The JCMS Annual Review Lecture
Sustainable Integration: Towards EU 2.0?*

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> 'For everything to remain the same,
> everything has to change.'
> Tancredi Falconieri in *Il Gattopardo*,
> Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa

Introduction

Many in Europe today feel that we are hovering on the brink of chaos. We have managed collectively to disrupt the fragile equilibrium of our ecosystem, in place since the dawn of humanity. The storms of global capitalism strike with unprecedented force in every corner of the globe, leaving much human debris in their wake. And nuclear Armageddon seems only marginally less implausible than it was half a century ago. However, today's general malaise is but a glimpse of what is to be expected in 20 years – looming wars over resources like oil, water and clean air, hunger or disease on an unprecedented scale, masses of refugees fleeing man-made and natural disasters, exploding inequalities and global imbalances as the world population rises towards the nine billion mark. On our continent itself, the view ahead to 2030 is no less gloomy: the aspirations of today's youth swamped by inter-generational debt, the young

swamped by the old, industries swamped by Asian competition. For the first time in our recent history, our children may be worse off than ourselves! The pessimists in our midst see the horsemen of the apocalypse galloping towards us at a breakneck speed. The optimists reply that it could be worse.

'We can still step back from the brink and become agents of change rather than its victims. The EU is no longer a choice but a necessity.' This is the message that a group of 'wise men' attempted to substantiate last June in *Project Europe, 2030*, a report which spelt out for the European Council the critical choice that we face – survival vs renewal – and its concrete implications for the Union, its leaders and its citizens (González Marquez *et al.*, 2010).[1] In this article, I offer my own, sceptical, variation on this universal call for action. My argument could be dubbed 'Europe 2.0 – with caveats'.

Risorgimento is hardly a new idea in Europe. The dilemmas we face today are perhaps not unlike those facing the Prince of Salina. Tancredi's words (quoted above) were, after all, a warning – a warning that the Prince ignored – although he knew that he would have to grant change to Italy's new masters if his family was to hold on to its influence. Yet the Prince was unwilling to change. Life in Sicily was too pleasant: thrilling hunting, delicious food, fine wines, magnificent palaces, beautiful women . . . and the island was too irredeemably set in its ways anyway. Life in the EU is not too bad either when contrasted with most parts of the world. Like Don Fabrizio, we know what we have to do to continue to flourish, but we are too comfortable, selfish or cowardly to act. And like him, if we do not decide urgently to act for the long term, our children will pay the price.

The *Project Europe 2030* report argues that for today's 'choice' for Europe to succeed it must mobilize the efforts of every level of society, and not only the princes of this world. Europe must be driven by a political vision, a shared project that asserts anew an answer to the question: why Europe? And why the EU in its 21st-century political incarnation? EU aficionados and insiders, including the readership of *JCMS*, may feel justifiably impatient with the periodic return of the *raison d'être* question, and equally critical of self-aggrandizing pronouncements. Many of the good things produced and nurtured by European integration – peaceful cohabitation between *frères-ennemis*, the freedom to move across borders and the democratic anchor offered to scores of weak states during and after the cold war – are taken for granted these days. They should not be. They still need to be nurtured.

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[1] The same message can also be heard from all manner of speeches, pamphlets and reports currently circulating around Europe's deliberative sphere in the wake of the financial crisis. See for instance, Tsoukalis *et al.* (2009); Fabry and Ricard-Nihoul (2010); Fondation Robert Schuman (2010).

Nevertheless, all these accomplishments can be seen as those of the EU's adolescence, the first phase of a journey, as we enter a second, mature, era of European integration, that of EU 2.0. Will this be a story we can tell?

Many would argue that after 50 years of expansion and consolidation on the European continent, the next 50 years ought to be about consolidating Europe's global role and our capacity to contribute to the responsible governance of our planet in the 21st century. But how? For the pragmatic among us, EU mark 2 does not require new grand institutional or constitutional plans. Instead it should aim to put the integration process at the service of the coming generations and make it sustainable in the broadest sense of the word. For this, European leaders and societies must be ready to pay the costs. Jean-Claude Trichet in this volume demonstrates that such a prospect is not utopian.

Sustainable integration can be defined as an ethos and a practice for EU action. The concept is increasingly present in various areas of EU policy-making but needs to be generalized. It consists of systematically assessing short-term actions against the benchmark of long-term goals while at the same time eschewing the kind of teleology geared at resolving once and for all the question of the nature of the EU as a polity. This requires in turn grounding the various variants and myths of Global Europe (Manners, 2010) on solid home ground. In short, the sustainability agenda contributes to moving the pervasive conflict over 'ends' from polity and identity to policy and outcome.

Many concepts and issue areas are part of the sustainable integration mix, albeit discussed under different agendas, from sustainable development and the relation between environmental, economic and socio-political sustainability to socio-economic resilience, human ecology, institutional robustness, federal durability, sustainable security, renewable energy, resistance to unexpected shocks or policy viability. Sustainable integration does not privilege one level of governance over another: a sustainable *EU* supports a more sustainable *Europe*, more sustainable European economies and welfare states. Indeed, the idea of sustainability is intimately bound up with flexibility in the ways each component contributes to the whole and vice versa. When it comes to individuals and groups, sustainability is grounded in principles for collective action like empowerment, emancipation and responsibility. And the value of collaboration over both individualism and hierarchy is of course the hallmark of the 2.0 revolution on the web.

Crucially, such an emphasis on sustainability is predicated on the idea that the EU's unique comparative advantage must be better exploited: its future-friendliness is the silver lining of its democratic shortcomings. With its indirect form of accountability, the EU machinery can go on pretty steadily

as individual governments fail. So it can overlook voter or shareholder short-termism and focus instead on the business which voters care less about: the interests of those not yet born and preventative action which if successful is invisible. At a time of unprecedented inter-generational divides, such a shield is precious for Member States and may become increasingly valued by citizens themselves.

EU 2.0 is about recognizing that sustainability is borderless, that distributed intelligence is centreless and that post-cold war mindsets must make way for the worldwide web world. In today's Europe as with Salina's 19th-century Sicily, I argue that the real object of change is change itself. Change is accelerating. Division of labour must make way for flexible partnerships, conservation calls for revolution and the foundations of integration must be re-examined through the lens of sustainability.

I lay out my argument in three steps: past, future and present. First, I try to take seriously the otherwise self-serving prognosis that we Europeans *stand at a critical juncture in our history* and take on ambient declinism by substantiating what I mean by sustainable integration. Second, I unpack this imperative and turn to the prescriptive mode by suggesting a set of guidelines for action towards a 'sustainable EU'. Finally, coming back to the here and now, I lay out some of the obstacles in the third part of this article, along with my own bias: the EU will only be sustainable as a political project if its leaders and citizens abandon the equation of integration with oneness, top-down policy design and simple hierarchical structures, all anachronistic in a 2.0 world.

I. Echoes of our Pasts: The Advent of EU 2.0?

Historical turning points, like the polities they encompass, are socially constructed. Like mini-Hegel clones, we are often prone to historical hubris, perceiving radical change in our times so that we may bask in the excitement. Apocalyptic benchmarks give us something to hold onto, but they are short-lived. Ten years ago, the new millennium heralded the end of everything: the end of history, the end of geography, the end of territory, the end of the state and even the end of time . . . ten years later, endism may have ended but heroic narratives are still with us. While we should not dismiss their mobilizing power, we need to take them in our stride.

