' own work. This section argues that norms are the result of complex interactions that belie both traditionalist approaches to the religious foundations of normative behaviour and certain neorealist arguments on how to understand state interests. I read Thucydides' *History* as a great narrative built around a number of thematic patterns.[4] In attempting to reconstruct the dense Thucydidean narrative, I focus on three such thematic patterns in particular. First, the dynamics of contestation between and amongst what Thucydides calls *homoiotropoi* powers and *diaforoi* powers. Second, I

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[4] I use the Loeb edition throughout (Thucydides 1928).

focus on the process of disentangling normativity from the customary and religious norms prevailing among Greek *poleis* before the Peloponnesian War. Finally, I endeavour to cast light on what we may call the emancipation of ruthlessness; a normative break that came as an early result of the disentanglement, leading to grim consequences for those involved. Athenian imperialism became the main vehicle for that emancipation.

Before turning to the three thematic patterns, we need to establish that Thucydides' methodology is such that allows us to draw inferences that go beyond the acclaimed 'objectivity' of a great chronicler. To begin with, the view of Thucydides as a 'mere' objective, great chronicler was justifiably undermined by early realist readings. The point, however, is that apart from the emphasis put by realist analysts on certain important aspects of the great historian's work, the methodology which underlies the narrative allows for other, equally important, thematic patterns to develop through the *History*. For realists, the *History of the Peloponnesian War* was about seeking timeless truths on the state's self-interested search for power, or the need to balance against the rise of such power. Werner Jaeger's classic study paved the way, emphasizing 'this political necessity, the mere mathematics of power politics': namely, that Sparta's fearful response to the growth of Athenian power was 'the true cause of the war' (Jaeger 1976: 488). Morgenthau and others followed in these steps (Morgenthau 1978: 38). The fundamental realist proposition – that international relations is about states pursuing interests defined in terms of power – is one that realists recognized in Thucydides' text.

A number of other interpretive possibilities are now possible. As W. R. Connor observed several years ago, a new direction in Thucydidean studies emerged after the late 1960s, marked by an increasing interest in Thucydides' own emotional involvement in the events of which he writes (Connor 1977: 289). While this may have resulted in writings of uneven quality, it also opened the door to more sophisticated accounts of Thucydidean discourse. In particular, of greater import for my analysis is the suggestion put forward by Adam Parry, the distinguished classicist. Parry has shown that the means of expression employed by Thucydides

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indicate that he was trying to harness the abstract vocabulary, which the Greeks were able to develop in the post-Homeric world, in order to simultaneously impose meaningful order and render 'eternal' the episodes in the *History*. A degree of abstraction was developed by Hesiod, and reached its height in Herodotus. But it is with Thucydides that we reach a 'social abstraction', i.e., a modality in writing in which abstract words appear as independent entities in sentences. Of course, they still imply human modalities, whereas with Aristotle another stage of abstraction is reached: abstract words need not refer to any human state or behaviour. Still, the remarkable thing about Thucydides is that he is analytical as well as engaged and that – as Parry (1970) suggests – the style to accomplish this is *struggle*: antithesis, variation, juxtaposition, a rather terse but also superbly condensed and meaningful discourse. For Thucydides, history is the search for the conditions that may encourage the intellect (*gnome*) imposing itself on reality, and the fundamental desideratum is a reality in which the intellect is in control of things.

In this context, the degeneration of civilization brought about by war acquires a fundamental significance: in part because wars were a constant feature of reality (they still are, to a certain extent); in part due to the apocalyptic implications of war for the human soul. In a famous passage describing the revolution in Corcyra (7.82.2), a pensive Thucydides remarks that 'war is a violent teacher', one that imposes itself destroying practices, mores, and morality: '*Ho de polemos biaios didaskalos kai pros ta paronta tas orgas ton pollon homoioi'* (7. 82. 2): war is a violent teacher, and brings the moods of most men into harmony with their present conditions. War subjugates everything *sta paronta*: '*ta paronta* – immediate, going reality assumes control of everything, and all language, including moral and political terms, becomes meaningless' (Parry 1970: 19). In this and other passages, Thucydides is making a fascinating point about the relations between human possibilities, material conditions and the frailty of signification. He sensed that man was entrapped in a situation where force, the immediacy of threat, and chance were his masters (Parry 1970: 19).

Zooming in from the general role of war in deforming humanity to the particular conditions prevalent in the Hellenic system of international relations, Thucydides proceeds to distinguish between wars on the basis of whether the warring parties resemble each other in terms of regimes, institutions, and political culture. Indeed, the fact that the war between Athens and Sparta was a prolonged contest between *diaforoi* powers gave that conflict some of its distinguishing features. Conflict between *homoiotropoi* powers (such as, Thucydides suggests, Athens and Syracuse) may be more difficult to resolve in military terms, because of similar mentalities and the adoption of similar tactics: both Athens and Syracuse were competent at sea. On the other hand, conflict between *diaforoi* powers (such as Athens and Sparta) is of grander dimensions, as different systems and worldviews clash, but it may lend itself to easier military resolution (Thucydides 7.55, 8.96). At the same time, the cohesion of each bloc played a major role in the balance achieved, as Athens' allies tended to have democratic or tyrannical regimes, while those that sided with Sparta were oligarchies.[5] Unlike oligarchy, both tyranny and democracy[6] were associated with financial enterprise, shipping, and expansionist thinking (Watson 2009: 52). War between Athens and Sparta became, in the end, a particularly protracted conflict. It led to direct confrontation over practices, institutions, and norms.

At the beginning of the *History of the Peloponnesian War*, we encounter an eloquent analysis of the dispute over Epidamnus. When faced with the domestic upheaval at Epidamnus, Corcyra – one of the developing city-state's founders – opted for detachment and neutrality. But when Epidamnus turned with success to the other founder, Corinth, Corcyra took offense. The Corcyraeans offer to submit their dispute with Corinth, that was also their own mother city, to arbitration in order to avoid further military conflict. At the same time, the Corcyraeans hope to be admitted to the Athenian alliance, a development opposed by their mother city (see

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[5] Regime type was a clear indicator of preference for an alliance, hence the willingness of both sides to intervene when called upon by domestic interests, in order to safeguard or topple a regime. Ste. Croix (1982, 1989) has asserted that the masses in the cities of the Athenian empire welcomed political subordination to Athens as the price to pay in order to be able to escape from the hated rule of their own oligarchs. That may explain the fact that, in most cases, revolts against Athens were the work of minorities.

