The Idea of Europe

Edited by

Ovidiu Caraiani,
Daniela Maricica Cotoară,
Adelin-Costin Dumitru
and Ciprian Tudor

Spine

Back cover

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FOREWORD

Each year, the National University of Science and Technology POLITEHNICA Bucharest organizes the Students' Scientific Conference. In the last couple of years, part of the papers presented during the European Culture and Civilization panel have formed the backbone of a collective volume, an emerging tradition which is hereby continued. The editors of the volume (Ovidiu Caraiani, Daniela Maricica Cotoara, Adelin-Costin Dumitru and Ciprian Tudor) teach courses and seminars on a variety of topics related to what could be labelled European culture and civilization at faculties such as the Faculty of Engineering in Foreign Languages, Faculty of Industrial Engineering and Robotics, and Faculty of Entrepreneurship, Business Engineering and Management.

The diversity of areas that could be covered by this label is visible from the topics selected by the students for their presentations. From analysing the impact of the Black Death on Europe to exploring the Ancient Greek institutional framework that offered us the first implementation of a democratic regime, from military events with a significant impact upon Ancient Rome's history to Europeanization and the Romanian cultural landscape, and from overviewing European Union policies for sustainable development to presenting changes occurring in European art throughout the centuries, the subjects chosen by students reflect the pluralism that has always characterized the European identity (or, better said, identities).

One of the advantages of having a panel such as European Culture and Civilization is that it provides room for not only a variety of subjects, but also for a multitude of disciplines to be represented. Each year (and 2024 was not an exception), Sociology, International Relations, Political Theory, History are well represented in the students' presentations. What the papers written with different methodologies and concepts have in common is an interest in exploring the aforementioned European identities, in all their multifaceted forms.

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The European Culture and Civilization panel also offers an opportunity for Erasmus students to take part in the public events organized by the National University of Science and Technology POLITEHNICA Bucharest, further demonstrating the benefits of one of the most successful programs implemented by the European Union. By doing that, it also allows the other students – but also the organizers – to become more familiar with novel perspectives on some topics.

Last but not least, we should emphasize – as we have also done in the past – the importance of having such a panel available to students at a *Polytechnic* university. After all, engaging with such topics represents an endeavor that is outside the scope of their specialties. That being said, understanding what it means to be European, and delving into topics that would traditionally be considered to be researched almost exclusively within social sciences and humanities, are aspects whose importance ought not to be understated. They contribute, on the one hand, to the formation of engineers who can also understand the social phenomena that have an impact upon their professional activity, and on the other, they open up social sciences and humanities to novel perspectives.

The following list contains the titles of the presentations that have been made during this year's edition of the Student Scientific Conference. Some of the essays on which the presentations have been based were selected for this volume, as shown in the Table of Contents.

- The Trauma of World War II (by Alexandru DOBRIN)
- The French Revolution: From Queendom to Empire (by Eduard-Alexandru DRUȚĂ)
- The Punic Wars: Rome's Ascension to Power (by Denisa-Elena ȘTEFAN)
- The Tragedy of the Black Death (by Dan MOJOATCĂ)
- The Importance of the Punic Wars in the Romanization of Europe (by Alexandru Cristian VASILE)
- European Art (by Irene IGNATENCU and Rares BURCEA)
- The Evolution of Music in Europe (by Gheorghiu VLAD and Felix CONDEI)

- Fashion throughout the last Century (by Vieru MAYA and Mara-Irina BALASA)
- Democracy in Action: Exploring Athenian Society and Governance in Ancient Greece (by Ilinca GOLGOT)
- Freemasonry in France (by Alexandru FLORIN)
- Europe's Environmental Challenges (by Elodie Nathalie Vivienne COFFIN)
- European Union Policies and Sustainable Development (by Valentina PETRENCU)
- What is Ethnic Nationalism all about? (by Marius ZAHARIA)
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THE PUNIC WARS: ROME'S ASCENSION TO POWER

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Abstract

Between 264 BCE and 146 BCE, several significant battles took place between Carthage and Rome, known as the Punic Wars. During the first war for control of Sicily, Rome built and prepared 330 ships, gaining naval superiority. Following a period of poor leadership, Hamilcar Barca and his soldiers played a crucial role in sustaining Carthage. In the Mercenary War (241-237 BCE), Rome compelled the Carthaginian colonies of Sardinia and Corsica to withdraw. The Ebro Treaty of 226 BCE stipulated that neither side could cross a certain border. The second Punic War began when Hannibal Barca led his army into northern Italy via the Alps, achieving numerous victories against the Romans and seizing control of northern Italy. The Romans' frustration with the perceived inaction of their forces unsettled Hannibal. Carthage refused Hannibal reinforcements and supplies, thwarting his ultimate conquest. Roman general Publius Cornelius Scipio advanced against the Carthaginian army in Spain, defeating Hasdrubal, Hannibal's younger brother. This event coincided with Scipio assuming control of Utica, a Carthaginian city in North Africa, and an Italian ally withdrawing support for Carthage. Consequently, Scipio was able to

outmaneuver Hannibal around Rome by thoroughly analyzing his strategies, thus preventing Rome from attacking him.[1] (Mark, 2018)

Keywords

Punic wars, Romans, Carthaginian, Mercenary war.

Introduction

Between 264 and 146 BCE, the Punic Wars were a series of conflicts between Rome and Carthage. The Carthaginian population, of Phoenician ethnicity, is commonly referred to as Phoenician (Phoinix in Greek, Poenus from Punicus in Latin). Roman historians named these conflicts "The Punic Wars" due to the origins of Carthage as Phoenician traders. This series of wars consisted of:

- First Punic War (264–241 BCE)

- Second Punic War (218–201 BCE)

- Third Punic War (149–146 BCE)

Following Rome's victories in all of these wars, it assumed control over the Mediterranean region previously under Carthage's control. Before 260 BCE, Carthage had evolved from a modest port settlement of the Phoenicians into the most affluent and dominant city-state in the Mediterranean. Its formidable mercenary army, powerful navy, and substantial wealth from trade, tariffs, and tributes enabled it to exert significant influence.

The Punic Wars: Rome's Ascension to Power

Through a treaty with the juvenile city-state of Rome, Carthage severely restricted Roman trade in the Western Mediterranean. This was made possible due to Carthage's superior naval strength. Roman merchants sailing in Carthaginian waters risked having their ships raided and their cargo stolen. However, as a result of Rome's decisive victory in the First Punic War, these dynamics shifted, and Carthage lost its previously immense influence, wealth, and prestige throughout subsequent conflicts.

By the conclusion of the Third Punic War, Carthage, completely subjugated by the Roman Republic, ceased to be a significant political or military power.[1] (Mark, 2018)

Research methodology

Introduction;

The introduction sets the stage for the exploration of the Punic Wars, providing context for the historical significance of these conflicts and their enduring impact on Western civilization. It highlights the geopolitical tensions between Carthage and Rome, the strategic importance of Sicily, and the overarching themes of power, ambition, and conquest that characterize the period.

1.   Background Research:

A comprehensive review of scholarly literature, primary sources, and historical accounts related to the Punic Wars is conducted. This phase involves gathering information on key events, battles, personalities, and socio-political dynamics leading up to, during, and after each war. Primary sources such as ancient texts, inscriptions, and archaeological findings are consulted to ensure accuracy and depth in the analysis.

2.   Data Collection:

The collected data is analyzed through a critical lens, examining patterns, trends, and causal relationships within the historical context of the Punic Wars. This involves identifying key themes, assessing the significance of specific events, and evaluating the motivations and actions of major players such as Hannibal Barca, Scipio Africanus, and Cato the Elder. The analysis also considers broader implications for Mediterranean geopolitics, military strategy, and socio-cultural development.

3.   Analysis and Interpretation:

The collected data is analyzed through a critical lens, examining patterns, trends, and causal relationships within the historical context of the Punic Wars. This involves identifying key themes, assessing the significance

of specific events, and evaluating the motivations and actions of major players such as Hannibal Barca, Scipio Africanus, and Cato the Elder. The analysis also considers broader implications for Mediterranean geopolitics, military strategy, and socio-cultural development.

4.   Historiographical Approach:

A historiographical approach is adopted to contextualize the interpretations and perspectives presented in the paper within the broader scholarly discourse on the Punic Wars. This involves comparing and contrasting different historical interpretations, theories, and methodologies used by scholars to study this period. By engaging with diverse viewpoints and debates within the field of ancient history, the paper aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the Punic Wars.