Our Tocquevillian Moment

There are certainly many ways to characterize this moment. After the French and Dutch 'no' to the Constitutional Treaty, I suggested that Europe's seeming malaise was akin to a modern day 'Tocquevillian moment', in which

a doomed era was ending without being replaced by the benefits of a new one (Nicolaïdis, 2005). A century and a half ago, the democratic aristocrat Alexis de Tocqueville, passionately concerned with the fate of Europe, anatomized democracy in America for hints of what to hope for (or not) on his own continent. While many of his contemporaries hoped for a liberal resto-ration, passively bemoaning the loss of a gentler era – Talleyrand's *douceur de vivre* – and the ills of their times – centralization, bureaucracy, atomization of society – Tocqueville argued that the transition from aristocratic to democratic regimes was inevitable. Witness to the pan-European upheaval of the 1840s, he saw these ills as growing pains, an expression and a function of the gap between rising expectations of the masses clashing with old regimes appar-ently incapable of reform. Though appropriately sceptical about the possible emergence of a truly democratic engaged citizenship on the old continent, he could clearly see that the in-betweenness of his era was unsustainable.

I believe that likewise, the EU has been going through an era of *in-betweenness* which is now ending. Its 20-year addiction to institutional reform, the almost continuous renegotiation of its founding pact, the demo-cratic prevarication of its elites, and the obsession with process goals over policy outcomes, all speak to the agonies of political mutation. The EU, fired up by the end of the cold war, has been poised between introversion and extroversion, precisely because it is unable to bridge its technocratic-aristocratic past and an uncertain but irrevocable future where citizens would enjoy the power of their collective veto over the grand (and not so grand) designs of their political masters. As heightened expectations for the EU could neither be fulfilled nor ignored, and today's European peoples turned polling stations into their barricades, their leaders have wavered between democratic denial and democratic atonement (Nicolaïdis, 2007b). Scholars of federalism have stressed the idea that the EU has been mired in a Calhounian situation 'in which the invidious question of competence attribution cannot be disentangled from the equally vexing one of institutionalizing democratic accountability via popular sovereignty' (Glencross, 2009). Until a new gen-eration embraces the instruments of participatory democracy including the democratic power potential of the Internet, the clumsy dance will continue (Saurugger, 2010). More broadly, the global financial crisis has created an unprecedented demand for more effective global governance in our emerging post-post cold war. So we may be left with a pre-crisis treaty for a post-crisis world, but treaties after all are only what the parties make of them.

To make the message starker, we can imagine the echoes of Europe's pasts like three tidal waves of 20, 50 and 200 years breaking simultaneously on our shores from various distances, leaving us to interpret the wavelength created by their untimely merging. Will they merge to amplify each other's downward

momentum; or will they level off together, combining their momentum to sustain European integration?

To be sure, beyond 20 years of post cold-war, the second wave of 50 years could be seen as the artificial product of anniversaries, of thoughtless anthropomorphizing around metaphors of 'mid-life crisis'. And yet, a plausible case can be made that the first half-century of European integration has been a *longue marche* from market-making to polity-making, from the EU-as-space to the EU-as-actor, from continental consolidation to embryonic global projection. Copenhagen 2009 then is a *rendez-vous manqué.* As the EU knocks at the door of the global theatre, others relegate it backstage.

That is of course because although *the EU* may be an international actor in the making, *Europe* is a continent in relative decline. By any standards, we are coming to the end of five centuries of western global dominance, especially as we witness the closing of the extraordinary industrial gap of the last 200 years between the west and Asia (Zakaria, 2008). In the 1800s, Asia was home to three-fifths of the world population and three-fifths of global product, which shrank to one-fifth of both in 100 years. Today, it is recovering its 'normal' share. Europe's share of world population is down to 7 per cent from 25 per cent a century ago, and its share of GDP down to a fifth. But these figures would only be evidence of decline if we reasoned in zero-sum terms. In fact, the rise of others' wealth can benefit us if the peace between us is sustainable. What the figures do mean is that the EU's mission is to grant weight to a continent that is without doubt but a province of a non-European world.

However, the last 200 years are, of course, also about a much greater conflict, that between a planet with finite resources and a human species with infinite aspirations. 'In such a war – a war we are waging against our very life-support systems – we have no hope of winning. Our best hope is to, as quickly as possible, call off the war, regroup, and fundamentally restructure our society around the acceptance of our planet's finite nature – around limits' (Allen, 2009). So the question is: will the EU help Europeans regroup?

Decline, Settlements, Equilibria and Cycles

The idea of Europe 2.0 is both a diagnosis as to where we are and a way of framing prescriptions for the future. It can be contrasted with two alternative stories.

The first story is that of *Phoenix-Europe*, in which the EU is faced with a stark choice in contemplating the brink of chaos: death vs rebirth. Mere survival won't do. Either the EU disintegrates, or it braces itself for a 21st-century renaissance. But are we really faced with so stark a choice other than in rhetorical terms? In truth, the complexity of EU politics makes

it unamenable to bold revolutions – all the more given the shared character of EU leadership, which is in my book one of its most commendable traits. There is no one fork in the road, but thousands of micro-decisions and indecisions, constrained by inertia, customs and path-dependency (Pearson, 2004). In contrast to Phoenix-Europe, 'EU 2.0' purports to encapsulate a confluence of trends and serve as a motto for action, a desirable bias in favour of sustainability. Born with the dawn of ecology, sustainability is becoming the name of the game in Europe across realms. No one can be seen to vote against such a state of mind but any policy or corporate action with short-term costs and long-term benefits is bound to elicit a brouhaha.

An EU 2.0 is not, however a simple variant of a second story, that of *Equilibrium-Europe*. It is true that with the Treaty of Lisbon, and arguably before its adoption, the EU had reached a constitutional settlement of sorts, ranging from issues of market liberalization and flanking policies to the balance between small and big states, the division of labour among EU institutions, and between them and the Member States (Moravcsik, 2006; Magnette and Nicolaïdis, 2003; Menon, 2008). The EU has developed a complex mix of forms of governance suited to the various requirements of policy areas (Boerzel, 2010). And its normative sustainability has been fine-tuned through 50 years of mutual accommodation between its legal and political systems (Maduro, 2010). This is why in fact we had little need for our protracted and costly constitutional debates, as demonstrated by the resilience of EU decision-making post-enlargement and pre-Lisbon (Dehousse *et al*., 2006); and why the EU is all the more unlikely to engage in further treaty reform in the near future – with the significant and contested exception of economic governance.

Nevertheless, it would be misguided to equate such a settlement with a prognosis of equilibrium. What we have today is an unstable equilibrium at best, limited to the constitutional realm. Even if its institutions are not in need of reform, endogenous or exogenous forces may mean that the EU can no longer be sustained only by incorporating new tasks into its mission – albeit necessary ones like an energy Union. Perhaps we have reached the limit of bicycle theory to enter a world of tightrope walking.

As mentioned in the introduction, the EU 2.0 agenda has much to do with flexibility. In a modern federal vision, we do not need to choose between the one and the many, and fix the 'optimal level' for dealing with various issues. Rather, the determination of who does what and how should be flexible enough to allow it to adapt to changing circumstances on the demand or supply side of the governance equation (Nicolaïdis and Howse, 2001; Menon and Schain, 2006). Proportionality should trump subsidiarity. It can be argued that the EU has now entered the cyclical logic of all federal constructs,

including by starting to re-nationalize certain policies, for example, competition and agriculture (Donahue and Pollack, 2001). However, it is also an insecure federal contract in which both centralizing or decentralizing moves are not yet seen as normal cycles of federalism, but rather interpreted by opponents and proponents as existential moves. The key to a durable EU system of governance, including its monetary union, will be to hold in check *at the same time* the two main sources of instability usually associated with federal systems, namely state shirking and federal over-reach (Kelemen, 2010).

