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European communion: political theory of European union

paper prepared for the Biennial Conference of the US European Union European Studies Association (EUSA), Boston 3-5 March 2011

abstract

Political theory of European union, though an engagement between political concepts and theoretical understandings, provides a means of theorising the EU as a political object. It is argued that the notion of sharing or 'communion', lying at the interface of political theory and political conceptualisation, provides a better means of theorising the EU as a political object rather than terms such as integration or cooperation. By exploring European communion through an engagement with political theory, the paper sets out how three different understandings of the EU as a political object are being constitutionalised – the EU as a constellation of communities; the EU as a cosmopolitan space; and the EU as an example of cosmopolitical coexistence.

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I. Theorising the EU as a political object

> For we must face the fact that in 30 or 40 years Europe will constitute a UPO—a sort of unidentified political object—unless we weld it into an entity enabling each of our countries to benefit from the European dimension and to prosper internally as well as hold its own externally (Jacques Delors 1985 in Drake, 2000, p. 24).

The Treaty of Lisbon brings Jacques Delors' 'unidentified political object' hovering ever more closely into view, providing a moment to reflect on the 'European dimension'. Despite six decades of European integration and scholarship, the identification of the 'nature of the beast', the European Union (EU), remains as difficult today as it has done in previous generations (Puchala, 1971; Risse-Kappan, 1996; Bretherton and Vogler, 2006). One possible reason for this difficulty may be the relative lack of engagement between political concepts and theoretical understandings, in other words, the need for a political theory of European union appropriate for the post-Lisbon era.[1]

This is not to say that there have not been a plenitude of attempts to identify the political object over these past generations. Initial attempts during the early decades of European integration included the identification of the European Community (EC) as being 'less than a federation, more than a regime' (Wallace, 1982, 1983), a 'political system' (Lindberg, 1967; Lindberg and Scheingold, 1970), as a 'level' (Camps, 1971) in 'two-level' policymaking (Bulmer, 1983, 1985) or in a 'multilevel political system' (Webb, 1983; Laffan, 1983). More recent attempts have introduced hyphenated-identities into the identification of the EC/EU as 'neo-medieval' (Bull, 1977; Minc, 1993; Zielonka, 2007), 'post-modern' (Ruggie, 1993; Diez, 1997), or as a 'region-state' (Schmidt, 2004, 2006).

In contrast to these attempts, this paper argues that the notion of sharing or 'communion', lying at the interface of political theory and political conceptualisation, provides a better means of theorising the EU as a political object rather than terms such as integration or cooperation. Through the use of very brief illustrations from the Treaty of Lisbon, the paper also suggests that within European communion are three different understandings of the EU

[1] The term 'union' (no capitalisation) is used here, following Adrian Favell and Virginie Guiraudon, to reflect the aim of (re)connecting 'the study of the European Union as a political construction' to 'the study of European union as an economic and social *process*' (Favell and Guiraudon, 2011).

as a political object – the EU as a constellation of communities; the EU as a cosmopolitan space; and the EU as an example of cosmopolitical coexistence.

Identifying the political object through political theory requires first taking a step back to consider the foundation, manifestation, and labelling of European union.[2] At the foundation of European union as a political project lies one cornerstone term. So widely used and accepted is this term that its foundational significance is often overlooked. Robert Schuman's declaration of 9th May 1950 proposed that 'la mise en commun' or 'pooling' of production would provide 'common foundations' and 'de facto solidarity' which 'may grow a wider and deeper community'. But the notion of mise en commun or pooling is more commonly interpreted as 'sharing' in contemporary attempts to explain the cornerstone principle of 'making common' as the foundation of European union (Bonde, 2003; Panizza, 2009).

The manifestation of European union as a political process can be understood in terms of sociology, social psychology, and the study of rhetoric. These approaches suggest that sociological categorisations, social psychological behavioural processes, and rhetorical argumentative techniques involve manifestations of sharing termed 'communion'. In sociology the concept of communion is a 'form of inner-worldly experience' which distinguishes a 'relationship from those of community and society' (Schmalenbach, 1977 in Vidich and Hughey 1988, p. 248). In social psychology 'communion manifests itself in the sense of being at one with others, in non-contractual cooperation, in relatedness and sharing' (Bakan, 1966, p. 15 in Abele *et al*, 2008, p. 436). In the study of rhetoric, 'communion ... consider[s] the status of values in argumentation and the role of rhetoric in the constitution and maintenance of community' (Graff and Winn, 2006, p. 46; Marunowski, 2008, p. 55).

The labelling of European union as a political product requires the conjoining of two constitutive terms used to describe the EC/EU. The conjoining of both 'community' and 'union' produces the term 'comm-union' as a label for both sociological/supranational community and political/intergovernmental union. In this sense, 'a 'political community' would be the end-result of a process of political integration', while ''political union' refers to one particular kind of institutional arrangement' (Bodenheimer, 1967a, p. 18).

The foundation of the political project in the cornerstone term of pooling, the manifestation of the political process in terms of communion, and the labelling of the political product in the conjoined term of comm-union lead to an argument. It is argued here that the project, process and product of European union is based on sharing, not integration or cooperation.

[2] The distinctions between project, process and product of European integration used here come from Glyn Morgan, *The Idea of a European Superstate* (2007, pp. 4-7).

In other words, the political object of European union may be identified as sharing 'European communion'.[3]

The rest of the paper first attempts to develop a concept of communion and situate within the terminological terrain dominated by the dichotomisation of supranational integration and intergovernmental cooperation. Next, the paper explores the concept of European communion through an engagement with the three broad approaches of communitarian, cosmopolitan, and cosmopolitical theory.[4] Under each approach a number of different theoretical perspectives will be discussed to shed light on the concept of European communion. The paper then briefly suggests how European communion might be understood by using a number of illustrations taken from the Consolidated versions of the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (European Union, 2010) after the Treaty of Lisbon. The paper argues that the concept of European communion, together with its exploration in political theory, helps identify the emergent political entity as constituted through economic, social and political processes. It suggests that rather than integration or cooperation the emergent consolidation of the EU (as briefly illustrated by the Treaty of Lisbon) is better characterised by the concept of European communion.