5.   Theoretical Framework:

Theoretical frameworks from fields such as military history, political science, and cultural studies are applied to analyze and interpret the dynamics of conflict, power relations, and identity formation during the Punic Wars. Concepts such as hegemony, imperialism, nationalism, and cultural diffusion are explored to illuminate the complex interplay of factors shaping the course of these ancient conflicts.

6.   Conclusion and Implications:

The paper concludes by synthesizing the findings, insights, and implications derived from the analysis of the Punic Wars. It highlights the enduring legacy of these conflicts on Western civilization, including their impact on military strategy, statecraft, cultural exchange, and the rise of Rome as a dominant imperial power. The conclusion also reflects on the broader lessons and implications of the Punic Wars for understanding the dynamics of conflict and conquest in human history.

7.   Bibliography and Citations:

A comprehensive bibliography is provided, listing all sources consulted and cited in the paper. Proper citation methods are followed to acknowledge the contributions of previous scholarship and ensure academic integrity.

First Punic War

(a) Introduction

The First Punic War erupted in 264 BCE, fueled by a power struggle over Sicily, an island with notable strategic importance, desired by both Carthage and Rome. The conflict was ignited when the Sicilian city of Messana, caught in a dispute between Syracuse and Carthage, sent a plea to Rome for assistance. The young republic, seeing an opportunity to overthrow Carthaginian dominance and further increase its own influence, responded by initiating a remarkable naval expansion effort. This expansion aimed to rival Carthage's naval supremacy. The ensuing battles and strategic maneuvers reshaped the geopolitical landscape of the Mediterranean and introduced innovative military tactics and technologies with enduring implications for future conflicts.

(b) Genesis, Naval Warfare Evolution, and Background:

The appeal of Messana for Roman aid triggered a decisive intervention, leading to the commencement of hostilities. Faced with Carthage's naval superiority, Rome embarked on an unprecedented shipbuilding program, rapidly constructing a formidable fleet of over 100 warships. This ambitious endeavor signaled Rome's determination to challenge Carthaginian hegemony in the Mediterranean.

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The pivotal naval engagement at Mylae in 260 BCE showcased Rome's nascent naval prowess and introduced the innovative corvus, a boarding bridge designed to neutralize Carthaginian naval superiority. This tactical ingenuity enabled Roman marines to board and seize Carthaginian vessels, shifting the balance of power in favor of Rome and heralding a new era of naval warfare.

Hamilcar Barca, the Carthaginian general, emerged as a formidable adversary, renowned for his strategic brilliance and lightning raids along the Italian coast. Despite initial setbacks, including the loss of Drepana, Carthage's resilience and Hamilcar's leadership prolonged the conflict, inflicting heavy casualties on the Roman forces and underscoring the challenges of confronting Carthaginian military prowess.

Rome's perseverance and adaptability eventually culminated in a series of decisive naval victories, notably the Battle of the Aegates Islands in 241 BCE, compelling Carthage to seek peace. The ensuing Treaty of Lutatius marked the end of the First Punic War, establishing Rome's dominance in Sicily and reshaping the geopolitical dynamics of the Mediterranean.

(c) Background, Naval Innovations, and Results:

The First Punic War erupted primarily due to the struggle for control over Sicily, a strategically vital region coveted by both Rome and Carthage. The conflict was triggered by the Mamertine War, a confrontation between Syracuse and the Mamertines of Messina, leading to Rome's declaration of war against Carthage in 264 BCE.

Despite lacking maritime experience, Rome rapidly adapted to the naval theater, constructing a formidable fleet and introducing groundbreaking innovations such as the corvus. This ingenious device, a portable gangplank equipped with hooks, allowed Rome to apply land-based tactics in naval battles, effectively countering Carthaginian naval dominance.

Hamilcar Barca, renowned for his military prowess and strategic brilliance, emerged as a key Carthaginian commander. His hit-and-run tactics and coastal raids inflicted significant losses on Rome, prolonging the war and showcasing Carthage's resilience in the face of adversity.

The war's turning point came with Rome's decisive victory at the Battle of the Aegates Islands in 241 BCE, compelling Carthage to sue for peace. The resulting Treaty of Lutatius concluded the First Punic War, establishing Rome's control over Sicily, Corsica, and Sardinia, while imposing heavy war indemnities on Carthage. This outcome marked the beginning of Rome's ascendancy as a dominant Mediterranean power and set the stage for further conflicts in the Second Punic War.[2] (Your guide to the Punic Wars)

Second Punic War

(a)   Introduction:

The Second Punic War, a monumental conflict between Rome and Carthage from 218 to 201 BCE, stands as one of antiquity's most renowned and strategically complex wars. The war's origins lay in Carthage's quest for revenge after its defeat in the First Punic War, compounded by Rome's imperial ambitions and expansionist policies. Hannibal Barca, the Carthaginian military commander, masterminded a daring campaign that saw his forces traverse the formidable Alps, achieving several stunning victories on Italian soil and threatening Rome's very existence. This conflict, characterized by epic battles, innovative strategies, and immense human drama, profoundly influenced the course of Mediterranean history and showcased the clash between two burgeoning superpowers.

(b)   Hannibal's Invasion and Tactical Brilliance:

Hannibal's daring crossing of the Alps and subsequent victories in Italy stunned Rome, showcasing his strategic genius and resourcefulness. His

innovative tactics, notably demonstrated at the Battle of Cannae in 216 BCE, underscored his military prowess and posed a formidable challenge to Rome's hegemony. Hannibal's ability to win the support of his Italian allies further strengthened his position, threatening Rome's control over its territories.[3] (Bellón Ruiz, 2017)

(c)　　　Scipio Africanus: Architect of Rome's Redemption:

In response to Hannibal's threat, Rome rallied under the leadership of Publius Cornelius Scipio, later known as Scipio Africanus. Recognizing the need for innovative strategies, Scipio adopted guerrilla warfare tactics and sought to undermine Carthaginian support in Spain and North Africa. Through diplomatic finesse and military acumen, Scipio orchestrated Rome's redemption, culminating in the decisive victory at the Battle of Zama in 202 BCE. This victory not only secured Rome's dominance in the Mediterranean but also marked the end of Carthaginian expansion and influence in the region.

(d)　　　The Legacy of the Second Punic War:

The Second Punic War left an indelible mark on both Carthage and Rome, shaping their futures in profound ways. For Carthage, the defeat signaled the decline of its power and influence, paving the way for Rome's ascendancy as the preeminent naval and military power in the Mediterranean. Rome, on the other hand, emerged from the conflict with a newfound sense of resilience and determination, setting the stage for its eventual transformation into a formidable empire. The lessons learned from the Second Punic War would influence military strategy and diplomacy for generations to come, leaving a lasting legacy on the course of Western civilization.[2] (Your guide to the Punic Wars)

Third Punic War

Introduction:

The Third Punic War erupted amidst renewed tensions between Carthage and Rome, sparked by Carthage's conflict with Numidia, a Roman ally. In 149 BCE, the influential Roman senator Cato the Elder seized upon this opportunity to advocate for the annihilation of Carthage, igniting a fervor within the Roman Senate with his impassioned rallying cry, "Carthago delenda est" ("Carthage must be destroyed"). This call to arms heralded the commencement of hostilities as Rome resolved to bring an end to the Carthaginian menace once and for all.

(a)   Carthage's Siege and Destruction:

The Third Punic War unfolded as a brutal siege of Carthage, lasting for three grueling years. Despite valiant resistance from the Carthaginians, who fought with unwavering determination and resourcefulness, they were ultimately overwhelmed by the superior military might of Rome. In 146 BCE, the Roman general Scipio Aemilianus orchestrated the final assault on Carthage, breaching its formidable walls and subjecting the city to a merciless sack. The once-mighty metropolis was reduced to rubble, its inhabitants either slaughtered or enslaved, and its territory annexed by Rome.

(b)   Legacy and Aftermath:

The destruction of Carthage in the Third Punic War marked the end of an era and the dawn of a new epoch dominated by Roman hegemony. With its annihilation, Rome emerged as the unrivaled master of the Mediterranean world, its supremacy unchallenged by any external power. The obliteration of Carthage served as a grim reminder of the brutal realities of power politics

and conquest, leaving an enduring legacy that reverberated throughout the annals of history.

(c)   The Last Showdown:

The Third Punic War, occurring from 149 BCE to 146 BCE, was the culmination of centuries of enmity between Carthage and Rome, ultimately resulting in the complete destruction of Carthage and the consolidation of Roman hegemony in the Mediterranean.