In such a context, a constitutional settlement today does not make the EU immune to gradual or abrupt decline. Most prominently, it is nothing new to argue that the EU is not underpinned by a stable transnational societal bargain. But the combination of unequal vulnerabilities across Member States to financial crises, the looming demographic trends and radically changing work patterns are making this disequilibrium increasingly unsustainable. The current dilemma can be summed up by the quip that if we are not careful, the fallout from the crisis will be not 'the death of capitalism' but 'the death of social democracy' in Europe. Witness the alienation of the 'no camp' of those feeling left out, including those threatened by the increase in competition brought about by the single market, the opening up of the welfare state to foreign access and the denial of access to public services.

Underlying such a social legitimacy deficit lies the continued fundamental asymmetry of the European socio-economic project between the protective-solidarist functions upheld by the (welfare) state and the competition function upheld by the EU. This unholy division of labour, while it may make sense in many ways, risks being further exacerbated as the EU increasingly takes on the function of a 'budget police' in the euro area. In last year's *JCMS*, Ferrera provided a brilliant analysis of the challenge at hand as one of targeting the optimal balance between two fundamental imperatives: openness to allow for the freedom to move across borders vs closure to create enough sense of *we-ness* among people to sustain feelings of solidarity which underpin redistributive justice at the national level (Ferrera, 2009). In this realm, the EU strategy of accommodation has been to impose minimal duties on access to welfare-state provisions for non-nationals, while limiting transnational redistribution to the realms of agriculture and regions, not individuals (Tsoukalis, 2005). This logic may have become unsustainably lopsided, at least on the continent.

While all our capitalist economies must reverse the deadly combination of privatization of gains and socialization of losses highlighted by the 2008 economic crisis, such an imperative may be more demanding in Europe than

anywhere else. This is why the EU must play its part in addressing it. But the management of the post-crisis will be harder than the management of the crisis itself, as we will be lacking the sense of urgency and desperation that can make sacrifices acceptable. Against the rise of nationalism, populism and benign Euroscepticism which characterizes the political atmosphere of a majority of Member States today, the challenge of sustainable integration is daunting.

Sustainable Europe-Sustainable EU: Making Sense of Sustainable Integration

In a 2.0 Europe, I argue, we will need to shift our attention radically from discrete inter-governmental to public inter-societal bargains, and from short-term inter-national bargains to long-term inter-generational bargains. In other words, we will need to move from arguing over more vs less integration, more social vs more market, more regional vs more global, more centralized vs more decentralized, to a prior question: what will it take to make European integration sustainable?

Sustainability is not a sexy, heroic, revolutionary idea – we are not facing dichotomous, make-or-break choices in the EU, but rather choices of degrees and of emphasis. At the same time, it is an all-encompassing concept which we can generalize beyond its original source in the environmental domain (Dresner, 2008). An ethic of sustainability applies to our global but also local ecosystems, biodiversity and our landscapes, to the way economic growth is fostered and measured, to political responsibility and to the societal foundations for the huge transformations ahead in our ways of life. Indeed, we are starting to see many signs of this emergent way of thinking whose threads need to be connected. Most obviously, we can read much of the economic debate in Europe today in terms of sustainable integration (Barroso, 2009). Can *this* crisis management prevent the recurrence of *future* crises? Can we increase European growth and competitiveness in a sustainable way, asks the Commission's Agenda 2020, when forecasters predict that the rest of the world will grow 3 percentage points faster than us? Can we shift our growth paradigm from a competitive race to the bottom to a qualitative prosperity strategy (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2010)? What would a durable stability and growth pact look like? Can sustainability be measured?

We must also connect sustainability to the most important insights of the so-called 2.0 revolution. That is, that survival is about the capacity to reinvent oneself or one's organization: if we are facing a decade of transition in which radical adaptation must happen in any case – in how we work, produce, consume, learn and live – let's at least gain from the pain and

reinvent the EU in the process.[2] More specifically: flexibility must apply not only to levels of governance as discussed above but to its content; complex systems are always dynamically evolving and rarely in equilibrium; stability is a derivative concept referring to how such systems allow for entry and exit. Greater connectivity, community collaborative networks are much more efficient than hierarchies at generating value. Resilience and robustness are usually not built in from the start but are a result of adaptive learning on the part of network participants themselves on how to stop the propagation of disruption. Contingency plans and mechanisms are always a good idea. Structures of incentives that fail to internalize externalities (such as unregulated free markets) are bound to be destabilizing. And distributed intelligence trumps central command. James Martin's cathedrals of cyberspace will be cathedrals of the mind, far more intricate than those of stone (Martin, 2006). Likewise, global actors will increasingly be challenged to harness the power of networks (Slaughter, 2004). And in such edifices, the wisdom of the crowds is not the demagogy of a new priesthood but the great lesson of the Internet age. There are caveats as always and the 2.0 world certainly has its dark sides, empowering individuals and groups bent on destroying value created by others.

Fascinatingly, the same kind of lessons emerge from the much longer view. Why do civilizations endure? Those dedicated to understanding why societies decline or collapse, while others are sustainable, assess the amount of adaptative capital they possess and that can be mustered to face endogenous and exogenous shocks (Diamond, 1998; Toynbee, 1948; Burke and Ashton, 2005; Porritt, 2005; Friedman, 2008; Rees, 2002). They observe that successful societies, like successful organisms, are only sustainable when they are in dynamic equilibrium with the larger system in which they are embedded, whether dynamically symbiotic or cautiously parasitic. This equilibrium is possible because they have evolved by developing feedback mechanisms to contend with extreme or cyclical change in their home systems including catastrophic risks. One of the best predictors of breakdown of these virtuous dynamics is the systematic detachment of elites from their host populations and the isolation of communities from their neighbours. As a result, we witness an ever-increasing mismatch of resources and demand, leading to what some have called (in its most extreme variant) the Medea hypothesis: life will kill itself, contrary to the rosy self-sustaining picture of a Gaia-earth.

In social terms then, sustainability is about the embeddedness of freedom of movement within the social contract of different states and communities at the

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regional and global level (Polanyi, 2001 [1957]). Socio-economic resilience rests with the ability of a social and economic system to withstand 'shocks' which can cause propagation of change in highly disruptive ways – coming from rogue bankers, volcanoes or shoe bombers. But there is a silver lining. The massive increase in communications generated by the Internet has allowed unprecedented access to information from experiments being carried out elsewhere in the world today or in other times, from which we have the ability to learn. We are the first to be able to map, measure and manage the impact of various factors on the systems that sustain us. The threat and the promise may be global, but each part of the global must develop its own way to resist political entropy in order to agree eventually on how to endure together. The EU is a resilient enough machine that will not disintegrate overnight. Instead, as we stand between a considerable *acquis* and radically new *realities*, to stagnate carries risks of its own, including that the system may be too vulnerable to unforeseen catastrophic events.

Sustainability calls for identifying difficult trade-offs – if high growth is unsustainable on the ecological front and low growth equally untenable on the social front, true sustainability is about changing those very parameters: there are indeed 'green reasons for growth' and 'social limits to growth'. Strategies and policies should resist aiming for the optimal, but must adjudicate between overshooting and undershooting in either realm. This is what the debate should be about.

To start along this path, we need to develop an early warning system, indicators of long-term unsustainability. This does not require predictive feats – we all know that there is nothing harder to predict than the future! Rather, we need to spell out the concrete implications of long-term trends (NIC, 2008). Foremost among these, for instance, is a well-known predicament: Europe is getting old – in 20 years' time and going on current trends, EU countries will face a gap of 70 million working-age adults.[3] The inverse age pyramid simply makes our welfare and pension systems unsustainable. It is a matter of fact that such prospects call for only three categories of solutions: more babies, more foreigners or longer working lives. All of these require change.