[6] The first often led to the second as the tyrants who wanted to stay in power had to accommodate and gradually endorse the views of the *polloi*.

1. 24-45). The Corinthians considers the Corcyreans disloyal: they accuse the Corcyreans of 'having revolted in violation of unwritten international Hellenic norms' (Cohen 2006: 270). What the Corinthians emphasize to Athens is the significance and the universal value of international norms. By contrast, the Corcyreans appeal to Athenian self-interest: by admitting them into the alliance, the Athenians would be doing what is in their interest, which is more important than the rights and wrongs of the Corinthian claims about Corcyraean disloyalty and violation of international Hellenic norms. According to this view, which the Athenians endorsed, crucial strategic advantages would accrue to Athens by virtue of Corcyra's location and sea power. The Athenians accepted the Corcyreans into the alliance, offending Corinth, which was Sparta's ally but, as the course of the ensuing war proved, Corcyra never became an important asset to the Athenians (Cohen 2006: 271).

Aiming to keep Sparta out of the ensuing conflict, Athens dispatched an envoy to influence Spartan deliberations. The audacity of the Athenians' speech at Sparta (in book One of the *History*) is a clear example of this novel approach to openly defending imperialism as a way of consolidating the city's perceived superiority.[7] The Athenians openly recognize that their motives in building the empire were fear (δέος), honor (τιμή), and self-interest (ωφέλεια) (1. 75). Neither deliberately provocative nor retreating from a robust defense of their great power (Orwin 1986: 72-85), the Athenians seek to avoid war, if possible, but not at the cost of diluting the perception of their superiority. This is a speech which on the one hand tends to vindicate the 'balancing-against-power' realist readings of Thucydides[8] while on the other hand it exposes, as we will see, the foundations of a new ruthlessness.

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[7] As Alker observes, throughout the *History* speeches regularly come before the great actions (or 'motions') (Alker 1988: 813-814). Paying particular attention to the context, Thucydides is clear on his interpretive as well as explanatory methodology: 'My habit has been to make the speakers say what was in my opinion demanded of them by the various occasions, of course adhering as closely as possible to the general sense of what they really said' (1.21).

[8] The view that Thucydides' analysis of the truest ('ἀληθεστάτην') cause of the war, i.e., that the growth of Athenian power brought fear to the Spartans and forced them to war ('ἀναγκάσαι ες το πολεμείν') (1. 23. 6), is a precursor to structuralist realist interpretations.

Athenian calculation, based on notions of short-term self-interest, proved myopic on various occasions in the 27-year war. As Thucydides insists time and again, it is the uncertainty inherent in human endeavours that makes it even more necessary for reasonable actors to plan beyond immediate gains. There is recognition, emphasized at various points throughout the *History*, that the future is uncertain and the fortunes of war constantly shifting. When things shift, the norms and institutions one ignored in order to seize a temporary advantage 'may no longer be available for assistance when one is in unforeseen and dire need' (Cohen 2006: 271).

At the same time, Athens was undergoing a process of change from within. The Athenian polis of the Fifth Century, that became the quintessential paradigm of classical Greek antiquity, was transformed through protracted all-out war. Of course, the idealized account of the Athenian regime presented by Thucydides (in the Periclean Funeral Oration) has often been read through Roman republican eyes. In fact, Thucydides's account of the Athenian regime emphasized both the civic commitment by the citizen and the confident and relaxed quality of life in Athens. The focus throughout was on the balance accomplished by Athenian political life (for free male citizens) between what we would call – in modern terms – participation and individual freedom, public-mindedness and respect for self-development: the civic greatness of the Periclean Age was exemplified in a civilized way of life, in culture and, characteristically, in the art of the Fifth Century (see Connor 1984). Thucydides is equally sophisticated 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 came to resemble a fortress, while the city's institutions, culture, and practices became seriously affected.[9]

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[9] See, e.g., at 7. 28: 'των δε πάντων ομοίως επακτών εδείτο η πόλις, και αντί του πόλις είναι φρούριον κατέστη'.

4. City-states and normative contestation

Normative struggle and normative emergence is at least as crucial an ingredient in Thucydides' analysis as 'power politics'. Cleon's efforts, after the fall of Mytilene, to persuade the Athenians to kill all male inhabitants and sell women and children as slaves mark the first major departure from the moderate imperial policy advocated by Pericles. In the end, following fierce debate, Cleon did not succeed in persuading the Athenians, but the debate itself manifests the gap between the arguments advanced and the views that were dominant a decade before. Then a few years later, the Athenians inflicted on Melos the terror Cleon had tried to persuade them to inflict on Mytilene.

It is in the context of the so-called Melian and Delian dialogues, that we find the most acute attempts to rationalise and legitimise the Athenians' departure from the traditional norms of international relations in the Hellenic world. The cynicism evident in the Athenian statements in the famous passages that constitute the Melian Dialogue (5.84 – 5.113) has led scholars to the view that Thucydides presents, in effect, an Athenian hubris. Culminating in the statement that 'right, as the world goes, is only in question between equals in power, while the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must' (5.89), the Melian Dialogue has traditionally been cited as an example of imperial arrogance ultimately leading to imperial downfall.