II. Terms and concepts

Since the 1950s scholars have primarily discussed the processes of European union in terms of a dichotomy between intergovernmental cooperation and supranational integration. For example, Miriam Camps distinguished between 'intergovernmental cooperation' based on retaining 'national influence and control', and the 'supranational approach' involving the 'transfer to supranational institutions any powers of supervision, regulation, or assistance' (Camps, 1956, pgs. 3 and 23). In terms of theorising these processes, Camps emphasised the 'Schuman Plan approach' or 'sector approach' involving the application to 'other sectors of the economy on a piecemeal basis' (Camps, 1956, p. 3). Camps defined this supranational approach as a involving processes of taking a 'new form of "action in common" among governments' and merging 'sovereignties to form a new political unit' (Camps, 1957, p. 7).

Carol Edler Baumann's study of Britain's relationship to European union further emphasises the way in which differentiation took place between membership of cooperation organisations and 'close association' with schemes of supranational integration (Edler, 1957; Edler Baumann, 1959). For Edler Baumann, this dichotomy involved differentiating

[3] See initial discussions of 'European Communion' in Manners, 2006a, pp. 47-9; 2008a, pp. 147-8.
[4] For an introduction to these three broad approaches in EU studies, see Manners, 2008b, pgs. 67 and 79-80; 2010a.

between ‘closer coordination between governments’ and ‘schemes of integration which ... impinged upon sovereignty’ (Edler Baumann, 1959, p. 363).

These understandings of supranational integration constitute the most common approach of political integration defined as a process whereby political actors in several distinct settings are persuaded to shift their expectations and political activities to new centre (Haas, 1958, p. 16; Lindberg, 1963, p. 6). While the emphasis on intergovernmental cooperation was subsequently to develop into an emphasis on ‘preference convergence’ / ‘liberal intergovernmentalism’, and that on supranational integration to ‘supranational governance’ / ‘political system’, the trap of the supranational-intergovernmental dichotomy remains strong (Branch and Øhrgaard, 1999; Manners and Whitman, 2003, pp. 392-4).

In contrast to such dichotomisations, conceptualising communion involves a return to the terminological and conceptual discussions of the 1950s and 1960s. From the outset of such discussions it is clear that ‘the institutional arrangements of the Community are a compromise between “supranational” and “intergovernmental” concepts’ (Camps, 1957, p. P. 14). Edler Baumann went further in arguing that understanding European union, and the conceptualisation of the compromise between supranational and intergovernmental concepts, required a psychological approach to the ‘beliefs and feelings’ surrounding Europe (Edler Baumann, 1959, p. 352-3). In her discussions of Britain’s relationship with Europe Edler Baumann emphasised the importance of ‘objective merit in terms of the national interest, however that might be determined, but also on their subjective appeal to ministers and statesmen as well as to the public at large’ (Edler Baumann, 1959, p. 352). In the context of relations with Europe, she emphasised that ‘the beliefs and feelings surrounding them have exerted almost as much influence on governmental policies as (and sometimes more than) the realities they represent’ (Edler Baumann, 1959, p. 353). Finally, Edler Baumann identifies the major importance of the ‘concept of national sovereignty and the aura of instincts and emotions, convictions and beliefs surrounding it’ (Edler Baumann, 1959, p. 361).

In the context of these discussions, the conceptualisation of communion lies at the nexus of political, economic, sociological, and psychological experiences of sharing. In political terms, communion suggests neither supranational integration nor intergovernmental cooperation, but some form of ‘co-integration’ (Manners, 2000, p. 28). In economic terms, communion suggests neither integration nor independence, but interdependence.[5] In sociological terms, communion has been articulated as neither community nor society, but a type of social relationship (Schmalenbach, 1977; Vidich and Hughey, 1988). In psychological terms, communion is neither selfish nor selfless behaviour, but a consideration of others (Abele *et al*, 2008). In sum, communion involves the *subjective sharing of relationships* rather than

[5] At a micro-economic level, Keith Linard suggests that an ‘economy of communion’ could even represent a way between ‘capitalism and socialism’. See Linard, 2003.

the integration into a 'sameness' community or the contractual cooperation found in societies or intergovernmental organisations. Critical in this conceptualisation are the ideas of distance, relationships and beliefs. While a communion involves sharing, there is a distance between being the same and being different in which European communion sits. Similarly, while communion involves relationships, it does not imply that relationships will always be with the same groups or individuals. Finally, subjective beliefs about these shared relationships are important in understand the significance of European communion.

A brief rereading of some of the earliest, empirically-informed studies of European union reinforce the importance of *subjective sharing of relationships* in the origins of European communion. Firstly, European communion can be seen in 'the appeal of the idea of "making Europe"' (Camps, 1956, p. 4; 1957, p. 7). Secondly, the British hesitancy for European communion can be seen in 'beliefs and feelings', 'instincts and emotions' (Edler Baumann, 1959, pgs. 353, 361; also Baumann 1957, 1967). Thirdly, European communion can been in 'the confrontation between traditional methods of interstate relations and the new community method is taking place' at the interface of 'political union' and 'political community' (Bodenheimer 1967a, p. 17; 1967b, p. 24). Finally, European communion can be seen in the 'birthmarks of Europe' left by the continuation and evolution of the 'ideas of its founders' (Mahant, 1969, 2004, p. 14),

In sum, communion involves the *subjective sharing of relationships* rather than the integration into a 'sameness' community, or the contractual cooperation found in societies or intergovernmental organisations.