In this perspective, unsustainability can be summarized with a more generalizable ageing metaphor: Europe's progressive loss of its power of attraction. The unsustainability warnings will likely apply increasingly across the board: *vis-à-vis* future migrants who will not materialize by magic the day we need them to plug the demographic hole; *vis-à-vis* investors, who will look for dynamism elsewhere on current growth and productivity projections; *vis-à-vis* candidate countries like Turkey who might one day decide

that accession is not worth the aggravation; *vis-à-vis* neighbourhood coun-
tries for whom convergence will generate fewer and fewer pay-offs; *vis-à-
vis* foreign and European researchers and entrepreneurs who find better
conditions in the US today, in the BRICs tomorrow; *vis-à-vis* Muslim
migrants, who represent our privileged links with their countries of origin,
as Europeans flunk the test of integration; and *vis-à-vis* other regions
around the world who want to see the EU as a laboratory for governance
and not a patronizing bully.

If sustainable growth is a *sine qua non* of our power of attraction, support
for networks of social innovators, research universities and green city plan-
ners as well as humane management of illegal migration must surely be on
our policy list. Tomorrow's knowledge society will require the constant
injection of new talent, much of which may come from people born outside
of Europe. Sustainable growth embedded in sustainable communities will
also require that we radically change our understanding of the value of older
people and their work, so that either staying or leaving work after a given age
becomes a choice rather than an obligation.

Can politicians make such 'sustainability decisions' and still win elec-
tions? The sustainability agenda is not going to be easy, but Don Fabrizio's
complacency will not do.

II. Shadow of our Futures: The Choice for Sustainable Integration

What is to be done? This article does not purport to provide a policy blue-
print for a sustainable EU. Rather it presents a set of guidelines for action,
a possible typology for the numerous proposals and 'agendas' on the table
today emanating from think tanks, academia and EU institutions. These
guidelines are focused on what the EU does *as the EU* directly. But they also
relate to what Member States do as partners in the EU, or ultimately, to the
actions of individuals and groups in European societies. They are mainly
common sense, and already inspire a great deal of action. But they also
present tensions and trade-offs which I believe must be made more visible in
our European politics. And they all relate to what I see as the EU's existing,
or at least potential, comparative advantage. I have structured them around
three broad 'dramatic' categories: (1) the strategic imperatives which define
the play – the treatment of time and space; (2) the plot of the play itself –
the internal, regional and global pacts that need to be struck; (3) and the
actors – defined through their standards of behaviour or what could be called
a political ethics around which Europeans can converge to inspire their
action.

Strategic Imperatives (the Action)

To start with, sustainability requires two systemic enablers, two classic dramatic imperatives which relate to the unity of time and space. In EU jargon, these should be 'mainstreamed'.

Time

This must be our starting point: rarely in history have we had such strong inter-generational divides in Europe. We are in the process of bequeathing daunting legacies to Europe's next generation in terms of climate change, debt, welfare, pensions and so on. European countries invest less in research and education than most other developed countries, our universities are losing their ranks under the weight of clientelism and closed-shop practices, risk-taking investors are discouraged. Our societies have for too long indulged in the cult of emergency (Aubert and Roux-Dufort, 2004). We are living on borrowed time and borrowed time: public debt in the euro area is now at 78.7 per cent which means that a 2010 European baby already owes €21,585.[4] And indeed, from every corner of Europe, from activists to industrial barons, from the jobless to the planners, from Copenhagen to Athens, we hear the imperative: *it is urgent to think long-term! We owe it to ourselves not to owe our children.*

Thankfully, the future is the EU's comparative advantage. This is the silver lining of its lack of short-term accountability, indeed of the indirect nature of its democracy. As Tocqueville famously noted, democracy is about the here and now – the past and the future are an elite concern. Since prevention succeeds when nothing happens (hard to sell to an electorate), and since future generations do not vote, a less democratically constrained set of institutions – especially the Commission, whose mission is to uphold the common good – should be expected to be particularly future-friendly. Sustainable integration implies that EU governance be legitimate and effective *over time* rather than as a function of electoral cycles.

Only at the EU level can we truly engage in a patient, systematic and intelligent rebalancing between today's and tomorrow's political imperatives. The task may be never ending, but 'we must conceive of Sisyphus as a lucky man' said Camus.[5] Serious change needs time: the financial crisis and reactions to it have amply shown that governments overestimate what they can change in the short term and underestimate what they can change in the long term. The EU can help lower their discount rate (Trichet, this volume).

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[4] I thank Jean Dominic Guliani for pointing this figure out and his broader insights.
[5] I am grateful to Mario Telo for his inspired Sisyphus metaphor.

There is no single answer as to when to act for the long term at horizon 2030 – the art of back-casting must become second nature to the EU. In some cases, long-term vision calls for *big bang* action: acting immediately because we are at a tipping point or because every year we wait, divergence from the objective increases. This is obvious in the realm of economic co-ordination for sustainable growth. In other cases, we must prepare the preconditions for *delayed* action further down the road when the technologies or mindset are ripe – as with investment in training for green growth employment. This is also true for enlargement or setting up a sustainable immigration policy in Europe grounded on the idea of citizenship of residence to encourage non-coercive circular migration.[6] But thirdly, in many areas we may be in between and must use the *window of opportunity* open in the next five years to set ourselves on a desirable path, which may otherwise diverge irrevocably. The window may characterize many issue areas, from upholding Europe's lead on green innovation and 'clean nuclear', to building digital Europe, the knowledge economy or a new Energy Community (Delors *et al.*, 2010; Sapir, 2009).

Generally, long-term structural policies must more systematically include in-built flexibility, on the assumption that they will need to change; immigration policies are a case in point. Short of radical moves like giving children the right to vote, we can take steps to increase the EU's future-friendliness.[7] For every action the EU takes, I suggest making an impact assessment of 'non-Europe 2030'. And in order to be better equipped to think about long-term strategy, we also need to create an effective network between national forecasting units in our Member States – a European forecasting network capable of connecting with its sister institutions, like the NIC, around the world.

Space

Our changing strategic equation concerns space as well as time. Sustainability requires fluid boundaries between policies within and policies without. Europeans were the first to invent the very idea of *globality* 200 years ago, thereby extending their reach around the globe, for better or for worse (Postel Vinay, 2005). Since the beginnings of the EU, born of the ashes of global war and global colonialism, we have been cautious, acting externally in a reactive manner for the most part. Europe's virgin birth in the wake of decolonization implied an enforced introversion. And indeed, EU foreign policy tends to this day to be conducted as a domestic affair itself, condemned to

[6] I am grateful to Brad Blitz, Alex Betts and Rainer Muenz for enlightening discussions on this topic.
[7] I am grateful to Philippe Van Parisj for persuading me that the child vote is not a crazy idea.

fulfilling the rival internal goals of the various parties engaged in turf wars and institutional point scoring – a logic referred to as 'internal functionality' (Bickerton, 2009). But with EU 2.0, acting globally can no longer be a residual concern, an external outlet for our internal rivalries. Instead, the global picture must inform all our actions.