As Lebow (1984: 10-11) has observed, it is didactic to compare and contrast the Melian Dialogue with Pericles' Funeral Oration, a famous passage also used by Thucydides to convey the Athenian approach to international hegemony:

> 'Delivered at the onset of the war, the Funeral Oration reflects a quiet self-confidence that derives from knowledge of Athenian power, political, economic and also moral [...] Athens need seek no opportunity to demonstrate resolve. Rather, Pericles argues, it should use its power moderately and only when necessary in defence of vital interests [...] The Periclean strategy was suitable to the Athens of 430

> B.C., a power bursting with self-assurance and revelling in its political, economic and cultural ascendancy in the Hellenic world. However, thirteen years of war, broken only by a short-lived truce of three years, had changed Athenians' view of themselves and of the world [...]. In the process, they had often sacrificed principle for expediency and honour for interest and in doing so had transformed the nature of the Athenian alliance. Athens' imperium was now held together less by the common interests of the member states and rather more by their fear of Athenian power' (Lebow 1984: 10-11).

Yet Thucydides goes further than that, and the point he makes is a much more interesting one. In a field of scholarship filled with hundreds of noteworthy contributions, it is Orwin's (1989) analysis that comes close to grasping the significance of the Melian dialogue from an essentially political perspective. Although his focus is on the cognitive shifts associated with the evolving Athenian understanding of war, interests, and morality, Orwin's work provides an erudite prism which may also be used as a step to further analysis. Orwin argues that the Athenian position, shifting but not inscrutable, ultimately implies 'the emancipation of necessity from the gods, or the emergence of absolute necessity'. Unlike traditional piety, Athenian discourse (recognizing in practice certain exceptions to piety) implies that some things are more fundamental for human beings than piety. While the Athenians do not go so far as to deny that the gods chastise impiety, wherever it is willful (i.e., wherever it is truly impiety), they do deny 'that the gods can reasonably expect us to put the sacred first, ahead of the necessities to which we are subject as human beings' (Orwin 1989: 237).

Orwin supports this ground-breaking approach with a stimulating reading of the Delian Debate. While from the point of view of a cursory reading of the Melian Dialogue it would appear that, for the Athenians, piety has lost all authority as a rule, passages such as the one concerning the occupation of the shrine of Apollo at

Delion indicate significant nuances, which – I would suggest – point to the normative mutation in progress.[10] As he suggests, referring to the Delian dialogue,

> 'this neglected passage in book 4, in which the Athenians first extend their characteristic outlook on international relations to those between god and humankind, is crucial for grasping the logic of their unfolding political theology of imperialism. I mean that doctrine that achieves its zenith in the most notorious episode in Thucydides, the so-called Melian dialogue (5.84-113, esp. 103-5). Our passage is equally crucial, however, for grasping the discovery of the notion of political necessity in the strict sense, that is, of natural necessity as opposed to the radical contingency of a world ruled by gods-a discovery that is the basis of all real political philosophy or science' (Orwin 1989: 237-238).

There was clearly a clash involving cultural and broader civilizational dimensions. But what was novel about the Athenian approach, in addition to its combination of commercial prowess and expansion abroad and political sophistication at home, was the aspiration to overcome and redraft the norms of international coexistence. Arguing against the often constricting influences of communal mores and of religious norms, the Athenians claim they are both capable of and justified in aiming to transcend inherited mores.

The point, further, is that Athenian emancipation from the traditional mores of an inter-communal system of international relations led to short-term and longer-term implications. The short-term emancipation of ruthlessness, apart from being abhorrent in ethical terms, did not serve the Athenians well: aiming to escape the limitations imposed by religious and traditional norms, they missed the opportunity

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[10] Orwin (1989: 237) makes the point with eloquence: 'The Athenians -to speak very broadly -can live neither with piety nor without it. Without caring to observe its restrictions except where convenient, neither have they purged their souls of the hopes and fears that piety nurtures. [...] The crux of the Athenian argument is that even respect for the sacred must yield to the necessities of human life. Obviously this implies that such respect does not itself rank among these necessities'.

to reflect on the normative requirements for the pursuit of the long-term interest of the *polis*.

Longer-term implications constitute a more complex field. After the Athenian capitulation, Corinthian and Theban demands that Athens be destroyed met with clear Spartan refusal (see Kagan 1987). But, crucially, Sparta's refusal to oblige her allies was not based on religious or moral arguments. Not anymore. Instead, Spartans refused to destroy a city that had played a key role during the Persian Wars, at a time of grave danger for the entire Hellenic system of international relations.

The role of norms has been the focus also of the work by Monoson and Loriaux (1998). But their unsurprising conclusion (that Thucydides suggests that it is precisely when the norms of moral conduct are disrupted that states and individuals find it difficult to chart a prudent course of action) flies in the face of Thucydides' cold and analytical account of the Athenians' playful approach to norms and norm influence in the Melian and Delian episodes. His overall secular approach encourages an analytical but certainly not detached approach to the adventures of the normative patterns prevalent in the Hellenic world before, during, and after the momentous War. And *that* is why he insists that the War he narrates is of immense importance to humanity: not because of the discovery of some laws of behaviour in international relations, as some realists would have us believe, but because of the momentous normative change brought about in the course of the conflict, smashing traditional mores, encouraging the mutation of norms and, ultimately, clearing the table for a rethinking of international conduct.

5. Small states and norm prominence

Despite 'smallness', most European small states have been conspicuous as international actors, due to economic or financial centrality (Switzerland), early economic prowess combined with a robust civil society (the Netherlands), a key geographical position (Belgium, Greece), an imperial past combined with stable domestic arrangements (Austria), and so on. And they have tended to promote particular sets of international norms.

Some of these states (with the addition of Denmark and Ireland and excepting Belgium, Greece, and the Netherlands) have tried to adapt long-standing traditions of neutrality to their new environments. Yet norms associated with neutrality have never been the most prominent among their contributions. First, because, as Thucydides suggests, an actors' neutrality does not always increase the chances for peace. The continuing debates on the structural conditions leading to the Peloponnesian War notwithstanding, it is clear that the immediate causes of the War had a lot to do with neutrality: Corcyra's attempt to remain neutral when faced with domestic upheaval and calls to intervene at Epidamnus, in effect invited intervention from Corinth, leading to hostilities between Corcyra and Corinth, both eventually appealing to Athens and to Sparta. At a later stage, the Melian 'small-state' evocation of neutrality led Athenians to the view that if Melos was allowed to opt out, any other ally would be tempted to do the same (see Rubin 1987: 355-356). Second, neutrality has not been the small states' strongest normative contribution because of oscillations and, in most cases, eventual capitulation to the realities of international alliances. Indeed, even within the EU, despite initial strengthening of the small states' voice, developments have led them to reconsider some of their earlier strategic choices in order to keep pace and exercise a degree of influence (Wivel 2005: 393-412).