Tensions between Carthage and Rome were reignited when Carthage became embroiled in a conflict with Numidia, a Roman ally. In 149 BCE, Roman senator Cato the Elder seized upon this opportunity to advocate for the annihilation of Carthage, famously declaring "Carthago delenda est" ("Carthage must be destroyed"). The Roman Senate, stirred by Cato's impassioned rhetoric and wary of any potential Carthaginian resurgence, acceded to his demands, thus precipitating the onset of the Third Punic War.

The Third Punic War commenced with a Roman siege of Carthage, which endured for three years. Despite valiant resistance from the Carthaginians, who fought with desperation and resourcefulness, they were ultimately overwhelmed by the superior military might of Rome. In 146 BCE, the Roman general Scipio Aemilianus breached the walls of Carthage, leading to a merciless sack of the city. The once-great metropolis was razed to the ground, its inhabitants slaughtered or enslaved, and its territory annexed by Rome.

The obliteration of Carthage marked the end of a civilization that had long been a rival to Rome. With its destruction, Rome solidified its dominance in the Mediterranean, unchallenged by any external power. The annihilation of Carthage also served as a stark warning to any other would-be

adversaries of Rome, demonstrating the ruthless lengths to which the Roman Republic would go to preserve its supremacy.

The legacy of the Third Punic War reverberated throughout history, shaping the geopolitical landscape of the ancient world for centuries to come. It underscored the brutal realities of power politics and conquest, leaving an indelible mark on Western civilization.[1] (Mark, 2018)

Conclusion

There were other goals to the more than a century-long Punic Wars than only territorial expansion. They battled for cultural legacy, economic superiority, and ideological disagreements as well. Every war revealed the strengths and vulnerabilities of both Rome and Carthage, proving their ability to change, innovate, and endure under trying conditions.

Apart from their military aspects, the Punic Wars had profound political, social, and economic consequences. Prolonged military engagements severely taxed the resources of Rome and Carthage, causing political unrest and socioeconomic upheaval. Carthage, whose economy was mostly dependent on trade, suffered significant financial setbacks as a result of war-related land destruction and interruption of its trading routes. Conversely, the consolidation of power and wealth within the Roman Republic was the outcome of Rome's growing thirst for conquest, which was driven by its ambition for expansion.

Moreover, the conflicts brought about important changes in both civilizations' socioeconomic systems. Riches from conquered areas were much appreciated by the aristocracy of ancient Rome and the socioeconomic gap between the patricians and the plebeians was increased. The political stability of the city-state was threatened and the commercial economy of Carthage deteriorated more quickly as a result of its wars.

Since they changed the Mediterranean terrain and shaped the balance of power in the region for many centuries, the Punic Wars had long-lasting geopolitical ramifications. Rome consolidated its position as the leading force in the Western Mediterranean after defeating Carthage, expanding its rule over the territory that Carthage had previously controlled and founding colonies all over. The final shift of Rome from a republican government to a vast empire spanning many cultures and areas was made possible by this dominating influence.

In addition, by encouraging cultural interaction and commerce, the Punic Wars had a long-lasting effect on Mediterranean culture. The combination of Roman and Carthaginian military tactics, architectural styles, and cultural traditions improved the local fabric and laid the groundwork for the successful growth of Greco-Roman civilization in the years that followed.

In essence, the Punic Wars were important incidents that shaped the course of Western civilization rather than separate conflicts. Their influence is felt even now in historical accounts, reminding us of the complexities of power, ambition, and the cost of armed combat to mankind.

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THE TRAGEDY OF THE BLACK DEATH

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Abstract

The Black Death, or the Black Plague, was a disease caused by bacteria, a disease that ravaged the European and Asian landscape killing well over two thirds of the population in Europe alone, and leaving its survivors scarred with piles of bodies lying about on the street. We have all heard of the bubonic plague, but not everyone knows the severity of it and how impactful it was both on the culture of Europe at that time and how important it is for us, today. In this paper I want to shed light upon a couple of aspects of the plague, from its impact on the population, to a small medical breakdown, to the artistic consequences it had upon the world. I consider that all of these are required to fully grasp the effects it had on European culture in its entirety. And so, I want to start this discussion with a few questions. What is the Black Death, how did it spread, and why?

Keywords

Bubonic plague, Black Death.

Introduction

The Black Death is not the name of the microbe itself, but of the pandemic that it has caused. Induced by a bacterium, Yersinia Pestis, the disease had a tragic life expectancy of only nine to ten days. With a 30% to 90% mortality rate if left untreated [1], anyone who had this knew they were about to meet their demise within the next days. But to understand the severity and ultimately the impact on the culture, we must first break down how it worked, medically.

The plague is mostly an umbrella term for the three types of plagues that exist: bubonic plague, septicemic plague, pneumonic plague. I will break down the symptoms and manifestations of each one but will focus primarily on the bubonic variant of the plague, as it is more influential than the other ones, portraying the "buboes" widely associated with the plague.Scientists can research the fundamentals of conscious systems that are hardly ever able to be studied in "normal" states thanks to the way that psychedelics lessen defensive and ego limits and rigidity. Drugs are heavily conditioned by the meanings we assign to them in various contexts. They are neither fundamentally good nor fundamentally bad. They are tools.

THE BUBONIC PLAGUE: It affected predominantly the lymphatic system, associated with our immune system and complementary to the circulatory system. The infection took place at the spot of an infected flea bite and spread to the nearest lymph node to multiply. Between one to seven days, symptoms akin to the flu - headaches, vomiting, and fevers in specific - affect the host. It slowly progresses into chills, seizures, heavy breathing, vomiting blood, and the infamous buboes, swollen lymph nodes where the bacterium reproduces, which are very painful and slowly necrotize as the bacteria provokes bleeding inside the nodes. This gives them the black color that is associated with the plague.

THE SEPTICEMIC PLAGUE: It can occur through two means – the bacterium has contact with the blood of the host, or through an untreated case of bubonic plague. The name septicemic implies that the bacterium has entered the bloodstream and proliferates within the blood. The plague inhibits the blood's ability to clot, which leads to bleeding under the skin, blood in vomit or spit, and tissue death of extremities such as hands, feet, and nose. This leads to additional infamous plague imagery: swollen, black hands/feet. Untreated, this disease is fatal.

THE PNEUMONIC PLAGUE: It can occur through inhalation of the bacterium, or through an untreated case of bubonic or septicemic plague. It starts like the flu, rapidly develops pneumonia, and can lead to respiratory failure or shock. Additional symptoms include coughing blood and chest pains. Untreated, this is fatal within even 36 hours. Unlike the other two, this enables the bacteria to spread from human to human, through airborne transmission (coughing).

With the symptoms laid down, let's see how these fatal combinations affected over 25 million people on Europe alone.

Research methodology

The study of the determinants, occurrence and distribution of health and disease is labeled epidemiology, and in the following paragraphs I will make some remarks akin to this. To understand cultural impact, we must understand how the disease spread, which in turn will allow us to see how it ravaged throughout Europe and left the horrid marks of which we can still see the effects today.

The next section will be divided into three parts: Spreading of the plague, two of the plague outbreaks – Plague of Justinian and the Black Death, and cultural reactions.

Results and discussion

Spreading of the plague

I will split this into two sections: micro spreading and macro spreading.

MICRO SPREADING: This is how the disease spreads on a smaller level, as the name implies. By this I am referring to rats and fleas.

The main carriers of this plague were the rats. Due to their blood, they were able to carry the disease for long periods of time without any immediate adverse effects on them [2]. The thread connecting rat-to-human transmission is fleas. Due to the rise of urban populations, rats and fleas were closer than ever to humans.

Fleas didn't attack humans; this might be a misconception. Fleas stuck to feeding off the rats, which in return infected the fleas. However, two aspects can lead to flea-human transmission. The first one, which is the rat population declining slowly provokes fleas to find other means of feeding. The second one, which is more important, is the effects of the bacterium on the flea itself. Yersinia pestis blocks the gut of the flea and reproduces inside it. Unable to feed, it gets more and more hungry and starts seeking any means of feeding including humans, which explains the first contact. [3]

This information is crucial, because these two beings are nowadays commonly associated with plagues, filth and diseases, and it is very likely that this is one of the main reasons. Imagery of diseases often portrays rats running about in the streets, and we all know them as disease carrying animals that we should stay away from.

MACRO SPREADING: This is how the disease spread around the world. While this is mostly about Europe, the pandemics affected Asia and Africa as well, and Europe isn't just a single country. From the Black Sea, to London, this disease marked a path in graves and bodies.