This does not mean lowering our domestic ambitions: on the contrary. In fact, acting global starts at home. Most obviously, our global ambitions cannot be served without sustainable growth throughout the EU. In general, EU institutions and European leadership must systematically consider each internal policy implication of our external objectives, and each global dimension of our domestic action – starting with energy, security and migration policies. We will fail in tomorrow's Copenhagens if we do not put our house in order. Indeed, a lot can be done on global environmental governance through the incremental externalization of our own practices, starting with the emission trading system (King and Walker, 2008). Is there any doubt that the EU's long-term asymmetric dependency on Russia is a direct function of our domestic energy policies and our failure to systematically apply competition rules in this field? Should the tools and competences for tackling internal and external threats be so distinct from each other? Does it make sense to deal with Europe's Muslim neighbourhoods *within* and *without* as different universes? Acting by example outside our borders rather than preaching to others requires [8]exacting standards for our domestic enforcement of the rule of law, labour and minority rights, or effective regulations. Such consistency between the internal and the external requires ongoing vigilance – it is, in fact, an old and exacting theme going back to the days when Duchêne pointed to the imperative of domesticating foreign policy as Europe's new contribution to the world (Duchêne, 1972). Each decision taken at the EU level should contain such a 'synergy rationale', and the new external action service must dedicate a special unit to enforcing it.

Three Interlocking Bargains (the Plot)

We now turn to the plot itself. What kind of action needs to take place in order to sustain integration under the above-mentioned imperatives related to time and space? The idea that long-term political coexistence is based on bargains between different groups of actors, and that these bargains need to be renewed periodically in order to sustain the social compact, is pervasive. Indeed, the notion of bargain covers different realities. There are iterated small sectoral bargains, the stuff of daily politics, political compromises and horse-trading. Then there are foundational or constitutional 'grand bargains', which usually contain packages of issues that benefit or cost different parties differently

(Moravcsik, 1998). The form that they take (treaty reform; new sets of laws; general frameworks) matters less than the extent to which they reflect a value-creating trade among parties. Because the EU is founded on consensus rather than majoritarian politics, its Member States either forge compromise deals or agree to disagree. More often then not, compromise between actors mirrors compromises between ideological stances (social vs Christian democrats), or between competing principles (say, multilateralism vs regionalism, conditionality vs partnership). As a result, our long-term plot for sustainable integration calls for devising subtle strategies of accommodation between equally compelling principles (see Meunier and Nicolaïdis, 2006). In short, I advocate thinking in terms of new bargains or pacts at three levels, namely internal, regional and global. These do not need to be struck in a big bang at one moment in time, but European decision-makers must ask whether the policies they now choose will have entrenched these bargains 20 years from now. And while a lot is up to Member States themselves, the EU can nudge in multiple ways.

Internal

For prosperity to be the well of sustainability that it should be, we need fundamentally to rethink how to measure and generate it (Stiglitz *et al.*, 2009). Can the EU become the engine of a sustainable social green-growth economy? As discussed earlier, the current economic and financial crisis may well have tipped the lopsided socio-economic contract in the EU beyond the sustainability threshold. If so, a renewed bargain should progressively be struck at the Union level between the economic, social and ecological dimensions of our development, if our leaders are ready to accept the electoral sacrifice they imply (Barroso, 2009; Commission, 2010). Give and take must take *inter alia* three forms:, (1) between social-market economies and Anglo-Saxon economies, the former committing to refrain from economic nationalism, the latter accepting more intervention to deal with the negative social side-effects of market integration (including through more EU-level redistribution or most likely through core minimal standards, greater tax co-ordination and enhanced corporate responsibility) (Monti, 2010; Herzog and Nicolaïdis, 2007); (2) between surplus and deficit countries (fiscal and trade), the former consuming more and accepting a more viable exchange rate for the euro; the latter committing to shed state capture by particularistic interest; (3) between those committed to *green* growth, through sustaining Europe's precarious global lead in green technological innovation and the proponents of nuclear power (Barroso, 2009; Climate Change Foundation, 2010).

More radically, some would argue that socio-economic sustainability requires nothing less than a complete transformation of capitalism (Joerges, 2006). In part, sustainable capitalism is about change in corporate governance structures as shareholder control no longer exists, and change in regulatory cultures to stem regulatory capture and incompetence. It is also about a better distribution of risk between socio-economic groups, regions and countries. Europe is home to the most risk-averse societies on earth (Laidi, 2010). Communism called for redistributing modes of production, social democracy for redistributing revenue, liberalism for redistributing power. Sustainable systems call for redistributing risk. Under such conditions, simple changes, for instance to the length of a working life, will not only benefit European society as a whole at some indefinite stage in the future but also individuals right now who will be cared for while taking care themselves.

Regional

Sustainability also rests on security, broadly defined – the freedom from fear dear to Judith Shklar. Can the greater Eurospheres which include and transcend the EU to its south and east generate sustainable security rather than insecurity in a 20-year horizon (Oxford Research Group, 2006)? Such a goal arguably calls for a second pact beyond the borders of the EU, between greater inclusiveness through mobility and less EU-centric polity-building in the Eurasia – Euromed regions. On the first count, the EU will need in particular to rethink radically its approach to free movement of people originating from neighbourhood countries, and devise ways of encouraging circular movement for the benefit of all sides – including through a European blue card and the portability of rights, for example, mobility packs which can encourage the return of people acting as bridge builders across the region (Wilson and Popescu, 2009). On the second count, the regions in question could progressively break with the association between more EU convergence and more EU access – simply engineering unreflexive EU policy export (Bechev and Nicolaïdis, 2010; Korosteleva, forthcoming; Whitman and Wolff, 2010). This would mean following a decentred path – sensitive to local priorities, empowering local actors and building a polity together with the countries willing to enter a true spirit of partnership. As the EU becomes increasingly provincialized in an emerging world order of rising powers, its geostrategic interest may very well be to be a part, indeed a driver of a wider strategic community, stretching from 'Gibraltar to Kars'. A regional geopolitical vision is crucial for the EU's future, including in its relations with Turkey, and cannot remain hostage to the hard constraints of regulatory and technical convergence.

Global

Finally, the plot will continue to unfold at the global systemic level, where sustainability must rest on redefining the complex links between global order and global justice (Foot *et al.*, 2004). We can be quite sure that in 20 years, the world will not only have several centres but also that its centre of gravity will have shifted – to Asia and the global south, to new public and private actors, to transnational institutions (Gnesotto and Grevi, 2006). But we cannot tell how this 2030 multipolar world will accommodate new patterns of globalization, residual US military unipolarity, traditional balance of power dynamics, a range of ad hoc bilateral alliances, regional groupings, power fragmentation, and competition over scarce resources, as well as probably broad areas of chaos. Sustainable integration is thus about global resilience: given these massive uncertainties, what will it take for Europe to remain a relevant pole and help accommodate the revisionist urge of rising states to change the rules of the game devised under the previous balance of power? What will it take to define and negotiate the terms of a truly sustainable global governance pact for the more crowded world of the future?

Such a pact, I would argue, will need to reflect better at the global level the need to balance the logics of openness and closure which we find within the EU itself or in the Eurosphere. Ultimately, this line is about who is responsible for providing 'human security' within the circumscribed boundaries of our communities (Kaldor, 2007). Clearly, Europeans should strive for a world in which interdependence is nurtured rather than a world of chaos or new hierarchies, isolated poles and rival states or regions – in short, an interpolar world (Grevi, 2009; Telò, 2009). A new 'global grand bargain' involving the engineering of 'nothing less than a new international system' (Hutchings and Kempe, 2008; Howorth, 2010) is only likely to emerge piecemeal and contested, but if it does, it must rest on renegotiating what we mean by global justice, in particular in determining 'who adjusts' to shocks in our system (surplus or deficit countries; carbon producers or consumers; nuclear or non-nuclear states; ultimately the poor or the rich . . .). The EU should not only strive to be a responsible power itself (Mayer and Vogt, 2006), but also to help make the idea of *responsible interdependence* as widely shared as possible among nations. Let us not shy away from the difficult questions which will underpin a sustainable global order: should we not be responsible stakeholders in the global climate as consumers, not only producers (Helm and Hepburn, 2009)? When does responsibility give us a licence to act without the consent of all? If enabling local actors is a pre-condition, who decides how and when? Can different degrees of responsibility justify new patterns of hegemony? And who defines what

'fairness' means and the mechanisms by which the protection of some does not end up hurting others more?