There are norms, however, small states did help diffuse and acquire prominence. These include the civilian, economic, and cultural projection of international identity, the adherence to international law and institutions, and the emphasis on openness

and pragmatic cooperative solutions to problems of cooperation. Small states in Europe have generally been able to pursue successful and influential strategies of international adjustment, based on a clearer focus on a narrow set of economic interests and objectives than characterises the large states and on dynamic responses to the real or perceived conditions of vulnerability (Keohane 1971; Katzenstein 1985). In particular, Katzenstein (1985, 2003) explored the ways in which patterns of historical evolution of the small European states differ systematically from those of large states. Democratic corporatism promoted a dynamic adjustment, developing two lines of argument. The first compared small with large states. The second line of argument draw distinctions among the small European states, based on their internal characteristics. Even if, for most of these states, the era of democratic corporatism is no longer with us, the underlying assumption (i.e., that democratic small states have been able to live with change due to particular political responses they have been able to forge) is still relevant. This concurs with the conclusion reached by an IR specialist who is critical of neorealism:

> 'small state behaviour is not immune from domestic political influences. It may well be that small state foreign security policy can be viewed as a state-centric phenomenon in which military strategy is a response to international pressures. But this is a proposition to be tested empirically rather than one to be assumed a priori. Contrary to the state-centric approach, the cases I have examined reveal that even the most vulnerable states may display foreign policies explicable only in terms of domestic politics. This is especially true for weak states which are also domestically liberal' (Elman 1995: 211).

Revisiting the 'small-states in IR' literature, it is clear that much of the research on which it was based was stimulated by the findings of scholars such as Cameron, Garrett, and others, that openness (in states large and small) does not undercut national choice, including for social democratic regimes that seek to strike a balance between efficiency and equity. As Katzenstein concedes, 'Garrett's provocative analysis is a useful corrective to the view, widely shared in the 1990s, that footloose

capital was all but eliminating national choices. And it offers an excellent starting point for any analysis that wishes to probe in greater detail tendencies toward corporatist arrangements, for example, in some of the Mediterranean countries, Ireland or Finland' (Katzenstein 2003: 11). But 'small size was a code for something more important' than just economic openness: it signified a politically salient perception of vulnerability, which in turn became closely linked to the ideology of social partnership (Katzenstein 2003: 11-12). Indeed, as Katzenstein is now eager to stress, 'similar corporatist structures are filled with different social content'. In fact, the combination of structural and psychological factors was a major if somewhat unfocused concern in the early literature on the subject (see Keohane 1969: 292-293). But it failed to lead to a clear understanding of the interactions between norms, strategies, and institutions.

As Keohane remarked in an early survey, 'if Lilliputians can tie up Gulliver, or make him do their fighting for them, they must be studied as carefully as the giant' (Keohane 1969: 310). Deprived of the possibility of relying primarily on the use of force, small states inhabit a universe that is norm-driven, certainly on paper but to a significant extent in practice as well. Evocation of international law and institutional procedures, appeal to rules of conduct, extensive use of the United Nations as a forum, succeeding (in Europe) in consolidating an amplification-effect of EU membership, and so on.

These attributes have converged in bringing about a persistent preference for peaceful resolution of conflicts. Of course, variation does exist. Some of these states (like the Netherlands) boast considerable economic, technological, and cultural prowess. Still others (like Greece) possess most of the common normative attributes we identified, but they also exhibit unusual (for their size) military capabilities. Greece merits a closer examination in this respect: while unusual in its almost continuous bias in favour of an economy largely defined by high military spending, it still managed to adopt the cooperative attributes that eventually led to Europeanization and changes in state-economy relations. At the same time, however, it is unlikely that Europeanization will be able to move deeper in the absence of a

fundamental shift away from the consistent bias in favour of military spending (Lavdas 1997).

In the course of the last fifty years, other actors – transnational interest groups, churches, foundations, media, a whole array of 'non-governmental organizations' – have developed, expanding in numbers and growing in significance. Such associations with an international focus go back a long way: various organizations (including women's groups, the World Federalists, and others) were present at the San Francisco deliberations which led to the signing of the United Nations Charter in 1945, 'some being allowed to submit their viewpoints to the delegates' (Kennedy 2006: 216). There can be little doubt that today, the sheer number, range, and significance of NGOs are different. Still, the role of the normative patterns associated with small state behaviour in Europe remains indispensable. Being political-power structures, hence infinitely more legitimate in comparison to NGOs, no matter what the advocates of a 'global civil society' may claim, small European states have been conspicuous in their successful paths of adaptation, innovation, and survival.

Successes in small-states strategies bring to the fore larger issues about political decisions, political will, and political responsibility. In section 2 of this paper, I suggested that political actors matter and they even become crucial during periods of crisis and re-adjustment. I concur with Lewin (2007) when he argues that politicians are not prisoners of historical forces: often they can opt for critical choices, choices that may lead to wide-ranging consequences. Political actors can therefore be held accountable for their actions. Blame avoidance rests on arguments that provide a ready refuge for politicians eager to avoid responsibility. And we should not be inclined to discount political accountability because of the trade-offs involved in consensus-building and coalition formation: consensual power-sharing arrangements often generate corrupt, collusive political systems (Lewin 2007).

In most cases of successful policy reform, certain conditions have been present – no matter how important the differences and divergences. It is a political-science truism that

> 'the greater the degree of autonomy or insulation that reorganization-minded governments enjoyed, the greater the chances of success. The autonomy derives from three mutually reinforcing factors related to the electoral and constitutional system: the degree to which the electoral system and constitution created governing majorities; the willingness of fiscal bureaus to articulate market-based reorganization as a policy option and enact it administratively; and the degree to which politicians were sheltered from short-term political pressures' (Schwartz 1994: 545).