To reprise, the concept of European communion understood in terms of the *subjective sharing of relationships* differs from both supranational integration and intergovernmental cooperation in a number of ways. In contrast to supranational integration, European communion does not presume a process towards a new political unit or the creation of an organic community of similar people. In contrast to intergovernmental cooperation, European communion does not presume a continued process of contractual relations. European communion involves the continued negotiation and mediation of relationships, sharing and subjectivities. The next three sections try to shed light on the concept through an engagement with the three broad approaches of communitarian, cosmopolitan, and cosmopolitical theory. It is worth reflecting throughout on the conceptualisation of European Communion on both the political consequences of an EU 'united in diversity' and on the theoretical consequences of the communitarian-cosmopolitan divide.

III. Communitarian theories

> In an anthropological spirit, then, I propose the following definition of the nation: it is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion (Anderson, 1983, p. 15).

For Benedict Anderson, political communities are imagined by members because 'in the minds of each lives the image of their communion'. Communitarian theories represent the predominant approach to understanding European union, with leading international political theorist Molly Cochran arguing that 'communitarianism is particularist and oriented to shared community life' (Cochran, 1999, p. 8). Similarly, leading social theorist Craig Calhoun comments that communitarianism suffers from a 'tendency to elide the differences between local networks of social relationships and broad categories of belonging like nations' (Calhoun, 2003, p. 96).

Writing over three decades ago, Carole Webb introduced a distinction between intergovernmental cooperation, supranational community, and transnational processes in the ECs (Webb, 1977).[6] Each of these perspectives has tended to assume a communitarian understanding of national, supranational, or transnational interests in which communities or groups serve to aggregate such interests. In this respect the image of communion lives in the minds of particular communities or groups, whether in member states, supranational communities, or through transnational processes.

Member states

One of the most common perspectives on European union is based on the role of member states engaging in intergovernmental bargaining in the Council of Ministers and at the European Council. The role of states and societies, governments and ministries has long been an important factor in understanding the politics and policies of the EC/EU. One of the first English language scholars on European union, Miriam Camps, placed considerable emphasis on intergovernmental cooperation within the ECs (Camps, 1956, 1957). The continued importance of member states was reemphasised in the early 1960s by the rejection of British membership and proposals for a 'political union' (Camps, 1964a; Bodenheimer, 1967). In the 1970s, Helen Wallace's work on national governments and the European Communities reiterated the centrality of national administrative inputs into the Community process (Wallace, 1971, 1973). It was this 20-year legacy of scholarship on the role of member states that led Webb to argue the European Communities as an 'intergovernmental' framework (Webb, 1977, pp. 17-22).

[6] See the use of Webb's three perspectives in Manners, 2006b, pp. 121-5; 2010b, pp. 33-5.

The contemporary relevance of intergovernmental theories focussed on member state communities can be found in more recent work by Hayes-Renshaw and Wallace (2006), Sherrington (2000), and Hagemann (2008). The communitarian understanding of national interests found in these works tends to assume that member states serve as the most appropriate and legitimate political communities for sharing European communion. But clearly the broader processes of European union, involving relationships between and beyond the economies and societies of the member states, are far more than the contractual relations between EU governments.

Supranational community

The other most common perspective on European union focuses on the role of the supranational community, in particular the institutions of the EU such as the European Commission and the European Court of Justice. The role of the supranational institutions, actors and groups, such as the Commission, its commissioners and Directorates-General have also provided an equally important factor in understanding the politics and policies of the EC/EU. In addition to an emphasis on intergovernmental cooperation, Camps argued 'the strength of the supranational approach ... [is that] ... the High Authority has unique powers of initiative and the burden of proof has been shifted.... The substitution of wholly new premises may sometimes be the only way to break the pattern of reflex opposition'; and that the 'Common Market' created a 'strong community of interest' (Camps, 1956, pgs. 23 and 25). Camps went on to suggest that the EC was 'a step towards the creation of a new kind of partnership .... [with] the appeal of "making Europe" .... [and] the idea that a new form of "action in common" ... is very strong' (Camps, 1957, p. 7). Writing over a decade later, both Bodenheimer and Camps stressed the continued importance of supranational community in the context of 'a world of rapid change' in which the 'time and space dimensions of the world are shrinking' (Bodenheimer, 1967, pp. 17-18; Camps, 1964, p. 478, 1971, p. 673). In this context, Camps proposed the European Community should again become a 'living experiment in creating new relationships among states and between peoples' (Camps, 1971, p. 678). In parallel to the member state perspective, Webb argued that the 'community method' of supranational organisation involved supposed 'Community-mindedness' that was part of constituting 'the European Communities' distinctiveness in international politics during the 1970s' (Webb, 1977, pgs. 6 and 14).

Contemporary arguments for the importance of governance theories focussed on supranational community includes recent work by Kostakopoulou (2001), Conant (2002), Schmidt (2006), and Cini (2007). Rather than focus on national interests, the communitarian understanding found here assumes that EU supranational community represents a more appropriate and legitimate political community for sharing European communion. But clearly the broader processes of European union have not gone as far as imagining Europe as a community, and given the cultural-linguistic diversities inherent in processes of Europeanisation and globalisation, are unlikely ever to do so. Communal imagining and

supranational integration in 21st century Europe shares nothing with that of 19th century Europe's age of nationalism.