A main cause for the spreading was the increase of international trade, which saw a big part of Europe and Asia connect routes via ships or ground. The medieval population was growing in numbers. A consequence of the increased travel accessibility was the possibility of war waged from afar. Wars imply cadavers, and they in turn imply rats and fleas.

Now we will dive into two of the three major pandemics, the final pieces of the puzzle needed to finally detail the impact of this pestilence upon Europe.

3.2.   Outbreak

THE PLAGUE OF JUSTINIAN (541-549; reoccurrence until ~700 AD):

Named after the Byzantine Emperor Justinian I, the plague of Justinian is a pandemic that affected Constantinople, Roman Egypt and Northen Europe with an estimated death toll of 15-100 million, equivalent to 25-60% of Europe's population at the time.

It is presumed that the disease was spread by rats which arrived in the cities by ships of grain, imported to satisfy food needs. The city of Constantinople required mass amounts of food to keep its population fed, and thus imported from grains from Egypt, with a thriving population of rats and in turn, fleas. [4]

According to firsthand accounts, there was no room to bury the dead and as such the bodies were left nearby on the streets. The city smelled of death and estimations were around 10.000 people dying daily, a figure now considered widely exaggerated considering the hysteria provoked by the plague.

Even so, the ruthless emperor did not refrain from collecting his annual tax, demanding the same amount as well as the amount owed by the dead neighbors. Farmers could not take care of the crops anymore due to most of them dying, and the price of whatever grain was left quickly rose. Justinian had to change legislation to counteract the decline of revenue from the plague.

The consequences were even more severe on Europe as a whole, as the plague helped with the fall of the Byzantine Empire, impacting it at a very important moment: the retaking of Italy and the Mediterranean.

This is regarded as the first epidemic, historically recorded, of Yersinia pestis. Epidemiologically speaking, the origin of the plague was in fact Asia, more specifically, China [5]. Some contest this, suggesting that the plague originated from sub-Saharan Africa, aligning more with how the first epidemic started. It is estimated that, at its peak, there were around 5000 [6] daily deaths in Constantinople culminating at a death of 40% of the city's population, with subsequent outbreak taking place in the following centuries.

THE BLACK DEATH (1346-1353; reoccurrence until 18th century):

The second pandemic, the deadliest one, is also in the title of this work. This is the deadliest pandemic in human history, responsible for millions of deaths and countless empty cities.

One of the causes that lead to the rise of the disease once again was the lack of hygiene during that period. Medieval London was filled with animals freely roaming the streets, and excrement being present throughout the city. [7]

It started in 1347, when traders from Crimea entered Europe. They were under siege from Mongols, who used infected bodies as armament for catapults, spreading the plague to the traders. Fleeing, they arrived in Constantinople, then Sicily, Pisa and Marseilles. From there, it struck throughout Europe in the following years, including Spain, Portugal and England by 1348. In the following two years it arrived in Germany and Scandinavia as well. However, places with less established trade routes such as isolated parts of Belgium and the Netherlands. It is also said that common malnutrition also weakened the body's immune response.

Deaths include:

-        Half of Paris (100.000 dead).

-        80% of Florence.

-        60% of Hamburg and Bremen.

-        62.000 Londoners.

-        170.000 settlements reduced to 40.000 by 1450.

Mass graves have been found, which allowed scientists to expand on the epidemiology of the plague. It is estimated that around 75 million to 200 million people in Eurasia died, with numbers for Europe varying from account to account, starting at 31% of the population, up to a possible 80%.

Surprisingly, immunity was proven to be developed by the body. It observed how a third of the population contracted the disease and most died, and in subsequent occurrences, only a half contracted the plague and only some died, and so on. This shows that the body was able to produce an immune response to prevent infection. [8]

The plague persisted throughout the centuries, up until the 18th century. It ravaged the entirety of Europe, specifically Italy, France and London. The Great Plague of London was another reoccurrence that killed an additional 100.000 of the estimated 460.000 people living in London at that time.

It is also said that the plague could've been a factor in the occurrence of the Renaissance. Italy was hit very badly, and this could've provoked an increase of thoughts regarding mortality and our place on Earth, rather than spirituality.

3.3.   Cultural reactions

We can observe how the culture at that time reacted to this unexpected phenomenon. This will include both medical and scientific reactions as well as religious ones. I consider that it is best described through art. In an illustrated manuscript from the 14th century (https://www.thecollector.com/black-death-medieval-art-and-artists/), devils are shooting arrows towards common people which are laid one on top of another on the streets, shot down. This elaborates the common belief at that time, that the plague is rather the divine punishment of God, striking down sinners. Depending on the religion, this was either wrath manifested or martyrdom, calling people to heaven. As such, some were reluctant to try and treat the disease, believing it's divine and not something else.

Alternatively, the goal of the picture is to instill fear in the common folk, telling them to not sin such that they do not suffer of this plague, thought of as God's punishment.

In the painting Persecution of the Jews, from a manuscript by Gilles li Muisis, (https://www.thecollector.com/black-death-medieval-art-and-artists/), Jews are shown as being sacrificed, or better said massacred, to stop the Black Death from spreading. As said previously, the plague was seen more as the wrath of God rather than a disease, or a disease going around because of an angered God. Christians believed that Jews were responsible for the plague, for not believing that Jesus was the Messiah, angering God. Religious feuds like these are characteristic of the 14th century. Besides art, certain treatments or figures have become "representative" of the Black Death, and the times of the past, showing how us humans dealt with such a violent threat. I will now explain some of these, although for one of them I think an explanation might not even be needed!

Doctors attempted to treat patients through different means. At that time, medicine was not so advanced. Prayer was the main method of healing, but doctors still tried different means, and this is one of them. It was believed that if the buboes were burst by a lance, they would alleviate the pain and symptoms. In truth this did little to help the patient, likely provoking additional pain, lowering the immune system's ability to respond to all the symptoms happening at once.

Another treatment used by plague doctors at the time was bloodletting. It involved penetrating an artery or specific blood vessels, with the goal of letting all the "bad blood" leave the body. At this time, besides the explanation of God's wrath, a pestilence was also considered. Some thought that there was a specific "miasma" in the air, spreading the disease from person to person. In hindsight, this wasn't completely wrong, as the blood of victims contained bacteria, pneumonic plague was easily spread around and hygiene wasn't exactly considered, leading to dead bodies in the streets and little regard for protection from the airborne bacteria. Bloodletting was

supposed to rid the body of the miasma that had entered. However, considering the body's inability to coagulate blood under septicemic plague, this most likely led to a lot of victims bleeding out.

The plague doctors can be recognized by anyone and have become representative of the Black Death. Contrary to popular belief, the mask wasn't created for the doctors, but was in fact used in Italian theaters beforehand, portraying doctors. The mask had medicinal herbs, along with some other pretty smelling flowers placed inside its beak, supposed to help with the "miasma" that was going around and infecting people. Surprisingly, it might have helped, as a mask could protect even a little against airborne bacteria.

The hat was used to indicate the profession, and the sticks were used to remove the clothes of the patients without touching them, as well as point to areas that needed attention from other doctors.

Conclusions

The Black Death had dramatic impacts on culture, especially back in the 14th century.

In a period where spirituality and religion were an explanation to anything, such an advanced threat could only be explained by the anger of the Gods. And rightfully so, considering millions of deaths is something we've only seen as late as the World Wars, which is a grim statistic to be compared to. To me, the concept of a disease would've been incomprehensible to the 14th century mind, considering the reliance on religion, and the desperate acts of sacrificing people to 'please' a deity by ridding the world of sinners.

On the other side of the coin, I consider the attempt at medicine a fascinating part of the plague. While primitive, they were still attempts and some seemed to know that this might've been more than just the wrath of God. It would not be a stretch to consider the masks of the plague doctors as a beginning of self-protection measures. With hindsight, protecting not only the skin but the face as well, is an interesting attempt at avoiding disease, considering the herbs to block the 'miasma' which can be substituted for a mask [9]. Additionally, a method of quarantine was implemented in a later outbreak in Croatia, where a thirty-day quarantine period was needed for new arrivals in the city from any plague affected areas. [10]

Another interesting aspect is the amount of involvement the plague could've had on the Renaissance, a very important event in the development of European culture. While not the sole factor, it is impressive that a lot of the tragical consequences of the plague, from the social to the economical and religious changes resulted in an almost perfect landscape for this 'revolution' to take place. Some that I can name are an increase in Greek scholars after the fall of the Byzantine Empire, as well as the destabilization of feudalism. [11]

All in all, the Black Death cannot be seen anyhow else than just a tragic part of history that only coincidence and the unstoppable march of time somehow turned it into quite literally a world reborn, with vastly different views upon life and our mortality. The effects can still be seen today, with us instantly recognizing figures such as the plague doctor, the danger and fear of disease we perceive when seeing a rat or fleas, and the simple but powerful words that have been used to name this plague, this pestilence, the Black Death.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PUNIC WARS IN THE ROMANIZATION OF EUROPE

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„The victor is not victorious if the vanquished does not consider himself so."