Small-states contribution has been twofold in this respect: persistent emphasis on openness and cooperation on the international front has helped focus political will at home, in the absence of majoritarian arrangements that would more directly encourage political responsibility.

6. The republican current

One cannot meaningfully speak of normative development without addressing issues of the changing form and content of the ideas that move actors. Republicanism, this section argues, provided the ideational platform against which new international norms acquired increased potency and a larger audience. It is a commonplace suggestion that the emergence of new normative queries in international political theory testifies to the transitory nature of some of the basic Westphalian premises. This has become more acute in view of the relative exhaustion of some of the great theoretical traditions. In this context, the impasse faced by the purest versions of both liberal and communitarian approaches led to renewed interest in a much older yet surprisingly relevant framework of thought. Indeed, faced with the achievements as well as the shortcomings of liberal thought, neo-republican theory aims to reinvigorate a rich trans-Atlantic tradition of political

sensibility. The republican tradition has been renewed by thinkers of the calibre of Philip Pettit (1997, 1999, 2001) and Quentin Skinner (1998).

This is not the place to rehearse at length the neo-republican argument.[11] Unlike traditional republicans, neo-republican thinkers do not believe that society has the right to enforce morality. Less particularistic in outlook and more favourably inclined towards the significance of procedural guarantees, neo-republican thought acknowledges the need to keep the debates on norms and values separate, albeit mutually reinforcing. This also acknowledges empirical evidence concerning the diversity and pluralism of political commitments.[12] Neo-republicans like Pettit (1997) recognise that modern citizens have multiple loyalties: toward their country, but also toward other points of reference, that could include their family, their friends, their colleagues, their ethnic, religious or cultural identities, and the associations to which they belong. Loyalty toward their political community may in fact be divided: citizens need not necessarily be committed first and foremost to their nation state; they may also feel loyalty toward their local community or toward the EU. Despite these provisos, loyalty toward the political community is a commitment that citizens ought to possess. From a liberal point of view it seems paramount that the latter commitment does not take precedence over autonomy and the institutions that guarantee such autonomy. The same applies to the republican notion of structural freedom (freedom as the absence of dependence and domination): commitment to the political community should not be allowed to defeat 'freedom as non-domination' (Pettit 1997). Only a political community that guarantees republican freedom is worthy of civic commitment.

A liberal rendering of republican sensitivities will defend civic commitment and civic virtues as general phenomena but will deplore the more determined efforts to mould civic life. Seen from this prism, a Republic of Europeans (Lavdas 2001; Lavdas and

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[11] For excellent overviews covering different aspects of the republican themes in their domestic and international applications see Brugger (1999), Schwarzmantel (2003) and Onuf (1998).
[12] Differences and variation in citizen orientations towards political phenomena comprise much of what makes political analysis a challenging field. Indeed, the analysis of contemporary democratic politics 'ought to center on how *varying* citizen motivations affect the nature of popular government' (Scalia 1991: 222).

Chryssochoou 2006) will aim to combine a sense of shared political and policy relevance at the EU level and multiple commitments at various levels, fields and areas of human action and civic activity. Even in the context of a classic republican work such as Machiavelli's *Prince*, flexibility ultimately becomes the new meaning of virtue: 'flexibility according to the times or situation' (Mansfield 1985: xxiii). There is flexibility in political choice and in civic commitment and a strong emphasis on political skills and political persuasion (Viroli 2002), although there can be no escaping the basic normative requirements of a well-ordered political community. In the emerging, complex and multi-centred Euro-polity, there is a great risk in further diffusing responsibility and encouraging the politics of 'blame avoidance'. It is therefore crucial to realize that accountability (emanating from the Greek conception of *λόγον διδόναι*) becomes a crucial parameter in the republican construction of a Euro-polity.

But there is, of course, another republican framework which remains influential:

> 'Republicanism was the most influential political ideology in shaping the nature of successive regimes in France's passage to and consolidation of modernity [...]. A pragmatic ideology of government overlaid with idealism, it is broad, many-faceted and often-shifting, a blend of several currents in France's socio-economic and political history. Essentially a compromise between various political and social traditions, its various forms have been determined at any one time by the balance of forces between the different elements pulling in different directions' (Hewlett 2003: 44).

It is 'republicanism' in this incarnation, as a dominant French ideology, which has been subjected to rigorous liberal criticism. The two 'republicanisms' are certainly distinct but, at least to an extent, mutually reinforcing. Rather than being an affront to the republican ideal, French republican practice – in its multi-faceted reality – tends to confirm at least some of the republican traits: universalism, defence of the possibility of a rational political order, a notion of freedom closely linked to popular

sovereignty, and an emphasis on political participation. It is also, as Hewlett rightly stresses, open to a pragmatic approach to government.

Europe's post-war distinctiveness owes much to the adoption of a republican view of politics as a participatory exercise without losing sight of the requirements of pragmatism. In fact, an incomplete, regional example of 'second-order globalization' (Apel 2000) has been evident in certain aspects of Europe's political, economic, and intellectual development over the last sixty years. The combination of pragmatism and reflection on the substantive challenges facing humans (social problems, environmental degradation, empowerment of disadvantaged groups, and so on) produced a unique late-twentieth-century European mix of efficiency and social responsibility.

Of course, the EU's projection of its 'soft power' on the international level and Europe's actual economic profile do not necessarily tell the same story. In terms of economic performance, today's EU is a mixed bag. Euro-sclerosis has been a predicament only partly offset by the dynamism of economic and monetary union, while many structural problems remain (Alesina and Giavazzi 2006). Yet concerns about possible negative consequences of the euro and EMU (e.g., Schmitter 2006) have not been justified by developments. On the contrary, for the majority of member states it was the euro that helped moderate some of the implications of the 2008 financial crisis. At the same time, however, the verdict is still open on the impact of monetary union on democracy. It is possible that domestic public institutions dealing with economic affairs gain more influence over other ministries, while central bankers at EU level 'will find it easier to assert their monetarist priorities' at the expense of officials championing economic expansion and employment (Schmitter 2006: 268). Schmitter succinctly formulated the question confronting us: 'EMU makes Euro-democracy more necessary, but does it make it easier?' (Schmitter 2006: 269).