Transnational processes

The third most common perspective on European union goes beyond member state and supranational communities to consider the role of community in transnational processes. The communities considered here include transnational actors and groups inside and outside the EU, such as those of transnational capital, transnational social movements, and groups within transnational EU institutions such as the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee, and the Committee of the Regions. The role of transnational processes and communities was increasingly recognised as important from the 1960s onwards, with references to the 'transnational context' and 'transnational phenomena' of the relations between EC member states (Bodenheimer, 1967, p. 24; Camps, 1971, p. 675). In the 1970s, Susan Strange increasingly asserted the importance of economic interdependence and transnational processes in international politics, including the 'new multistate community' of the EEC (Strange, 1971, p. 311). Strange's advocacy of the importance of transnational processes were based on her observation that by the early 1970s international economic relations were 'out-distancing and out-growing the rather more static and rigid international political system' (Strange, 1971, p. 305; also 1976). Reflecting the emerging importance of transnational processes over the previous two decades, Webb argued that in addition to the role of member states and the supranational community, the interdependencies and intensive networks created by the formation of the EC reflected transnational processes in the wider international system (Webb, 1977, p. 22).

The contemporary significance of transnational processes has dramatically increased with the assumptions of accelerating globalisation in the post-cold war era, as work on transnational groups, communities and processes by Börzel (1997), Kohler-Koch (1999), Guiraudon (2003), and Saurugger (2009) illustrates. In contrast to member state or supranational communities, the third emphasis on transnational communities focuses on the roles of transnational firms and business, transnational trade unions and NGOs, and transnational parties and networking as appropriate and legitimate communities sharing European communion. But clearly the uneven processes of European union incorporate and disincorporate differing transnational communities in radically different ways. Hence the unlikelihood that on their own such transnational groups, communities and processes will even constitute the civil society or social capital of imagined political communities.

While the image of communion might live unevenly in the minds of particular European communities or groups, such imaginings are inherently circumscribed in space and time, rather than being pan-European. The limitations of member state relations, diversities of supranational community, and fractured nature of transnational processes ensure that communitarian theories do not provide a satisfactory basis for European communion. At

best, these plural imaginings are part of the constitutionalisation of the EU as a constellation of communities.

IV. Cosmopolitan theories

> [T]he enactment of a European communion (a more demanding word than 'community'), looked to an eclipse of tribalism, of sectarian violence, of brute power-relations. This foresight of hope had, after Europe's near self-slaughter, every rational legitimacy (Steiner, 1996, pp. 10-11).

For George Steiner, European communion is more demanding than community, and looks to 'an eclipse of tribalism, of sectarian violence, of brute power-relations' for legitimacy beyond communities. Cosmopolitan theories that look beyond communitarian understandings have slowly emerged in the post-cold war period, with Cochran defining cosmopolitanism as 'universalist and individualist in orientation' (Cochran, 1999, p. 8). Calhoun surmises that 'cosmopolitan means belonging to all parts of the world; not restricted to any one country or its inhabitants' (Calhoun, 2003, p. 105). Cosmopolitan theories thus differ from communitarian theories in arguing that concerns for humanity as a whole, or the rights of the individual within humanity, should provide the basis for legitimate political actions (Cochran, 1999, pp. 21-51).

While cosmopolitan theories can take more liberal form, the focus here is on critical cosmopolitan perspectives that involve the recognition of, and engagement with, difference. Mirroring Webb's threefold communitarian distinction, the critical cosmopolitan perspectives considered here draw on critical theories, feminist perspectives, and post-structural theories to emphasise deliberative, gender, and difference politics which cut across communal boundaries.[7] In this particular respect, European communion is enacted through an eclipse of communitarian concerns of self and an openness to cosmopolitan concerns of others through understanding deliberative, gender, or difference politics.

Deliberative politics

Jürgen Habermas' critical theory and his advocacy of 'communicative action' in the public sphere provides the basis for deliberative politics. Deliberative politics demands an expansion of EU deliberative democracy, union citizenship, and the EU public sphere in order to facilitate communicative action in the form of politics based on public deliberation and communication. The role of deliberative politics as providing a more legitimate basis for EU actions and policies has been advocated by Deirdre Curtin (1997), Justine Lacroix (2003), and Seyla Benhabib (2004) in their discussions of cosmopolitanism and deliberative

[7] For an introduction to these three critical perspectives in EU studies, see Manners, 2006b, pp. 125-30; 2007; 2010b, pp. 35-6.

democracy. Curtin (2003: 58) draws on Habermas's link between 'communicative action, deliberation and civil society', arguing that EU post-national democracy should be built on deliberation in the public sphere. Lacroix places an emphasis on 'European constitutional patriotism', suggesting that 'far from denying the importance of national peculiarities, [a] shared political culture should emerge from an open deliberation and confrontation process among the various national cultures involved in the European Union' (Lacroix, 2002, p. 951). Benhabib argues for 'moral universalism' and 'cosmopolitan federalism' based on Habermasian discourse ethics, and involving multiple iterations of cosmopolitan norms between the layers of international law and democratic legislatures (Benhabib, 2004, pgs. 13 and 176-7).

Contemporary scholarship on deliberative politics includes the work of Mitzen (2006), Jacobsson (2007), and Boon (2007). Scholarship focused on the role of deliberative politics in European union advocates that deliberation and argumentation are the most important, appropriate and legitimate aspects for sharing European communion. However the absence of any one EU public sphere where deliberative politics could take place render this approach to European communion problematic.

Gender politics

In contrast to deliberative politics, gender politics provide critical cosmopolitan perspectives that seek to understanding European union based on feminist insights. Gender politics demand feminist insights into the role of social relations, subjectivity, power and 'the political'. The role of gender politics in understanding and transforming EU politics has been argued by a large number of scholars, including Jo Shaw (2000), Catherine Hoskyns (2004), and Annica Kronsell (2005). Shaw employs a method of 'importing gender' in order to engage with 'embodied difference' in EU law and to endeavour to uncover the 'gendered character' of the EU legal system (Shaw, 2000, pp. 413-414). Hoskyns advocates for gender sensitive integration theory that starts with social relations, is honest about subjectivity, and 'would need to be one that sought to theorize change, transformation, and power, and had a broad definition of the political' (Hoskyns, 2004, p. 224). Kronsell's systematic critique of existing malestream theories of 'national interest'; transnational, multilevel, and network governance; and institutional norms argues the need to envision integration from a feminist viewpoint, concluding that existing integration theories leave the 'male-as-norm unquestioned and invisible' and 'work from a simplistic view of power' (Kronsell, 2005, pp. 1035–6).