A Political Ethics (The Actors)

The final branch of our dramatic tryptic brings us to the actors themselves. Ultimately, sustainable integration will rest on its legitimacy, its capacity to generate ongoing passive support and sporadic mobilization among the greater public. Others have demonstrated how democracy and efficiency, input and output legitimacy, a Europe of participation and a Europe of results are intrinsically linked (for an overview, see Schmidt, 2009). In the same spirit, I have argued with Robert Howse that democratic legitimacy is likely to come as much from patterns of behaviour as from formal structures of representation (Howse and Nicolaïdis, 2009). To paraphrase Dahrendorf, we can live with flaws in European democracy as long as we have European democrats. In this spirit, the sustained legitimacy of governance arrangements beyond the state will depend on the prevailing political ethics, to the extent that such an ethics reflects and shapes widely shared social norms. There is no one 'right' blueprint here, nor is there any reason why the conversation over the principles that should underpin such a political ethics should be restricted to Europe. I would highlight five: recognition, solidarity, empowerment, decentring and ownership.

Recognition

Surprisingly, Europe, home to the highest density of nation-states on earth, continues to resist a philosophy of difference. After 50 years of 'ever closer Union', European officialdom needs to change the story from engineering convergence to recognizing and exploiting complementarities through integration. And European citizens need to grapple with the fact that managed mutual recognition is the key to a sustainable single market, founded on the tolerance for 'foreign' workers, the exploitation of complementarities, the enforcement of fair competition and the adoption of common minimal standards. But recognition is a broader ethos of integration underpinned by trust and tolerance, the ethical frontier of sustainability (Nicolaïdis, 2007a, 2010a). Similarly, multilingualism must be lovingly nurtured, provided we adopt English as a European lingua franca as advocated by Philippe Van Parisj. The same basic concepts underpin plans for a Europe-wide renewable energy grid that could exploit the complementarities between windy northern Europe and sunny southern Europe, all-nighters in the south and early birds in the north (Climate Change Foundation, 2010). And in discussing the economic governance of the euro area, sustainability implies that states must decide more

clearly where they need to converge, and where freedom to act is necessary for diversifying risk and enabling trial and error innovation.

Solidarity

Ultimately, recognition must apply to the social struggles and sacrifices by those at the periphery of our societies and our Union to be part of the whole. In this post-crisis era, we need to ask anew what is the glue that holds us together, as ethics and pragmatism meet in Europe's rekindled debate over solidarity under conditions of extreme diversity (Van Parijs, 2004). Surely the vast differences in socio-economic status between different Member States of the EU, as well as between individuals across Europe, deeply undermine the call for otherwise exploiting our differences. But incantations that solidarity must inform all relations between individuals, regions, generations and states will remain wishful thinking unless we focus on sustaining the virtuous circle linking solidarity, responsibility and competitiveness. As the crisis of the euro demonstrates once again, solidarity will not be sustained or indeed have much impact if not conditioned on a deep sense of collective and individual responsibility on all sides and on a concern for sustaining growth. EU policies must be assessed on their contribution to this core virtuous circle. The underlying ethos is that simple, and as old as humanity: rational solidarity is not a zero-sum game but also benefits those who practise it; diffuse reciprocity over the benefits of solidarity enhances economic stability over time; it also operates as a signalling device to generate outside trust in the system as a whole; and it functions as a trigger for increased responsible behaviour on the part of its beneficiaries. In sum, a sustainable union must practice what Lampedusa's Prince called 'profitable altruism'.

Empowerment

Our Union has suffered from the widespread perception that it was only about 'markets not individuals'. Redressing this distorted perception is not just a matter of shifting paradigms: markets serve people if managed properly. It is also about recentring the European project around citizens, workers, consumers, entrepreneurs, researchers, innovators, right holders, border crossers, volunteers and members of communities. Politically, empowerment is about fostering a new and active European citizenship for the 21st century. On the socio-economic front, individual talent must be nurtured through everything the EU does: more and smarter investment in education, culture, research, creativity and innovation, lifelong learning and training at work; resolute action against entrenched corporatism and the vested interests which often

stand in the way of new ideas and practices, including in many European universities (Commission, 2009; Lambert and Butler, 2006).

More generally, empowerment is a philosophy of governance which sees the EU as a shared infrastructure, an enabler of activity for its citizens, firms and governments.[8] In such a world, power, authority and competence (and concomitantly the subsidiarity guidelines) should not be understood as a zero-sum game: the Union takes it, others lose it; or local governments keep it against EU encroachment. On the contrary, the Union acts as a 'power multiplier' at all levels: to empower individuals against states with directly enforceable rights, consumers against firms who abuse their dominant power, firms against protectionist states, and its Member States on the global scene.[9] In our networld, the EU can only be a global enabler if it ensures that those who are in charge in cities, districts, regions, countries and transborder areas are enabled by the collective to act effectively by governing in partnership while still taking responsibility (Committee of the Regions, 2009). The EU Commission in particular needs to make empowerment its foremost imperative, moving from a culture of control to one of trust for instance when funding universities, research or industrial innovation. EU institutions can help strengthen citizens' involvement in calling public authorities to account on their true commitment to the rule of law.[10] And the same philosophy can apply when acting outside our borders. There is little doubt that both internally and externally, transparency is key to empowerment and that the Internet can serve as a powerful tool in this regard (Ghani and Lockhart, 2008). Leaders not only need to *convey* that this is the logic driving the EU, but must also *act* in accordance with such a principle: no action without empowerment!

Decentring

Decentring follows from empowerment but takes this logic one step further. It is about acknowledging that the Union is a sophisticated, complex and messy system of shared governance requiring several hubs and not one, from national capitals hosting summits, as opposed to Brussels, to networks of local representatives shaping EU governance. But of course, decentring is not

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[8] I am grateful to Rem Koolhaas for substantiating this metaphor.
[9] I am grateful to Lykke Friis for this expression.
[10] In this spirit, concrete steps could be taken. The office of the Ombudsman is spearheading a campaign to encourage the European and national parliaments to organize annual hearings of citizens on the application of EU law – say on free movement of people. The same logic can be taken one step down to support direct citizen-led enforcement by watchdog voluntary groups targeting corruption, clientelism and bad governance in old and new Member States especially with regards to the distribution of EU funds. I am grateful to Nikiforos Diamandouros and Alina Pippidi for our discussions on this topic.

only a strategy for governance within. As mentioned above, it needs to apply to the EU's external relations including through co-development and fluid movement of people; conditionality over processes that empower local actors rather than standards designed in Brussels; decentralizing decisions to EU country delegations; locating management away from Brussels; and new kinds of status for partner countries linked to shared polity building rather than simple convergence (Bechev and Nicolaïdis, 2010).

Ownership

Finally, a political ethics is about collective ownership of the Union. Sustainability cannot be accomplished without changing the tone of our political game. If governments continue to treat the EU and its institutions as alien or hostile when it suits them, they should not be surprised to see them rejected. If they continue to treat their peoples as needing to be re-elected *à la Brecht*, they should not be surprised at their sense of alienation. The Union deserves better than to be treated as a convenient scapegoat for unpopular or difficult decisions – scapegoats can play useful roles, but not when at the same time people are expected to identify with them (the IMF is not a union of peoples). Member States, regional and local authorities have to accept once and for all that they *are* Europe and say it. For its part, the Commission has to play the role entrusted to it – it should not set itself out as the European government nor should it shy away from its responsibilities, even when this involves confrontation with the Member States. Politicians and citizens alike must take ownership of this Union of ours and accept that it is an imperfect and fragile exercise in shared leadership and that blaming the EU for the pains of adaptation, or its citizens for blaming the EU, is a dangerous game. The EU does not need to be loved but *sustained* by more diverse forms of participation connecting e-democracy, culture, festivals, referendums and transborder exchanges. Let us start with the annual holding of a mega-Agora Europe, the Woodstock of European politics.