Exactly how significant a role the European experiment will play in the future of the market economy is not yet fully discernible. But the debate on different 'models of capitalism' (Coates 2000) has been recast. The political economy of privatization

(Lavdas 1996) and the shifts in cleavage lines (Kriesi 1998) have been reshaping public-private boundaries from Scandinavia to Southern Europe. There is a saying which rings true: 'there's more than one model of capitalism in the EU but certainly less than 27' (the number of current member states). Both conformity (within the monetary union) and variation (in areas such as education and training) contribute to the EU's composite politico-economic profile. At the same time, as the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) acquires some *gravitas*, analysts have been quick to ask whether a European strategic culture is emerging. A strategic culture is associated with the formation of goals as well as the choice of means. As an analyst asserts, 'the structural shift from bipolarity to unipolarity caused a notable shift in the European defense industry', encouraging a substantial increase in intra-European codevelopment and coproduction weapons projects (Jones 2008: 79). Elements of an emerging strategic culture in the EU need to be situated in the context of 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. It was 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. Of course, as 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 perpetual peace, 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, in which a multitude of states, large and small, shared the 'manners of Europe'.

As 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 domestic republican arrangements.

But Deudney's point is valuable: 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 tackles contemporary 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). For a number of years, rehearsing international theorizing from Kantian and republican prisms (Onuf 1998) has led to worthwhile ideas and normative hypotheses. Yet republican security theory shares a number of 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 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. Interestingly, 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 (Kagan 2003) 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, all-inclusive metaphor. The same, *mutatis mutandis*, applies to a second case of over-simplification, which is almost a mirror-image rendering of the first one. I mean the analyses which aim 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. 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. A tradition that gives priority to conceptions of justice and liberty, without necessarily eschewing the use of force when it comes to defending those values or a set of norms that guarantee a civilized form of life.

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 the EU is now a part. Neither rigid hierarchy, nor unpredictable anarchy: the prevalence of diffuse and mixed reciprocity leads to the negotiation of shifting modalities of cooperation. Of course, there is conflict, at the minimum because of scarce resources coupled with the burden of inherited ideological and other preconceptions. But seen from this perspective, the debate 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.

7. Reciprocity and the evolution of EU politics

When Balfour, the British Foreign Secretary, pledged his country's support for the efforts to establish a Jewish home in Palestine, the promise he made in 1917 had various consequences in international affairs for many years. Yet in a recently discovered document, we read Balfour stating that the promise was a tactical move to win support for Britain during the First World War; the British government never had any intention of honouring this pledge (McCauley 2006: 251). Tactical moves aiming to mislead other parties, promises made with no intention of keeping, are among the devices used in order to achieve various objectives in international politics. The 'Balfourian tradition' is evident in tactics used by Stalin, Churchill, and Roosevelt, among others (McCauley 2006: 251-252).

Needless to say, deceit by pledge is not the most ruthless among the means used to gain advantage in world politics. But it is of special interest because of its borderline nature: it pretends to accomplish something by entering a tacit or explicit pact of some kind. It aims to entice rather than coerce. A pledge can therefore become the starting point for reciprocal exchanges between the parties concerned. Yet the crucial link is interpretation: in order to enter into a relationship of reciprocity, we need to read a pledge as a sign of good behaviour. This becomes even more significant when we consider the different types of reciprocal exchange.

Notions of reciprocity—returning good behaviour for good behaviour and bad for bad—are considered crucial for stabilizing cooperation by making non-cooperative behaviour unprofitable. Two basic patterns have been well recognized: specific reciprocity and diffuse reciprocity (see Keohane 1986). Specific reciprocity occurs when exchanges are seen as comparable in value and occur in strict sequence. In other words, in specific reciprocity, both actors in a relationship insist that the value of their concessions must be equivalent and that each must be made highly conditional on the other. The polar opposite pattern (diffuse reciprocity) is one in which the actors consider both the value and timing of individual concessions to be irrelevant. As Lepgold and others have suggested, there is evidence of stable, cooperative interaction in which exchanges fit neither of these patterns. In these situations, the pattern of interaction on *either* the timing or the value of the exchange—though *not both*—is deliberately left 'unbalanced', yet both parties remain satisfied. As Lepgold and Shambaugh argue, 'unless observers are able to recognize these mixed types of reciprocated exchange patterns, they are likely to make faulty attributions about other actors' behaviour and to misunderstand the causal factors that produce the behaviour' (Lepgold and Shambaugh 2002: 230).

The work on mixed reciprocity shows how we can identify four distinct patterns of reciprocity in terms of the two basic dimensions of social exchange on which it is based: contingency and equivalence.

Contingency refers to the sequence and timing of an action taken by one actor in response to an action taken by another. A highly contingent action is one which is only taken in response to an action by another, and is taken fairly quickly thereafter. A less contingent action may take place after a longer period of time or even in advance of an action taken by another. Equivalence refers to a comparison of the perceived values of goods given and received. Theories of social exchange suggest that the value of any particular good is issue-, context-, and actor-specific and is not inherent to the good itself.

This line of argument indicates that the goods or actions exchanged need not be of objectively equal value to be considered equivalent and that the trade of two identical goods may not be considered an equivalent exchange. Rather than being a function of some objective value of the goods themselves, equivalence depends on how the exchange is subjectively evaluated. Equivalence becomes imprecise when the rate of exchange is either not specified or is inconsequential for the purposes of that particular exchange (Lepgold and Shambaugh 2002: 229-252).