In addition to the work of Hoskyns, Shaw and Kronsell, important scholarship on gender politics includes the work of Mazy (2001), Woodward (2003), and Prügl (2007). Scholarship stressing gender politics in European union contends that feminist perspectives on power/political and constructions of gender are the most important, appropriate and legitimate aspects for study. However the extent to which gender politics is considered

important, or not, in the broader processes of European union is of major concern here. Clearly there are significant differences in gender relations across Europe north, south, east, and west.

Difference politics

Difference politics emphasise post-structural approaches to understanding how and why discursive practices construct and legitimate difference in and through European union. Difference politics demands a recognition of the roles that constructions of difference play in EU politics, polity and policy, as well as an advocacy of methods of deconstruction and genealogy to reveal such constructions. The importance of understanding the role of difference politics in the construction of European community can be found in the work of Julia Kristeva on abjection, strangeness and freedom. Kristeva uses psychoanalysis to understand 'the creation of self as an internal psychological process' in which 'the other exists in our minds through imagination even when (s)he is not physically present' (Kinnvall, 2006, p. 52). Kristeva advocates recognizing that 'the foreigner is within us' and 'by recognizing our uncanny strangeness we shall neither suffer from it nor enjoy it from the outside' (Kristeva, 1991, pp. 191–2) and thus sees European integration as part of a cosmopolitan ethic that recognizes the strangers to ourselves, the othering practices of nationalism, and a different type of freedom (Kristeva, 1998, pp. 328–9; 2000, p. 115).

More recent works on difference politics by Foritier (2006), Lewis (2006), Pace (2007), Rumelili (2007), emphasise the construction of regional narratives, (co)habitant imaginaries, imaginaries of Europe, and regional communities. Such scholarship emphasising difference politics in European union argues that understanding discursive practices and constructions of difference are the most important, appropriate and legitimate aspects of sharing European communion. However not only do communitarian constructions of difference continue to retain hegemonic power, but recent 'muscular' reactions to multicultural perspectives illustrate an omnipresent conservatism against 21st century European communion.

While the eclipse of tribalism, sectarianism and brute power relations may be achievable unevenly through European union, such critical cosmopolitan enactments are endangered by reactionary responses in a Europe conditioned by neo-nationalism and neo-racism. The limitations of a pan-European public sphere, defensive masculinity, and monoculturalism ensure that critical cosmopolitan theories do not, on their own, provide a satisfactory basis for European communion. At best, these openings towards others are part of the constitutionalisation of the EU as a cosmopolitan space.

V. Cosmopolitical theories

> [A]t the very heart of the European Union is the concept of a communion of equals. Our … historical experience of international relations … had been governed by an ethic of predator and prey; where the small and the weak were dominated by the large and the powerful; and where cultural diversity was seen as a threat to the powerful core…. The collegiate nature of the European Union provided a new model for international relations – a model based on mutual respect, regardless of size and on co-operation rather coercion (McAleese, 1999, p. 8).

For Mary McAleese, European communion involves equality, mutual respect, and cooperation in international relations. The increasing challenges of multiculturalism in the twenty-first century has led political psychologists of globalization to seek an ethical middle ground between communitarian and cosmopolitan approaches they term 'cosmopolitics' (Kinnvall and Nesbitt-Larking, 2010, 2011). Drawing on Cheah and Robbins, Archibugi, and Calhoun, Kinnvall and Nesbitt-Larking contend that cosmopolitics 'can thus be seen as an approach trying to combine communitarianism with cosmopolitanism ... Traditional cosmopolitanism ... relies on a discourse of individual rights; while communitarianism is based on a discourse of social rights which is often expressed in exclusive localism. Both run the risk of substituting ethics for politics' (Kinnvall and Nesbitt-Larking, 2011; see also Cheah and Robbins, 1998; Calhoun, 2003).

Cosmopolitical perspectives differ from cosmopolitanism in that they seek a 'strong sense of cosmopolitanism [which] calls for confrontation with deep and necessarily contentious differences between ways of life', rather than a 'soft cosmopolitanism . . . aided by the frequent flyer lounges (and their extensions in 'international standard' hotels) [where] contemporary cosmopolitans meets others of different backgrounds in spaces that retain familiarity' (Calhoun, 2003, pp. 106-7). Importantly, Craig Calhoun asks whether cosmopolitanism 'provides the best hope of sustaining particular achievements and openings for creativity in the face of neo-liberal capitalism' (Calhoun, 2003, p. 104). He suggests it does not and 'needs to disentangle itself from neo-liberal capitalism. . . . It needs more discursive engagement across lines of difference, more commitment to reduction of material inequality, and more openness to radical change' (Calhoun, 2003, p. 111). At the same time, cosmopolitical approaches seek to engage with communitarianism by establishing a connection to the 'idea of political action rooted in immanent contradictions of the social order', where 'immanent struggle for a better world always builds on particular social and cultural bases' (Calhoun, 2003, pp. 102-3).

The cosmopolitical theoretical approach considered here focuses on reconciliatory, identity, and ethical politics as part of trying to understand the roles of equality, mutual respect and cooperation in European communion. In this respect, European communion is best conceived in terms of achieving reconciliation and equality in order to overcome historical

experience; recognising and respecting identity and cultural diversity; and acknowledging an ethic of cooperation rather than coercion. These three cosmopolitical perspectives of reconciliatory, identity, and ethical politics will be considered here.