\- Quintus Ennius

Abstract

The Punic Wars, a series of three conflicts between Rome and Carthage from 264 BCE to 146 BCE, played a crucial role in the Romanization of Europe. These wars marked the transformation of Rome from a regional power in the Italian Peninsula into a dominant force in the Mediterranean, paving the way for its broader expansion and influence across Europe.

"The Punic Wars were perhaps the greatest and most significant armed struggle in all of antiquity. Over the course of more than a century the two most powerful nations in the Mediterranean battled for supremacy. The

forces involved, and the casualties suffered by both sides, were far greater than in any wars fought before the modern era. […] Rome rose from a small parochial power to become the mighty military machine that would dominate Europe and North Africa for the next five centuries." - Adrian Goldsworthy, The Punic Wars [1]

Keywords

Punic Wars, Romanization, Mediterranean domination, supremacy

Methodology of research

1.   Introduction: This section introduces the Punic Wars, outlining their historical significance and the lasting effects on european civilization. It describes the geopolitical rivalry between Carthage and Rome, focusing on the strategic value of Sicily, the Iberian Peninsula and northern Africa, while emphasizing themes of power, ambition, and conquest that defined this chapter of history.

2.   Literature Review: A thorough examination of academic sources, primary documents, and historical accounts concerning the Punic Wars. This step involves collecting information on pivotal battles, significant personalities, and the socio-political context before, during, and after each war. The use of ancient texts, inscriptions, and archaeological evidence ensures a detailed and accurate study.

3.   Data Gathering: This phase involves compiling information, statistics, and observations from multiple sources to create a comprehensive story of the Punic Wars and their geopolitical effects. It includes military tactics, diplomatic strategies, economic factors, and above all societal effects and cultural interactions between Carthage and Rome. Primary and secondary sources are carefully organized to aid in detailed analysis.

4.   Critical Analysis: The collected data is subjected to critical analysis, identifying patterns, trends, and cause-effect relationships in the context of the Punic Wars. This involves exploring major themes, assessing the importance of key events, and evaluating the roles of key figures like Hannibal Barca, Scipio Africanus, and Cato the Elder. The analysis extends to wider implications for Mediterranean geopolitics, military tactics, and cultural development.

5.   Historiographical Perspective: This section provides a historiographical perspective to place the paper's interpretations within the broader academic discussion of the Punic Wars. It involves comparing and contrasting different historical analyses, theories, and methodologies used by historians to study this period. By exploring a range of viewpoints, this paper aims to offer a balanced view of the Punic Wars.

6.   Theoretical Framework: Theoretical concepts from military history, political science, and cultural studies are used to interpret the complexities of conflict, power dynamics, and identity formation during the Punic Wars. Themes like hegemony, imperialism, nationalism, and cultural diffusion are examined to explain the multifaceted nature of these ancient conflicts.

7.   Synthesis and Implications: This section summarizes the key findings and insights from the study of the Punic Wars, highlighting their enduring impact on Western civilization. It discusses how these conflicts influenced military strategy, statecraft, cultural exchange, and the rise of Rome as a major imperial force. The implications for understanding broader trends in conflict and conquest throughout history are also considered.

8.   References and Citations: A detailed list of all sources used in the paper is provided, following proper citation practices to acknowledge prior scholarship and maintain academic credibility. This section ensures that all references are appropriately documented and accessible for further research.

Results

A. Overview

Carthage

Carthage was an ancient city located in present-day Tunisia in North Africa. It was founded by the Phoenicians, a civilization originating from the eastern Mediterranean, particularly from the city of Tyre, located in modern-day Lebanon. The date for the founding of Carthage is considered to be 814 BCE, according to Roman historians, however it is possible for it to be dated further back in history. [2]

The Phoenicians were known for their extensive trading networks and naval expertise. In its early days, Carthage served as a trading port and a strategic outpost for the Phoenicians in the western region of the Mediterranean. It rapidly developed into a significant economic and political power, eventually becoming the capital of the empire that holds its name.

Carthage slowly separated from its origins, creating its own distinctive culture and political structures, overtaking their ancestors in the race to power. The city's strategic location along the Mediterranean coast allowed it to control trade routes and build a powerful navy, whilst playing a major disadvantage in the agricultural landscape, as opposed to their european rivals.

Carthage is best remembered for its conflict with the Roman Republic, namely a series of wars fought between 264 BCE and 146 BCE. The Punic Wars ultimately resulted in the conquest of Carthage by the Roman Republic, ending its decades of control over the gateway to Europe and Africa, the Mediterranean Sea.

Despite its eventual demise, Carthage left behind a significant legacy, having its remnants diverge into new cultures and civilizations, particularly in terms of trade practices, naval ingenuity and above all, a hope of revolt against an oppressive empire, which sought to exploit and enslave its people.

Rome

Rome was an ancient city located in present-day Italy, near the Tiber River in the central-western part of the Italian Peninsula. According to legends, it was founded in 753 BCE by Romulus and Remus, twin brothers raised by a she-wolf. Romulus was also the first Roman king, having murdered his brother due to their disagreement over who should be the leader of Rome.

Rome developed from a small male-dominated community into the most powerful European civilization of the time through military conquest, strategic alliances, and a modern and complex political system. It transitioned from a monarchy to a republic in the late 6th century BCE, due to the severe corruption of their kings. By consequence, Rome developed a new governing style, which served as a bridge between democracy and aristocracy. This political structure allowed for the participation of civilians in the political system, creating the base for a strong sense of Roman identity and patriotism.

The Roman Republic's military prowess and engineering skills led to rapid territorial gains throughout the Italian Peninsula. What came as a disadvantage later was their division between the conquerors and the conquered, the latter being prone to rebel against their masters. Rome's legions, known for their discipline and adaptability, played a crucial role in their military campaigns. On the Italian Peninsula, Rome reigned supreme, having unmatched strategy and technology for the time, as opposed to the tribal latins and even the greek city-states. The Romans also established colonies and forged alliances with its more notable neighbors, further solidifying their control over the peninsula.

Rome's strategic location and expanding influence made it a central hub for trade and cultural exchange in the Mediterranean. The city's architecture, law, and engineering achievements became renowned, with iconic structures like the Roman Forum, the Aqueducts and many others. By the 1st century BCE, Rome transitioned from a republic into an empire, eventually forming a vast territory stretching across Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East, establishing itself as one of history's most enduring and influential civilizations. Its footprint in history lived past its untimely demise under the young emperor Romulus, whose empire fell at the hand of the germanic king Odoacer; leaving the Eastern Roman Empire, later renamed to the Byzantine Empire, as the only significant part of the fallen giant. The roman influence stuck to parts of the Iberian Peninsula and northern Africa, but they were soon absorbed into the germanic tribes of the Visigoths and Vandals.

Some ruling aspects which Rome and Carthage had in common are the governing style, both being semi-democratic republics, having their own Senate and Judiciary. The title of „king", however, was hated by the romans due to their previous incidents with corruption. One dreadful cause of the one year term that the consuls served, however, was the search for glory and prestige in a short span of time. The most reliable source of prestige were usually military victories, hence, romans had an inherent drive to conquer and expand as much as possible, partaking in an incredible ammount of offensive wars. The roman spirit was considered to be unbreakable, which lead to their victories in the Punic Wars, despite the numerous catastrophes they have encountered. (eg. The Battle of Canae where 25% of the male population aged 18-50 had perished, The mediterranean storms which lead to aproximately 250 thousand deaths etc.).