In Europe, after the Marshall Plan averted the spread of communism over the shattered European democracies following World War II, the institutionalization of ever expanding areas of European cooperation became the dominant project. It is worth noting that strategic action – initially by the US, at a later stage by France and other European states – became the critical variable determining the early phase. Specific reciprocity (Axelrod's 'tit-for-tat' games) after the late 1940s can explain the absence of violent conflict in European international relations. Yet the institutionalization processes associated with the EC/EU can only be explained with reference to a combination of (a) strategies by a multitude of actors aimed at expanding cooperation, (b) the prevalence of diffuse and mixed reciprocity games, and (c) an encouraging international environment. Not all games are linked to diffuse reciprocity; some correspond to the mixed types suggested by Lepgold and Shambaugh. Indeed, games linked to *partially* unbalanced relationships constitute much that is worthy of careful examination when it comes to EU politics.

Later developments manifest the crucial role of intense and widespread institutionalization of intra-EU interactions. Today, the EU utilizes and cultivates two sets of norms: one, stemming from previous experience in international organization; a second one, which is the result of decades of intense interstate as well as transnational cooperation and institutional fusion in post-war Europe. The first set comprises of norms associated with the avoidance of violent conflict, the prevalence of positive-sum games, and the role of epistemic communities. The second set has given us norms associated with the development of a multilevel conception of

citizenship and a complex model of governance predicated on post-national notions of authority and accountability.

In dealing with EU politics, we can focus on the expectations of reciprocal exchange in terms of contingency (immediate /less immediate) and equivalence (precise /imprecise). While the analysis in Lepgold and Shambaugh (2002) does not specifically address the EU, we can utilize their approach in order to explicate the ways in which EU-specific ways of dealing with reciprocity may be useful in a broader perspective. In EU politics, at difficult and/or early points in cooperation, both actors demand strict contingency and precise equivalence from the other. As the horizon of cooperation expands, other modalities gain in weight, linked to diffuse and mixed models of reciprocity (see examples in Table 2). The main hypothesis is that the concepts used (such as subsidiarity, codecision, and so on) depend on how actors interpret (and then respond to) others' policy moves and policy concessions.

Table 2. EU actors' expectations in four strategic contexts (adapted from Lepgold and Shambaugh 2002).

CONTINGENCY

EQUIVALENCE

	Immediate	*Less immediate*
Precise	Specific reciprocity: narrow exchange in strict sequence (mostly in Council of Ministers)	Mixed: narrow, longer-term exchange (inter-member states deals, interest group-Commission interactions)
Imprecise	Mixed: broad exchange in strict sequence (certain policy areas, in Council of Ministers)	Diffuse reciprocity: broad, longer-term exchange (European Council, certain policy areas in Council of Ministers)

Focusing on types of reciprocity can help explain the different ways in which political theory establishes the relationship between the domestic and the international. In the Westphalian era the clear distinction predominates, whereby the traditions of justice and the good life are considered to be relevant at the domestic level of analysis. The international level can at best accommodate specific reciprocity. The emergence of new normative queries in international political theory testifies to the transitory nature of some of the premises of the Westphalian era: 'the increasing salience of the international is clearly one of the reasons why conventional political theory has been called in question in recent years, and the borders of (international) political theory are one of the most important sites of change in the way in which we understand our world' (Brown 2000: 205). Small states played key roles in redefining international norms in the course of this long and tortuous transitional phase: they were keen to promote international institutions but also to use them, to persuade but also to cajole, to interact and to engage in reciprocal exchanges while at the same time attempting to strengthen their international position. Mutant norms of cooperation became fitter in the process, specific patterns of reciprocity remained strong in some areas while mixed or diffuse patterns arose in others, and small-states' conspicuous but largely harmless presence provided excellent promotion for international norms.

Yet this is a process, uncertain and fragile, in which shifting modes of reciprocity may encourage or discourage further coexistence and cooperation. Kant thought that republican polities would enter into a treaty of perpetual peace. In fact, a republican peace would be a process rather than an end-state: conditioned by norms of reciprocity and challenged by shifts in their operation. In this process, the stability or instability of reciprocity norms will decide the next steps. Indeed, it is not accurate that *all* democracies refrain from fighting amongst themselves. It has been demonstrated that emerging democracies with unstable political institutions often associate themselves with both domestic and international violence and conflict (Mansfield and Snyder 2005).

If the intellectual context for this revival has been the ongoing debate between liberalism and the various communitarian and socialist critiques, the political context has clearly been the apparent triumph of neoconservatism. Views that explain the near absence of war between democracies by pointing to the structural attributes of democracies (division of powers, elections, and so forth) have been influential in the shaping and the promotion of the neoconservative agenda of promoting democracy abroad. Indeed, 'the strategic program of promoting democracy revived neoconservatism and gave it new coherence and purpose' (Ish-Shalom 2008: 96). Surveying a range of political science writings on state building and institutional reform, Fukuyama (2004) suggested that weak, corrupt and incompetent states in various parts of the world pose serious challenges for US international power in a post-9/11 constellation. While the EU's soft power and the international organizations' enforcement capabilities are fraught with problems and cannot deliver on the ground, the US has the capacity to pursue objectives. Restoring 'stateness' abroad with a multitude of instruments and methods, including the projection of soft power, becomes a key component of a stable international system: the 'art of state-building will be a key component of national power, as important as the ability to deploy traditional military force to the maintenance of world order' (Fukuyama 2004: 164). But is the US the most suitable actor to pursue this particular set of objectives?

The EU's rise to world-power status has been dependent on its economic and civilian successes. Tsatsos (2007) put forward the concept of a 'sympolity' in order to make sense of the complex interactions between *demoi* and states in today's EU. Fabbrini (2007) suggests that the US and the EU are becoming two different species of the same political genus, i.e., 'compound democracy'. A compound polity is a union of states and their citizens and ii fits well political systems 'that have the features of both an interstate (confederal, intergovernmental) and a supra-state (federal, supranational) organization' (Fabbrini 2007: 3). The political project – common to both the EU and the US – is to create a political union among states and their citizens. According to Fabbrini, the fundamental puzzle of compound democracies is that in order to maintain their 'compoundness', they need to diffuse power, but such diffusion of power, at its turn, hinders decisions and diminishes effectiveness. Unlike

authors who suggest that the EU and the US grow apart in terms of their domestic politics (Kopstein and Steinmo 2008), Fabbrini argues that structural systemic similarities become more and more important.