Reconciliatory politics

Drawing on the work of Hannah Arendt, Catherine Guisan argues that the EU has forgotten its 'lost treasure' of ethical and political impulses behind the fifty-year-old European integration process (Guisan, 2005, 2011a). The role of the EU's 'principles of action' have been hermeneutically retrieved by Catherine Guisan's studies of the principle of *reconciliation*, the principle of *power as action in concert*, and the principle of *recognition* in the memories and actions of participants (Guisan, 2011*b*). Guisan argues that reconciliation is a forgotten, yet crucial aspect of European integration, starting with Franco-German reconciliation with the 1951 Treaty of Paris, and extending to post-cold war reconciliation in central Europe, as well as between Greece and Turkey (Guisan, 2011*a*). Within the principle of reconciliation, Guisan identifies the five distinct practices of breaking with the culture of blame; forgiving; promising; fair reorganization of relations between the parties; and the benevolent involvement of an external political power (Guisan, 2011b). Although mostly forgotten, political theory of reconciliatory politics is the one constant of the past fifty years of European union, as work on relations between France and Germany, Greece and Turkey, in Northern Ireland, as well as in the former Yugoslavia illustrates.

Reconciliatory politics, as found in Guisan's work in particular provides a cosmopolitical understanding of European union. Other scholarship on EU reconciliatory politics includes the work of Gardner Feldman (1999), Meehan (2000), Gourlay (2004), and Mushaben (2006). Such scholarship on reconciliatory politics in European union emphasises the importance of achieving reconciliation and equality in order to overcome historical experiences as crucial elements of sharing European communion. While processes of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions have become widespread throughout the world, the centrality of reconciliation to European union has clearly been forgotten. And yet somewhere in between communitarian particularisms and cosmopolitan universalisms lie the subjective sharing of relationships through practices of cosmopolitical reconciliation inherent in European communion.

Identity politics

Since the early 1990s Brigid Laffan has argued that the 'politics of identity have enormous salience ... for the EU ... because the Union is moving from issues of instrumental problem-solving to fundamental questions about its nature as a part-formed polity (Laffan, 1996, p. 81). Laffan suggests that both internal and external policy measures are part of the politics of identity in the EC, with a particular emphasis on the 'People's Europe' measures 'to strengthen and promote the identity of the EC for its citizens' and measures that seek 'to give the peoples of the Community a sense of common identity' (Laffan, 1992, p. 125).

Unlike the tendency in post-structural difference politics to see practices of othering as rather binary in nature, Laffan and others see identity politics as multiple and open. For Laffan 'the Community's distinctive characteristics are its multi-levelled and multi-cultural nature' where 'shared loyalty, rather than an all-or-nothing shift of loyalty, is more likely than any radical transformation of identity' (Laffan, 1992, pgs. 178 and 126). The importance of Laffan's contribution is this acknowledgement of 'multiple identities' through the distinction between seeing identity in a 'restrictive manner' of 'exclusive closed terms' and that of an 'open inclusive manner' which is 'open to identification with a political and cultural space that transcends national borders' (Laffan, 1996, pp. 98-99).

Besides the work of Laffan, a significant number of scholars have taken the politics of identity seriously in the understanding and analysis of European union. Amongst this scholarship, the work of Laura Cram on identity and banal Europeanism is important in emphasising the contingent and contextual nature of identity, and the possibility of the coexistence of multiple identities (Cram, 2009; also 2001). Scholarship on identity politics in European union emphasises the importance of recognising and respecting identity and cultural diversity as crucial elements of sharing European communion. While the negotiation of identity politics has become one of the central challenges to world politics over the past two decades, the possibilities of diverse and multiple identities in European union has tended to be overlooked. And yet somewhere in between communitarian particularisms and cosmopolitan universalisms lie the subjective sharing of relationships through practices of cosmopolitical identities inherent in European communion.

Ethical politics

Finally, cosmopolitical theoretical perspectives on moral and ethical politics of European union have become increasingly important over the past decade. In particular, Lynn Dobson has argued that 'the emergence of political theory on the EU is cousin to the reinvigoration of international political theory more generally' suggesting that 'when justification relates to supranational or international institutions, the presumption ought to favour impartial, not partial, modes of justification' (Dobson, 2006a, pp. 522-3). Dobson's work on normative political theory of the EU uses liberal theorists, such as Alan Gewith and John Rawls, to understand how the 'output or procedures of political institutions can transgress or uphold moral or ethical norms' (Dobson, 2004, p. 43; see also Dobson 2006b; Føllesdal and Dobson, 2004). Similar to Guisan and Laffan, Dobson's work attempts to develop cosmopolitical theory capable of European union after the Treaty on European Union 'defined the EU as a distinctive political entity and unsettled existing concepts of, for example, political community, political legitimacy, democracy, sovereignty and citizenship' (Dobson, 2006a, p. 513). Dobson suggests that normative political theory must deal with three problems—the problem of 'reconciling unity and diversity'; the problem of 'dual ontology' (the moral standing of both individuals and states); and the problem of 'justification' in the EU. It is this attempt to theorize these dilemmas of individual rights versus group rights, of individuals

versus states, of the cosmopolitan versus the communitarian, that constitute cosmopolitical theory. As Dobson and Føllesdal conclude in their consideration of political theory and the European constitution, many of these theoretical dichotomies in the EU 'are not so clear, so stable, nor so unidimensional, as sometimes portrayed. If we are to develop a sophisticated appreciation of normative issues in a multi-perspectival polity we may have to accept that our task lies less in specifying 'either/or' and more in specifying 'to what degree, in what combination, and in what circumstances'' (Føllesdal and Dobson, 2004, p. 183).