III. History of our Presents: Europe's Demons and Sacred Cows

If the EU possesses the kind of comparative advantage which lends itself to the prescriptive ambition exhibited above, why is there a sense that we may not be on the right track? What are the obstacles to attaining the mundane but nevertheless highly desirable steady state of sustainable integration? The path to sustainable integration is bumpy indeed, paved as it is with misguided realist temptations and useless utopias. Many have dissected and attempted to explain EU failings in the pages of *JCMS* in the last few years. The EU will not

instantaneously get rid of its pathologies: grandstanding at the very top unduly inflating citizens' expectations, apathy at the bottom, the pervasiveness of double standards and hypocrisy, the popularity of blame-thy-neighbour rhetoric, the rigidity of its bureaucracy, the pervasiveness of self-destructive turf battles, the old habits of bullying on the part of big states, socio-economic rigidities, generalized risk aversion, normative dissonance and of course the infamous lack of political will. All this capped by the lure of transcendentalism – when heads of state make overly ambitious common declarations and then blame Brussels for failing to deliver on them.[11] And because the EU machinery tends to focus on process rather than substance, its decision-makers can continue to feel that progress is being made when nothing is actually happening.

I will not assess all these pathologies here. Instead, I will focus on what I see as crucial cognitive and political barriers to progress on the road to sustainable integration, which can be captured in the mytho-zoological pantheon of old demons and sacred cows. Perhaps more than others, the world of politics is prone to the fear of cognitive dissonance, prone to use the cognitive material with which it is familiar. Hence the obsession with oneness in much of the EU instead of that of plurality, complexity, polycentricity and complementarity, which ought to characterize our world of networks and managed conflict.

This diagnosis brings us back to the fundamental ethos of a 2.0 world, that is a world not defined by top-down management and self-contained organizing units of groups or individuals, but rather a world in which value emanates from distributed intelligence. In Euro-parlance, unless and until the EU turns unity in diversity into more than a pretty motto, sustainable integration will remain a mirage.

What is the EU? A People, State, Power, Territory and the Cult of Onenesss

Statism is certainly the EU's mother of all demons. The state-centric paradigm still pervades the thinking on governance among its elites. To be clear, most of contemporary European history has been about state building: sovereign-state building, then nation-state building in the 17th–19th century, democratic-state building in the 19th century, welfare-state building in the 20th century and now 'Member State building'. Indeed, the construct of the nation-state with its defined territory, people and government has been Europe's greatest export to the world – for better or worse. And while

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[11] For a brilliant, yet sober analysis see Menon (2008). See also the proceedings of the conference, 'Why the EU Fails', SIIA, Helsinki, December 2009, «http://www.upi-fiia.fi/en/event/241».

globalization is testing its resilience, churning out failed states and propping up globalized states, we can be sure that the nature of the state is undergoing major transformation (Clark, 1999; Obinger *et al.*, 2010). So EU Member States *qua states* and their attachment to what remains of their sovereignty are not the problem – states are generally a good thing. The problem instead is the propensity to wish for the EU itself the attributes of statism – one people, one territory, hierarchical governance, single leadership, majoritarian voting, one voice – when it is not, and should not be, a state.

So the EU is a schizophrenic power, proud to be a 'different kind of actor' in world politics yet yearning to look like other states on the block adorned with the traditional paraphernalia of statehood. Vivien Schmidt conveys this duality in her expression of 'regional state'. To be sure, many nationals in Europe can only countenance one European polity if it looks just like them: a Republican France, a regionalized Spain, a federal Germany writ large. Euro-Rhineland is alive and well in the 2009 EU pronouncement of the German Supreme Court. In short, one way or another an ever closer union has long been akin to an ever 'cloner' Union, cloning the state at a higher level of aggregation. This pathology, understandable as it may be, is the ultimate obstacle to sustainable European integration.

In fact, we do have a counter-narrative to inspire a non-state-centric understanding and management of the EU, which can be found under many different labels, from constitutional pluralism to post-national, cosmopolitan or transnational variants (Menon, 2008; Habermas, 1998; Ferry, 2005; Eleftheriadis, 2009) – although even the guardians of the post-national temple have been found to lapse into the temptation of 'othering' (in this case the US) in order to foster a 'European identity' (Habermas and Derrida, 2003). I have argued that the EU must be understood as a demoi-cracy in the making, that is as a community of others engaged in a highly demanding exercise of mutual recognition not only of their cultural idiosyncrasies but also of their various political systems and societal bargains (Weiler, 1999; Nicolaïdis, 2004). While the extent to which the bigger Member States uphold the anti-hegemonic spirit which presided over the creation of the EU will be key, there are reasons to be pessimistic on this front (Bunse *et al.*, 2006).

On the external front, the obsession with oneness inspires talk of the EU as a superpower encapsulated by the aspiration for a single European army. But if the EU is not a state in the making, it should not strive to become a classic 'superpower' or claim to redefine the nature of diplomacy in the 21st century while practising 19th-century diplomacy. This means to aim to affect the regional and global rules of the game rather than expand its sphere of influence, including through using the leverage of the (still) biggest market in the world (Leonard, 2005; Nye, 2004; Moravcsik, 2010).

Who Speaks for the EU? The Mantra of a Single Voice

There is no more powerful mantra in the EU lexicon than the call for 'one voice'. If we could find a way to have only one of us pick up the infamous Kissinger call, we would achieve international greatness and easily shape those regional and global pacts. Instead, the story goes, we might provide a single phone number, but the voice at the other end will redirect the caller, 'press 1', 'press 2'. . . In truth, why should this not be the case? How can we profess a belief in 'strength and diversity' and yet not accept that the failed pursuit of 'one voice' is more often than not counterproductive?[12]

   The most intuitive set of arguments here are arguments *from necessity*. In other words, since the EU is not a state but an aggregation of states, let us orchestrate its polyphony as best we can. EU institutional actors who represent it in the outside world – such as the Trade Commissioner, the High Representative or the President of the EU Council – do not have the 'arbitrary power' of national heads of state but reflect different ways of aggregating interests across Member States. And while one could argue that any large heterogeneous democratic polity (like, say, the US) will be prone to divisions plainly visible to the outside, the EU stands in a class of its own. The actors that compose it are all free to act as individual external actors on the international scene – this is a not a prerogative attributed to the same extent to the US Congress, or individual US states. Each EU Member State in turn has its own national geostrategic interests, historical traditions and political sensitivities – *vis-à-vis* ex-colonies or the ex-Soviet Union; *vis-à-vis* the US or Muslim states; in terms of trade interests or resource dependencies. These differences need to be exploited, not denied.