It is in the world-inhabiting aspects that the EU and the US appear to grow more, not less, dissimilar. Kagan's (2003) critique of normative power Europe was based on the idea that it made a virtue out of a necessity. Has the EU actually the intention to be Kantian, he asked, or is it Kantian only because it cannot match the US which is resolutely Hobbesian? Instead of a more nuanced understanding of the normative dynamics of the EU, eclectic approaches to the particular constellation of Euro-Atlantic republican norms have often resulted in over-simplified and misleading dichotomies (Kagan 2003: 'Kantian Europe' vs. 'Martian America'). Discussing the EU's 'normative power', Laïdi (2008) proposes to distinguish between 'European Governance' and 'American Sovereignism.' Despite common features that can be traced to republican security theory, the divergence between US 'hard power' and EU 'soft power' has grown further since 9/11. Republican security theory is attentive to the domestic implications of imperial dominance, which may destroy republican arrangements. As we have seen, this is an observation that – applied in a different context – was advanced by Thucydides in his analysis of the implications of the war for domestic (Athenian) democracy. As the war conditions became chronic and peace appeared elusive, the Athenian polity was transformed: it 'resembled in fact rather a fortress than a polis'.

Yet American 'sovereignism' may be evolving towards a tempered and more reflective version. The new US administration that resulted from the 2008 elections seems to be aware of the issues involved: it is increasingly becoming a commonplace suggestion that the use of US 'hard power' is quickly undermining its 'soft power', the consequences being far-reaching and multi-faceted (Slaughter & Hale 2008: 116-117). Actually addressing this concern would cover a lot of ground towards rehabilitating a republican political culture of IR as a Euro-Atlantic construction.

8. Conclusion

Normative approaches to international relations have come a long way since Thucydides. Although neorealists insist that capabilities determine relations and the balance of power (Waltz 1993), most would now agree that intentions matter as well as capabilities. But if intentions matter, then so do norms, which influence intentions, and they also impact motives. A recent formulation of a cultural-cum-normative approach to IR by Lebow (2008), insists on taking into account the motives of actors. Propensity for risk-taking, he argues, 'varies not only in response to whether gains or losses are perceived to be at stake, but, more importantly, the nature of those gains and losses' (Lebow 2008: 366). Of course, the nature of gains and losses can be construed in a number of ways. Following Thucydides, Lebow finds it useful to note that Greeks explained policy decisions 'with reference to three distinct motives: fear, interest and honor' (2008: 417). More refined views on the motives of actors are possible. The point, however, is that the evolutionary shift towards the prevalence of mixed and diffuse forms of reciprocity in European politics affects contents as well as tactics. A cultural theory of international relations remains extremely valuable, so long as it can provide links between the evolution of advanced forms of cooperation and transformations at the level of the content of actors' strategies and, also, motives.

Thucydides showed how the disentanglement of normativity from pre-established religious and moral codes opened the door for rational calculation, but he also showed that the prevalence of short-term, myopic, instrumental rationality led to grim consequences. Caught in the predicament which arises from the harsh demands of war, having escaped the requirements of religious norms and traditional morality, the actors are prone to miscalculations. In the tripartite scheme of motives suggested by Thucydides (and endorsed by Lebow and others), the move away from fear and honor would entail greater emphasis on rationality, provided that man is able to impose his intellect on the environment, which – as Thucydides clearly argued – was close to impossible in a situation of intense and prolonged warfare.

The international environment has been critical in the EC/EU's efforts to impose a set of rules on a changing European political economy. The main implication is that 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 understanding of 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. I suggested that norms of cooperation become crucial in this process because, as they search for credible tools to interpret and master a changing Europe in a changing world, actors distil their experience in close and repeated cooperation with a view to enhancing their knowledge of and influence over complex games of advanced hyper-dependence.

Today, the EU utilizes and cultivates two sets of norms: one, stemming from previous experience in international organization; a second one, emanating from specifically European experience, is the result of decades of intense interstate as well as transnational cooperation and institutional fusion in post-war Europe. A deeper understanding of the role of norms in the projection of international identity, an agenda brought to the fore mainly by constructivist authors but also evident in more eclectic work in foreign policy analysis (Katzenstein 1996), requires a new emphasis on both the ideational and the material factors at play. From the perspective of an analysis of today's EU political system, the role of norms of advanced cooperation in EU institutional and political processes can be explicated with the help of a framework proposed by Lepgold and others. In EU politics, at early stages in cooperation, actors demand strict contingency and precise equivalence from each other. As the horizon of cooperation expands, other modalities gain in weight, linked to diffuse and mixed models of advanced reciprocity. Norms associated with advanced reciprocity can be assessed in the context of what Apel calls 'second-order globalization': a novel order of human interaction encouraging a reflective modality that takes into account problems and prospects of humanity on a global level.

Hence it would appear that today's 'normative power Europe' is the result of a unique combination of a republican tradition of international thought and practice

and normative traits associated with small-state behaviour and small-state survival in Europe. Small states have played key roles in helping certain international norms attain prominence: they have been keen to promote international institutions but also to use them, to persuade but also to cajole, to coerce but also to coax, to interact and to engage in reciprocal exchanges while at the same time attempting to inveigle a pass to international status. Mutant norms of cooperation became fitter in the process, and small-states' conspicuous but largely harmless presence provided excellent promotion.

In broad summation, I have sought to sketch a framework for the evolution of norms, in which ideas as well as actors play key roles at different stages. A fuller application of this framework would entail conceptual discussion (presented herein), and a number of case studies. In the present paper, I identified in political thought influential views on normative international patterns, before focusing on actors and processes that have helped norms of diffuse and mixed reciprocity acquire prominence. Partly as a result of such combined ideational and practical influences, norms of advanced cooperation have become institutionalized in EU politics and policy, while the projection of the EU's normative power owes much to conceptions of republican security and republican peace. Indeed, a republican notion of peace, robbed of its Kantian teleology, is not unlike Cavafy's *Ithaca*: as we strive to reach it we become 'wiser, full of experience' – and, I would add, more capable of a reflective view on norms and normative change.

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