Rome's offensive approach was driven by its desire to gain control of key territories, especially Sicily, which was a crucial strategic and economic region. Despite Carthage's superior naval technology and experience, Rome quickly adapted by building a large fleet and developing innovative naval tactics. Rome's relentless pursuit of victory, commitment to expanding its

territories, and ability to overcome initial ddisadvantages and even catastrophes ultimately led to Carthage's defeat and the Roman conquest of Sicily which marked the exchange of power in the Mediterranean region. Carthage, on the other hand had two major factors which led to their defeat, namely their overly defensive nature, especially on the land-based battlefield, where they were no match for Rome in terms of experience; alongside their reliance on mercenaries, as to not lose their own people and allow their trading practices to continue during war time. [3]

B. The economic aspects of Carthage and Rome

Carthage's economic system

As mentioned earlier, one of the key differences between Rome and Carthage is their focus on the external sphere. Some key aspects that highlight the trading and economic aspects of Carthage:

I.   Strategic Location and Trade Routes: Carthage's location on the coast of North Africa, spanning from current day Morroco to the eastern borders of current day Lybia, was a strategic advantage. It served as a gateway for two major Mediterranean trade routes, providing access to Europe, North Africa, and even the Middle East. This allowed Carthage to control all trade in the region, allowing for a thriving economy and unrivaled prosperity in the Mediterranean.

II.   Diverse Trading Partners: Carthage's trade network served as a middle ground for every region that neighbours the Mediterranean Sea. It had trading connections with a high variety of cultures and regions, including Egypt, Greece, Italy, Iberia, the Levant, and West Africa. These connections led to a very diverse inventory of goods into Carthage, making it a thriving commercial spot.

III.   Exports and Imports: Some of the exported goods of Carthage include: agricultural products, textiles, pottery, metalwork, and luxury items. On the other hand, the carthaginians imported raw materials, metals, precious stones, ivory, and exotic goods from distant lands. These imports facilitated the production of high-quality manufactured goods and luxury items, which were later exported to their trading partners or used within the Carthaginian empire.

IV.   Innovative Maritime Technology: Carthage was a pioneer in maritime technology, with a strong focus on shipbuilding and navigation. The Carthaginians developed advanced ship designs, such as the quinquereme, which inspired the roman version which also included the „corvus" (a mobile bridge that latched on to a neighbouring ship, creating a solid deck for the roman soldiers to march on), and were skilled in building large trading fleets and warships. This technological expertise allowed them to maintain a dominant position in Mediterranean trade and establish colonies and trading posts in key locations.

V.   Commercial Institutions and Financial Systems: Carthage had a well-developed system of commerce and finance. Its financial system relied heavily on exports, and later the extraction of silver ore from the Iberian Peninsula. The Carthaginians were known for their business acumen, and many of their practices influenced later economic systems in the Mediterranean region.

VI.   Carthaginian Colonies and Expansion: Carthage established a network of colonies and trading posts throughout the Mediterranean, including in Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica, and the Iberian Peninsula. These colonies served as important trading spots and sources of raw materials, especially in the case of the Iberian Peninsula. The Carthaginian presence in these regions also allowed them to control strategic points along key trade routes. Later on, after conquering most of current day Spain, Carthage founded the largest silver mining location in the region, which served as a means of paying war reparations to the romans after the first Punic War. [2]

Rome's economic system

During the Republic period (circa 509–27 BCE), Rome's economy was characterized by a combination of agriculture, trade, and a flourishing market that facilitated the expansion of Roman influence across the Italian Peninsula. Several key factors defined the economic landscape of the Roman Republic, contributing to its growth and stability during this era:

I.   Agricultural Base: Agriculture was the backbone of the Roman economy. The Roman countryside was dominated by small farming communities, in which the citizens grew staple crops such as wheat, barley, and legumes, along with olives and grapes for oil and wine production. This agricultural base provided the food supply needed to sustain Rome's population, its exports and its lengthy military campaigns.

II.   Land Ownership and Latifundia: As Rome expanded through conquest, it acquired many new regions. Over time, a shift occurred from small family-owned farms to large estates known as latifundia. These estates were typically owned by wealthy patricians and staffed with slaves or tenant farmers. These factors contributed to social and economic changes, leading to greater wealth disparities and notable social tensions during the late Republic.

III.   Slavery: Slavery played a significant role in the Roman Republic's economy. Slaves were used extensively in agriculture, mining, and even domestic work, providing a source of cheap labor. The influx of slaves from Rome's military conquests greatly increased the labor pool, enabling the expansion of large estates and the development of other economic activities.

IV.   Trade and Commerce: As Rome's influence grew, trade and commerce became increasingly important. Rome's strategic location near the

Tiber River allowed for efficient transportation and communication within the Italian Peninsula and beyond. The Roman Republic developed a network of roads and infrastructure to facilitate trade, enabling the movement of goods and resources across its territories. Rome's trade networks extended across the Mediterranean, connecting with regions like Greece, Egypt, North Africa, and the Iberian Peninsula.

V.   Coinage and Monetary Economy: The introduction of coinage in the Roman Republic contributed to the development of a more sophisticated market economy. Coins like the denarius became widely used for trade and commerce, facilitating transactions and enabling Rome to maintain a stable economy. The use of coinage also allowed for the collection of taxes and the funding of public projects and the military.

VI.   Military Expansion and Spoils: Rome's military conquests provided significant economic benefits through the acquisition of new territories, tribute, and spoils of war. The expansion of Roman influence across the Italian Peninsula and beyond brought new resources and wealth into the Republic, which further fueled its growth and economic stability. [1]

C. The military prowess of Carthage and Rome

Military aspects of Carthage

Carthage's military traditions were deeply rooted in its history as a Phoenician colony with a strong emphasis on maritime prowess and strategic alliances. As a major trading empire, Carthage's military was designed to protect its commercial interests and maintain control over its vast network of colonies and trading outposts across the Mediterranean. The Carthaginian navy was among the most powerful of its time, boasting advanced ship designs and a formidable reputation for naval warfare. This naval strength allowed Carthage

to control key maritime trade routes and project power across the sea. In terms of land forces, Carthage employed a diverse array of troops, often relying on mercenaries from various regions, including Iberians, Gauls, Numidians, and Greeks. [3]

This reliance on mercenary armies was a notable characteristic of Carthaginian military tradition, reflecting their pragmatic approach to warfare and the use of diplomacy and trade to secure military alliances. Carthage also fostered exceptional military leaders, with figures like Hannibal Barca demonstrating innovative tactics and strategic brilliance, particularly during the Second Punic War against Rome. Overall, Carthage's military traditions were a blend of naval dominance, strategic alliances, and reliance on a multicultural army, which contributed to the city's enduring influence in the ancient Mediterranean world.

Carthaginian military leaders were severely punished for failure, hence their reluctance to engage the romans in direct combat, usually relying on attrition. Their inexperience in land battles showed very early on, as they were unable to properly manouver their superior mounted units, usually opting for fights on uneven terrain, where they came at a severe dissadvantage. They later hired a spartan strategist, who reformed their army, allowing them to defend their capital from the roman armies during the first Punic War.

While Carthage's reliance on a mercenary army provided flexibility and access to diverse fighting styles, it also had several inherent disadvantages:

I.   Loyalty and Trust: Mercenaries, by definition, are hired soldiers motivated by financial incentives rather than loyalty or allegiance to a particular cause or nation. This can lead to issues with trust and

dependability, as mercenaries may not exhibit the same commitment to a battle or cause as traditional soldiers with deep ties to their state.

II.   Costs: Maintaining a mercenary army can be expensive, particularly during prolonged conflicts or wars. Mercenaries typically require competitive wages and benefits to keep them engaged, leading to significant financial burdens for the state that employs them.

III.   Unreliable in Crisis: Mercenaries might be less reliable in critical moments, such as when pay is delayed or when faced with high-risk situations. Their primary motivation—financial compensation—could lead them to desert or switch sides if it seems more profitable or safer.

IV.   Weak Cohesion and Discipline: Unlike a standing army composed of citizens or individuals with shared cultural or national ties, a mercenary force might lack the cohesion and discipline essential for effective military operations. This disparity can affect overall coordination and unity during battle.

V.   Vulnerability to Manipulation: An enemy could exploit the mercenaries' financial motives by offering better terms, leading to defections or mutinies. In the case of Carthage, there were instances of mercenaries revolting or shifting loyalties when their demands for pay or conditions were not met.

VI.   Reduced National Identity and Patriotism: Mercenary forces often have little to no connection with the national identity or patriotic fervor that can drive traditional armies. This can impact morale and the willingness to fight for broader national interests.

VII.   Potential for Civil Unrest: The presence of large numbers of mercenaries in a society can lead to social tensions and even civil unrest, especially if the mercenaries are not paid or treated fairly. Carthage experienced this firsthand during the Mercenary War (240-238 BCE), when unpaid mercenaries revolted, causing significant internal conflict and destabilization. The mercenary war was a chaotic event which lead to Rome annexing the islands of Sardinia and Corsica, while also increasing the price of the war repparations that the carthaginians had to pay, from 3200 talents of silver, to 4400.