   Which brings us to another set of arguments, those arising *from desirability*. In short, the European ship can be seaworthy no matter how mismatched its parts (Leibfried *et al*., 2009). Sometimes, of course, it is useful simply to be able to rely on plain old division of labour, to have different European leaders speak for Europe with different accents and sensitivities – with so many arenas, comparative advantage should be exploited in diplomacy as well as in trade. Indeed, it could be argued that Europe's internal diversity makes it more attuned to the needs of a 'new peoples' diplomacy'.[13] Moreover, it may be plainly counterproductive for the EU to speak with 'one voice'. UN corridors are full of stories of how once EU Member States have reached a common position they are no longer capable of give-and-take with others with dire consequences for its justice and human rights agenda (Gowan and Brantner, 2008). Not only are they collectively rigid

[12] I am grateful to Anand Menon for our discussions on this issue.
[13] I am grateful to Richard Whitman for sharing his thoughts on this issue.

and therefore unfriendly to the UN system, but their joint position may be much more polarizing than if they were defending a range of compatible options. The most radical version of this argument is that differences in positions among Europeans can sometimes be positively empowering for the EU as a whole. One example could be the Janus-faced diplomacy pursued around Kosovo, and the utility of having held different national positions when Russia sought to use Kosovo as a precedent in the Georgian context. In the end, a sustainable EU foreign policy will have to become smarter at combining one voice, orchestrated polyphony and even, when need be, constructive cacophony.

What Sells the EU? The Delusion of the European Model

Oneness, however, is also about the message itself, not only the messenger. Europe-as-a-model is an old and familiar trope even while reincarnated as EU-as-a-model for regional and global governance. Are those who see parallels between the old *mission civilisatrice* and EUniversalism suffering from post-colonial stress disorder? Can we not argue that today's idea and practice of the EU as a model, with its hands-off and non-coercive character and the involvement of Member States that historically have been at the receiving end of the 'Soviet model', has precious little to do with the *mission* of yesteryear?

   Admittedly, the rest of the world seems to see the EU in contradictory terms: as a highly attractive example of regional integration, which too often squanders its soft power potential through lapses into patronizing.[14] The EU's great comparative advantage is its predilection and capacity for negotiation among a plethora of actors. Others see this; but they also see this advantage being used unwisely. As a result, the message of the EU as a normative leader is contested everywhere even while Europe's 'check appeal' continues to bolster it. So the hope here is that its leaders learn to project a more self-reflective stance, an understanding of the EU as a *laboratory* – a place where experiments can lead to failures as well as successes – and as a *tool box* – providing a range of 'governance tools' from which others can pick and choose – whether spanning varieties of capitalisms, or different rule of law traditions or alternative governance mechanisms. Only by acknowledging its experimental and multifaceted nature can the EU be a credible inspiration for regional and global governance, and provide a non-colonial vocation for Europe in its engagement with new regional and rising powers.

Why the EU? The Obsession with a European Narrative

These dilemmas with regards to our attitude to the outside world bring us back full circle to the inside story. If only, we hear in many European corners, we could come up with a single European story, a narrative about why we must stick together across the continent. To be sure, Europeans do seem to share a certain inclination for reiterating their commitment to universal political principles and purposes, such as freedom, peace, the rule of law, prosperity, solidarity, fundamental rights and social justice (Garton Ash, 2007). These common principles are arguably the object of a 'soft consensus' on the EU 'namely, as a market founded on democratic values' (Medrano, 2010).

But beyond these vague principles, solace cannot be found in the sacred cow of narrative hegemony. In reality, if there are many equally acceptable ways of belonging and feeling allegiance to any political community, this is all the more the case when the political entity at issue is the EU. Indeed, the EU rests on practices of interpretation and negotiation reflecting strong – yet reasonable – disagreements between its many component parts on the norms and goals that underpin the process of integration (Nicolaïdis and Pélabay, 2009). We need to embrace the prevailing narrative diversity about the EU both within and across European countries. Vivien Schmidt has identified four broad EU narratives, namely 'pragmatic', 'normative', 'principled' and 'strategic' (Schmidt, 2009). Actually, the EU gives rise to many more variants as an object of scorn or desire – attracting labels from an artificial construct, or even an identity threat, ethical hazard, a giant supermarket to a community of values, a humanist polity, a cosmopolitan order, a legal community or a democratic anchor (Lacroix and Nicolaïdis, 2010). Taken together, all these stories are part of a bigger multifaceted whole, part of a logic we can only wish for, a logic of reflexive appropriation, decentring and mutual learning. If we can amplify the echoes between them and hear them together in a new kind of political polyphony intended to take the competing visions of Europe seriously, we may start to turn 'unity in diversity' into the core normative basis for sustainable integration.

Conclusions

This article is part manifesto, part research agenda – although I readily grant that it is too long for the former and too short for the latter. Thankfully, European studies have become firmly embedded in global and comparative *problematiques* while being increasingly characterised by exuberant methodological and theoretical pluralism (Egan *et al.*, 2010; Jørgensen *et al.*, 2006; Warleigh-Lack and Phinnemore, 2009). The sustainable integration frame

opens up many questions which can be explored through a range of conceptual lenses. How do we know it when we see it? What are the actors and factors which impede or support it? How are they likely to evolve in the next decades? What is the relationship between legitimacy, democracy and sustainability? How does a sustainable EU affect sustainable European states and vice versa? How are the various pieces of the sustainability agenda related across issue areas? Who are the winners and losers of sustainable policies? What kinds of institutional features best serve sustainability?

We can venture a few broad hypotheses. First, that sustainable integration is a tall but not impossible order. With our European weather and wealth some of us have it too easy, so like Don Fabrizio, we do not try hard enough. For others, tomorrow is simply an unaffordable luxury. But we can. Crisis, as we all know, has the power to bring out the best in all of us. As this momentous year reminds us once again, the EU continues to accumulate a wealth of experience, from its mistakes at least as much as its success. While it would be a tremendous hubris to believe that today's EU has all or even most of the answers, when it comes to problems that transcend our individual national capacities to act, it is the best we have! While it is urgent to think long-term, we must act now, while the window of opportunity is still open. And future-friendliness is the EU's comparative advantage.

Second, the time may be ripe to call for EU 2.0. The ideal underpinning the EU does not need to be grand in order to be great. A sustainable EU 2.0 should be our collective ambition for horizon 2030. We need to translate the new 'web philosophy' on the power of networks and distributed intelligence to the governance and policies of the EU itself. Only if we embrace this new modernity can we aspire to help shape a world of responsible inter-dependence in the 21st century reflecting the aspiration – within and outside Europe – for greater fairness, solidarity and justice. Europe can still embody the power of a simple idea – that the ties that bind sustain peace – but that this must be a *global* ideal for Europe requiring *new* modes of co-operation.

Third, this is also why the story we tell must reflect perceptions and priorities from outside. Outside Brussels an EU 2.0 would be an EU that relies much more radically on decentred action, decision-making and power throughout Europe. And outside Europe: after 200 years of western dominance, we are now but a province of a non-European world where we must strive to make a difference as a post-colonial power and a global mediator. Perhaps, then, we can once again aspire to be the inspiring project we once were in a language that speaks to new generations.

Ultimately, if we seriously aspire to change the world, we Europeans must first change ourselves. The Lisbon Treaty is but a beginning, necessary

but insufficient. We will not instantaneously get rid of our European pathologies, nor slay our sacred cows. And because it *is* remote and complex, the EU will likely remain remote and complex in the eyes of its citizens. But these facts of life should not stifle its ambitions. Obscure EU, complicated EU, infuriating EU, quiet EU can be a power multiplier making its *raison d'être* the empowerment of others, individuals and nations, insiders and outsiders, born and not yet born. In short, if the rising powers in this world want to brush us aside prematurely, as they seemed to in Copenhagen 2009, let us not get mad, let us get even! We must put our common house in order if we are to keep it in orbit. Only on solid foundations will the European Union be able to move down the road of sustainable integration. The journey requires political courage and collective ambition, solid pragmatism and a clear sense of the ideals worth fighting for. Let us, once again, echo Beethoven's call to seize fate by the throat. Together. Now.

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