While scholarship explicitly on ethical politics in the study of European union is relatively new a number of works, including those by Delcourt (2006), Aggestam (2008), and Ypi (2008), serve as important examples. Scholarship on ethical politics in European union emphasises the importance of acknowledging an ethic of cooperation rather than coercion as a crucial element of sharing European communion. While the challenges of ethical politics have been hotly debated across the world over the last decade, the ethic of cooperation rather than coercion in European union has gone unseen. Any yet somewhere in between communitarian particularisms and cosmopolitan universalisms lie the subjective sharing of relationships through the negotiation of ethical politics inherent in European communion.

Finally, while reconciliatory, identity, and ethical politics may not yet be at the very heart of European union, the do provide a sense of direction for European communion. The collegiate nature of European union may indeed provide a new model for international relations based on achieving reconciliation and equality; respecting identity and diversity; and acknowledging an ethic of cooperation rather coercion as a satisfactory basis for European communion. At worst, these collegialities are part of the constitutionalisation of the EU as an example of cosmopolitical coexistence.

VI. The Lisbon Treaty

The eight-year processes of negotiating and ratifying the Treaty of Lisbon from December 2001 to December 2009 suggest that the March 2010 consolidated versions of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) and Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) might provide some insight in the self understandings of the EU as a political object. While the treaties have become the subject of extensive academic production which cannot be discussed here, they do also provide some very brief illustrations of the three different understandings of European communion discussed so far.

Constellation of communities

The Treaty of Lisbon reinforces the communitarian understanding of the EU as a constellation of communities through its references to member states, supranational

community and transnational communities. The 2010 consolidated versions of the TEU and TFEU, like all EC/EU treaties that proceeded them, illustrate the primacy of member states as conferrers of competence: 'By this Treaty, the HIGH CONTRACTING PARTIES establish among themselves a EUROPEAN UNION, hereinafter called 'the Union', on which the Member States confer competences to attain objectives they have in common' (TEU, 2010, art. 1). The consolidated versions of the treaties also illustrate the importance of supranational community as the recipient of conferred competence: 'The Union shall pursue its objectives by appropriate means commensurate with the competences which are conferred upon it in the Treaties' (TEU 2010 art. 2(6)). This dual nature of European communion at the confluence of supranational community and member state communities was captured more clearly by the opening article on the 'Establishment of the Union' in the 2004 Constitutional Treaty: 'Reflecting the will of the citizens and States of Europe' (TCfE, 2004, art. 1). There are also manifold illustrations of the roles of transnational communities in the consolidated treaties, including references to employers and undertakings; employees and socio-economic representatives; civil society and citizen's representative associations; and regional and local level government (TEU, 2010, arts. 4, 5 and 11; TFEU, 2010, arts. 101 and 300). What is also interesting is the extent to which transnational communities may be global as a consequence of EU external relations and engagement with the United Nations and international, regional or global organisations (TEU 2010, arts. 3 and 21). In all of these respects 'the Lisbon Treaty did not nature of the Union, which remains a "partially federal entity"' (Piris, 2010, p. 331).

Cosmopolitan space

However, the Treaty of Lisbon also illustrates a partially cosmopolitan understanding of the EU by opening new space through references to deliberative politics and gender politics, while raising questions about difference politics. Within the 'provisions on democratic principles' of the consolidated treaties, the principle of participatory democracy through deliberative politics is illustrated through references to 'public exchange', 'regular dialogue', 'broad consultations', and 'citizen's initiative' (TEU 2010, art. 11). The consolidated treaties contain a number of illustrations of attempts to come to terms with some aspects of gender politics. These include references to, and policies addressing, 'equality between women and men' (TEU 2010, arts. 2 and 3; TFEU 2010, arts. 8, 153 and 157). More specific attempts to combat trafficking and sexual exploitation, to ensure equal pay for equal work, support positive discrimination, and combat domestic violence may also be seen in the consolidated treaties (TFEU 2010, arts. 79, 83, 157, and declaration 19). The consolidated treaties illustrate the problems of proclaiming as 'universal' values and principles such as human dignity, human rights, freedom, democracy, equality, solidarity, and the rule of law (TEU 2010, preamble and art. 21). Such claims of 'universal' create a politics of difference against countries and cultures who do not share such values and principles. The risks of constructing such differences are amplified by references in the preambles of the consolidated TEU and Charter of Fundamental Rights to particularistic claims of the 'inheritance of Europe' and

'moral heritage'. Such risks may be partially addressed through the innovation of creating a politics of 'neighbourliness', although reference to 'values' may also counteract such innovation (TEU 2010, art. 8). Jean-Claude Piris identifies the attempts to enhance democratic participation and legitimacy, as well as the new values and objectives of 'equality between women and men', pluralism, tolerance and respect for 'cultural and linguistic diversity', as important (Priis, 2010, pgs. 71-3, 112-3). He argues that 'article 2 TEU on the Union's values is not only a political and symbolic statement. It has concrete legal effects' (Piris, 2010, p. 71).