Thus, while mercenary armies could offer Carthage immediate and flexible military capabilities, these inherent disadvantages posed significant risks and challenges, especially during periods of extended conflict or internal strife.

Military aspects of Rome

Militarily, Rome was becoming more sophisticated and disciplined after the conquering of the Italian Peninsula. The Roman legions, with their flexible manipular structure, allowed for tactical adaptability on the battlefield. This military evolution was crucial as Rome engaged in the series of Samnite Wars, which culminated in Rome's dominance over the central and southern Italian Peninsula. By the early 3rd century BCE, Rome had also successfully faced external threats, such as the invasion by Pyrrhus of Epirus, demonstrating its ability to withstand and repel foreign incursions.

The Roman military during the Republic and early Empire periods was known for its structure, discipline, and adaptability, allowing Rome to

expand and maintain control over vast territories. However, certain aspects of the Roman military posed potential challenges:

I. Rigid Hierarchy: The Roman military operated under a strict hierarchical system, where orders flowed from the top down, providing clarity and discipline. While this structure ensured cohesion, it could also limit flexibility and creativity in the field. If commanders lacked initiative or misinterpreted orders, this rigidity could hinder a quick response to evolving battlefield conditions. These flaws were most noticeable when fighting Hannibal, as most consuls failed to agree on a strategy, usually engaging in chaotic skirmishes which favored the carthaginians.

II. Cultural Homogeneity and Limited Diversity: The Roman legions were primarily composed of Roman citizens and, later, those granted citizenship through conquest or alliance. This homogeneity fostered unity and a strong sense of Roman identity. However, it could also lead to a lack of diverse perspectives or specialized skills that non-citizen forces might provide. This limitation could impact Rome's ability to adapt to different warfare styles and environments.

III. Inflexible Recruitment Practices: Roman military recruitment relied heavily on citizen soldiers, who were typically required to serve for a set period. This method worked well when Rome had a large pool of citizens to draw from, but as the Empire expanded and conflicts prolonged, maintaining this system became challenging. The inflexibility in recruitment could lead to a shortage of troops or over-reliance on allied forces and auxiliary units, impacting overall military effectiveness.

IV. Dependence on Conquest for Resources: Rome's military expansion was often driven by the need to acquire new territories and resources. This dependency on conquest to fuel the military and economy could create a cycle where continual expansion was necessary to maintain

stability. As Rome's territory grew, the cost of defending distant borders increased, putting additional pressure on the military to keep expanding.

V.   Potential for Corruption and Abuse of Power: The hierarchical nature of the Roman military, combined with the significant authority given to commanders, could lead to corruption and abuse of power. Military leaders with substantial autonomy might misuse their authority, leading to internal discord or even rebellion. This risk was particularly pronounced during periods of political instability or when military leaders became influential figures in Roman politics.

VI.   Logistical Challenges: The Roman military's vast reach created logistical challenges in terms of supplying and transporting troops across long distances. Maintaining a consistent supply chain for food, equipment, and other essentials was crucial for military success. However, disruptions to these logistics, whether from natural obstacles or enemy actions, could significantly impact Rome's ability to sustain its campaigns.

Aftermath and conclusions

The aftermath of the Punic Wars dramatically reshaped the power dynamics of the Mediterranean and had far-reaching consequences for the Roman Republic and the entire Mediterranean region. Following the decisive Third Punic War, in which Rome utterly destroyed Carthage, the Romans established a new level of dominance over the western Mediterranean, leading to significant shifts in political, economic, and cultural aspects in the region.

With Carthage's defeat, Rome gained control over vast territories, including Carthage's African holdings, which became the Roman province of Africa. This new province, with its strategic position, provided Rome with valuable resources, further strengthening its economic base. The annexation of other Carthaginian territories, such as Corsica, Sardinia, and parts of Iberia, also contributed to Rome's expansion and control over crucial trade routes, further facilitating Rome's economic growth and enabling more military campaigns.

The aftermath of the Punic Wars also had significant cultural implications. Rome's military success and territorial expansion further solidified the Roman identity and sense of superiority. As Rome's influence spread, so did its cultural values, language, and legal systems, contributing to the Romanization of conquered territories. The Latin language became more widely used, and Roman laws and administrative practices were now more clmmon in their newly acquired regions. [4]

Politically, the victory in the Punic Wars transformed Rome into a Mediterranean superpower, but it also introduced new challenges. The acquisition of vast territories and the wealth that came with it led to social and economic changes within the Roman Republic. The Roman elite became wealthier, and the increased reliance on slave labor from conquered territories contributed to social unrest and the widening gap between the rich and the poor. The need to maintain control over distant provinces and manage a growing empire created strains on Rome's political and military systems, foreshadowing future conflicts and internal instability.

Furthermore, the destruction of Carthage symbolized Rome's ruthlessness and determination to eliminate threats to its supremacy. The Roman Senate's relentless approach, epitomized by Cato the Elder's repeated call to "destroy Carthage" (Carthago delenda est), set a precedent for Rome's aggressive approach to dealing with rivals and competitors. This mentality of absolute domination would continue to influence Roman policies in the years to come.

In summary, the aftermath of the Punic Wars was a transformative period for Rome, marking its emergence as the preeminent power in the Mediterranean. The conquests and expansions that followed led to significant economic growth and cultural diffusion but also sowed the seeds for social and political challenges within the Roman Republic, setting the stage for the transition from Republic to Empire in the coming centuries.

Overall, the roman patriotism and sense of identity were key driving forces behind Rome's rise to power, setting it apart from Carthage. The Roman ethos was deeply rooted in a strong sense of duty, honor, and civic responsibility, embodied in the concept of "virtus"—a combination of courage, strength, and moral excellence. This sense of identity was cultivated through various institutions, including the family, the army, and public life. The Roman Republic encouraged active participation in governance through its system of magistrates, the Senate, and popular assemblies, fostering a collective sense of ownership in the state's destiny. Roman citizenship was highly valued, granting rights and privileges that tied individuals to the city and its interests. In contrast, Carthage, a city-state centered on commerce and maritime power, relied heavily on a mercenary army and diverse trading networks, with less emphasis on civic involvement and shared national identity. The Carthaginian focus on trade and business, while fostering a vibrant economy, led to a military structure which paled in comparison to the cohesive, citizen-based army of Rome. This difference in core values and civic engagement contributed to Rome's ability to mobilize vast citizen armies, driven by a sense of shared destiny and patriotism, while Carthage often struggled with issues of loyalty and internal unity. As a result, Rome's strong identity and commitment to its ideals played a crucial role in its victories over Carthage in the Punic Wars and its eventual rise to dominance in the Mediterranean, and later most of southern Europe and northern Africa.

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[3] The Fall of Carthage: The Punic Wars 265-146 BC - Adrian Goldsworthy

[4] The Cambridge Ancient History series

DEMOCRACY IN ACTION: EXPLORING ATHENIAN SOCIETY AND GOVERNANCE IN ANCIENT GREECE

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Abstract

This paper examines the evolution of Athenian democracy, focusing on its historical development, key principles, and lasting impact on political thought. By analyzing primary sources and modern scholarly literature, the study explores the context in which Athenian democracy emerged, its institutional framework, and its relevance to contemporary political discourse. The paper highlights the significance of Athenian democracy as a pioneering experiment in citizen participation and governance, shedding light on its enduring legacy and lessons for democratic theory and practice.

Keywords

Athenian democracy, Ancient Greece, Political institutions, Citizen participation, Governance

Introduction

Athenian democracy stands as a cornerstone of Western political thought, renowned for its innovative approach to citizen participation and governance. Originating in ancient Greece, Athenian democracy represented a radical departure from traditional forms of government, empowering citizens to actively engage in political decision-making. This paper seeks to explore the evolution of Athenian democracy, tracing its development from its inception to its eventual decline. By examining the historical context, institutional structures, and underlying principles of Athenian democracy, this study aims to provide insights into its significance and relevance to contemporary political discourse.

Historical context and emergence of Athenian democracy

Preceding political systems in Ancient Greece

During the Bronze Age, the Greek world was characterized by large kingdoms. However, following the 'dark age' of approximately 1000-800 BCE, the Greek world transformed into a landscape of numerous small communities. Particularly in the southern and eastern regions of the Greek mainland, the Aegean islands, and the west coast of Asia Minor, these communities adopted the form of poleis, or city-states, centered around a town and its surrounding land. Through a process known as synoecism, smaller poleis tended to merge and form larger ones, yet local allegiances and the desire for autonomy remained strong. Although many areas of Attica were deserted during this time, Athens persisted as one of the few inhabited sites, positioning itself for recovery.