Cosmopolitical coexistence

Thirdly, the Lisbon Treaty illustrates a fundamentally cosmopolitical understanding of the EU as facilitating cosmopolitical coexistence through its aspirations for reconciliation, identities, and ethical politics. The consolidated treaties illustrate the role of reconciliation in both the preamble and respect for equality of member states. The reference in the TEU preamble to the 'the historic importance of the ending of the division of the European continent and the need to create firm bases for the construction of the future Europe' suggests the importance of reconciling past divisions in Europe. In parallel, the reference to relations between the Union and the member states (TEU, 2010, art. 4) suggests that 'the Union shall respect the equality of Member States before the Treaties as well as their national identities, inherent in their fundamental structures, political and constitutional, inclusive of regional and local self-government'. There are many illustrations from the consolidated treaties of the emphasis given to identity and diversity, particularly since the adoption of the motto 'united in diversity'. These illustrations include references to the desire 'to deepen the solidarity between their peoples while respecting their history, their culture and their traditions'; the objective of respecting 'its rich cultural and linguistic diversity, and shall ensure that Europe's cultural heritage is safeguarded and enhanced'; and the 'improvement of the knowledge and dissemination of the culture and history of the European peoples' (TEU, 2010, preamble and art. 3(3); and TFEU, 2010, art. 167(2)). The consolidated treaties illustrate a number of aspects of ethical politics with references to, for example, the fundamental principle of subsidiarity in which 'the Union shall act only if ... the proposed action cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States, ... but can rather, ... be better achieved at Union level' (TEU, 2010, art. 5). This emphasis on an ethic of cooperation between states, either at central or at regional and local level, is a central element of a shared raison d'être where the Union acts to better achieve together what cannot be achieved apart. In his concluding analysis of the Lisbon Treaty and beyond, Piris suggests that the European project's 'essential aim is reconciliation and peace among peoples who have fought each other for centuries' (Piris , 2010, p. 339). His also suggests that the Treaty's emphasis on the concerns of member states and their 'essential functions' will not address the major imbalances which affect the Union, most importantly concerns of its political legitimacy (Piris, 2010, pp. 332-4).

VII. (N)ever closer union

This paper has argued that political theory of European union, though an engagement between political concepts and theoretical understandings, provides a means of theorising the EU as a political object. It also suggests that within European communion are three different understandings of the EU as a political object – the EU as a constellation of communities; the EU as a cosmopolitan space; and the EU as an example of cosmopolitical coexistence. In this respect the processes of European union involve the recognition of the difficulties and diversities of constitutionalising an increasingly numerous and diverse political object in a globalising era.

It has been argued here that the contemporary processes of European union are not primarily characterised by integration or ever closer union, nor by cooperation or never closer union, but by a recognition of 'sharing' involved in a more global EU. It is suggested that between the previous concepts of supranational integration and intergovernmental cooperation lies the notion of sharing or 'communion'. Support for the notion of communion comes from the cornerstone term of pooling, from sociological, psychological and rhetorical processes, and from the conjoined term 'comm-union'. As brief illustrations from the consolidated treaties suggested, the notion of communion captures the multiple nature of the EU as a political object between imagined communities and cosmopolitan enactments – where local and global politics commune.

It is also been argued that political theory of European union demands an understanding of three broads strands of theory – communitarian, cosmopolitan and cosmopolitical. This involves drawing together communitarian perspectives of member states, supranational community and transnational processes; cosmopolitan perspectives of difference, gender and difference politics; and cosmopolitical perspectives of reconciliatory, identity and ethical politics. The first discussion of communitarian perspectives demonstrated the extent to which this has constituted the dominant approach to understanding European union. The illustrations from the consolidated treaties, in particular the establishment and conferral of competence, reinforce this communitarian understanding. In contrast, the second discussion of critical cosmopolitan perspectives showed how deliberative, gender and difference politics serve as an omnipresent reminder of how communities are never quite how they are imagined. Here the illustrations from the consolidated treaties, such as democratic principles, gender equality and engagement with difference, suggest that critical cosmopolitan concerns are not unimportant. Finally, between these communitarian and cosmopolitan approaches the innovation of introducing cosmopolitical approaches suggests that reconciliation, multiple identities and an ethic of cooperation are all at the very heart of European union. Again, the very brief illustrations from the consolidated treaties reinforced this innovative interpretation of cosmopolitical European communion.

It is further suggested that the past two decades of European union may mark a move away from the more top-down project of Union towards a more bottom-up process of communion. In other words, the bold political initiatives of IGC and treaty-driven integration may give way to EU policies in response to economic and social processes of global interdependence. This change will make both an exclusive focus on only supranational integration or only intergovernmental cooperation less likely, but processes of sharing and communion within and without Europe more likely. Following Favell and Guiaudon (2011), such a shift away from political project towards economic, social *and* political processes demands a reconfiguration of EU studies that European communion as concept *and* analytical approach facilitates.

To summarise, the paper has argued that the notion of sharing or communion provides a more appropriate means of conceptualising European union rather than terms such as integration or cooperation. The paper has further argued that within this new approach, political theory of European union contrasting communitarian, cosmopolitan, and cosmopolitical theory is appropriate. It has not suggest that the radically different theoretical approaches of communitarianism and cosmopolitanism are in anyway compatible, but that cosmopolitical theory is an attempt to mediate these distinctions. Furthermore, the paper has suggested that one of the benefits of bringing together the concept of communion with political theories is that the study of European union becomes better equipped with concepts and theory appropriate for the post-Lisbon era. In this era the need to understanding economic, social and political processes of European *union* become more important than bold political projects of European *Union*. In the previous section, the paper very briefly illustrated these political concepts and theoretical understandings with references to the post-Lisbon consolidated treaties without engaging in the considerable secondary literature o the subject.. Clearly these illustrations are open to interpretation in the context of identifying and understanding the EU as an emergent political entity constituted through economic, social and political processes.

European communion, at the intersection of a conception of communion and of cosmopolitical theory, provides a means of theorising the political object located in a sense of ‘sharing’ (conceptually) and a sense of ‘betweenness’ (theoretically). European communion thus helps EU studies to come to terms with a post-Lisbon union characterised by less integration and more consolidation; with cosmopolitical theory characterised by less dichotomisation and more innovation; prepares for greater emphasis on broader patterns of social, economic and political change; and recognises the betweenness of an increasingly identified political object between state-like universalisms and regional-like particularisms.

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