The governance of Greek poleis initially rested with kings, often not markedly distinct from other prominent families emerging from the dark age's uncertainties. Eventually, rule by kings gave way to governance by officials

appointed annually from leading families. In some poleis, individuals from the fringe of ruling aristocracy exploited discontent to seize power as tyrants. However, within a few generations, the tyranny was overthrown, leading to regimes where affluent men capable of serving as 'hoplites' in the polis army wielded political influence. This transition marked the emergence of a 'middling' ethos in Greece, shifting away from aristocratic dominance. [1]

Social and economic factors contributing to the rise of democracy

Athenian direct democracy took root when Cleisthenes ousted the tyrant Hippias between 510-507 BCE, though democratic elements had been introduced earlier, notably by Solon in the early 6th century BCE. However, full-fledged democracy, marked by the rule of law, was formalized by Themistocles in 482 BCE with the enactment of his Naval Law or Decree, which initiated significant democratic mechanisms. This transformation propelled Athens from a predominantly land-based power to a maritime force, achieved through the construction of 200 new warships (triremes) between 482-481 BCE. Notably, the Athenian fleet played a pivotal role, comprising almost two-thirds of the combined Greek fleet that secured victory against the Persians at Salamis in 480 BCE, thereby safeguarding democracy. [2]

Peisistratus established a tyranny in 546 BC, which was eventually overthrown in 510, leading to the expulsion of his son Hippias from Athens. In the ensuing power struggle, Isagoras, an aristocrat, appeared to gain the upper hand over Cleisthenes, another aristocrat and member of the Alcmeonids family. However, Cleisthenes allied himself with the common people, or demos, proposing constitutional reforms aimed at broadening political rights. Seeking support, Isagoras enlisted the aid of oligarchic Sparta, known for its formidable military, to install him in office. A Spartan force arrived in Attica, seized control of the city, and ousted Cleisthenes and his followers. However, when the Spartans attempted to dissolve the legislative council and establish a government aligned with Isagoras' interests, they faced resistance from the Athenian demos. As a result, the Spartans were compelled to withdraw, allowing Cleisthenes to return in 508 and enact significant constitutional reforms that laid the foundation for democracy.

Key figures and events in the establishment of Athenian democracy

The establishment of Athenian democracy was shaped by key figures and events, including the reforms of Solon and Cleisthenes. However, the political transformation of Athens was accompanied by notable military successes, particularly in the battles of Marathon in 490 BCE and Salamis in 480 BCE, which established Athens as a formidable naval power. These victories marked a shift in the balance of political power within Athens, favoring the thetes, a poorer class previously excluded from public office, who now found employment as rowers in the navy. Under Athenian leadership, the Delian League was formed to counter Persian threats, eventually evolving into the Athenian League, with member states paying tribute to Athens for naval protection

Solon's legislative measures, known as the Seisachtheia, abolished debt slavery and reformed the legal system to promote fairness and justice. The initial significant transition toward democracy took place in 594 B.C. when Solon, an Athenian figure, was summoned to address the escalating social and economic tensions threatening the fabric of Athens. Solon's reform package included the annulment of all outstanding debts, the provision of citizens' rights to contest a magistrate's ruling before the assembly of their peers, and the prohibition of Athenian citizens being subjected to slavery as a means of debt repayment.

Solon's reforms were notable not for their complete embracement of democracy but for their progressive democratization. By outlawing debt servitude for Athenian citizens, Solon implicitly underscored the inherent value of Athenian citizenship, establishing a fundamental equality among citizens. Moreover, his restructuring of the aristocratic political framework into a wealth-based system facilitated social mobility. While Solon's reforms did not institute a full-fledged democracy, as they primarily benefited the affluent class, they laid the groundwork for subsequent democratic institutions. [3]

Cleisthenes' reforms, implemented in the wake of the Athenian victory over Persia, transformed the political landscape by introducing the deme system and expanding political participation to a broader segment of the population. These reforms laid the foundation for Athenian democracy and contributed to its institutionalization. [4]

Institutional framework of Athenian democracy

Assembly (Ekklesia) and direct democracy

The Ekklesia served as the cornerstone of Athenian democracy, providing citizens with a forum for debate and decision-making. The assembly gathered in a specially designed room on the Pnyx hill, which could hold about 6000 citizens, at least once a month, but more often two or three times. Any member of the public could address the assembly and cast a vote by raising their hands. The decision was definitive because the majority had the upper hand. The proceedings were arranged and the voting was evaluated by nine presidents (proedroi), who were chosen at random and served a single term in office.The assembly deliberated on a number of specific issues, such as choosing military and financial magistraties, planning and supplying food, starting legislative and political proceedings, sending envoys, voting on fund-raising and expenditure decisions, and debating military matters. [5] Any citizen who had grown too strong or dangerous for the polis may likewise be voted out of Athens by the assembly. Voters in this instance used a secret ballot in which they scribbled their names on a shattered piece of pottery (ostrakon). Parrhēsia, or the right to free expression, played a significant role in the discussions and eventually became one of the most prized rights for citizens. Laws (nomoi) were defined and temporary or particular decrees (psēphismata) established after appropriate discussion. The assembly also made sure that authorities were performing their jobs properly and that rulings were upheld. The Ekklesia had the authority to declare war, approve treaties, and pass laws, ensuring that political power resided with the citizenry [6]After the restoration of democracy in 403 BC, pay for assembly attendance was introduced. This promoted a new enthusiasm for assembly meetings. Only the

first 6,000 to arrive were admitted and paid, with the red rope now used to keep latecomers at bay. [7]

Council of Five Hundred (Boule) and administrative functions

The Council of Five Hundred, or Boule, was responsible for administering the daily affairs of the city-state. Its members, the 500 residents which were chosen by lot from among eligible citizens, served one-year terms and represented different demes, but also had the possibility of serving twice in a row. The Boule prepared the agenda for the Ekklesia, proposed legislation, served as the assembly's executive committee and represented the 139 districts of Attica and oversaw the city's finances. Its administrative functions were crucial in maintaining the smooth functioning of Athenian democracy. On top of that, the boule managed the operations of several other magistrates and functioned as the assembly's executive body. The boule oversaw the operations of the numerous boards and magistrates that handled Athens' administrative duties. It also appointed randomly chosen boards of ten members to handle anything from religious observances to naval affairs. Laws passed by the assembly might be contested in court, and judgments about exclusion were made there

Courts (Dikasteria) and judicial processes

The Dikasteria acted as the judicial branch of Athenian democracy, adjudicating legal disputes and ensuring the rule of law. It was of made up of 6,000 jurors and the top magistrates (archai), who are chosen yearly by lot. In fact, magistrates had to go through a twice-designed mechanism that used colored tokens (kleroterion) to guarantee that those chosen were selected at random. Attendance at the assembly was not a prerequisite for jury service, but being under oath did. Both the assembly's and the courts' authority stemmed from the idea that they both represented the people's direct will. [9] The jurors could not be removed from their positions since, in essence, no one could have more authority than them, unlike office holders (magistrates), who could be impeached and charged with wrongdoing. A logical consequence of

this was that, as acknowledged by the defendants, a court could only have rendered an unfair ruling if it had been misled by a party to the dispute. The legal system operated on a fast track, requiring cases to be finished by dusk and lasting no more than a day. [10]In certain cases, a penalty was imposed automatically upon conviction; however, in other cases, the jury deliberated between the two parties' suggested sentences for the guilty prisoner. [11] There was no way to appeal. Nonetheless, there was a way to bring charges against the witnesses of a prosecutor who was successful, which seems to have the potential to overturn the previous decision. The assembly's laws might be contested here in the courts, where judgments on debt forgiveness, naturalization, and exclusion were rendered. The Athenian legal system was known for its commitment to fairness and impartiality, although it was not without flaws. The Dikasteria played a vital role in upholding democratic principles and protecting the rights of individuals. Around 462 BC, Pericles is credited with introducing juror payment, which Aristotle regarded as essential to radical democracy (Politics 1294a37). Early in the Peloponnesian war, Cleon increased pay from two to three obols; the exact amount was unknown at the time. It is noteworthy that this was implemented almost 50 years prior to the practice of charging for participation at assembly meetings. One of the main costs of the Athens state was maintaining the courts, and during periods of financial hardship in the fourth century, the courts had to be closed, at least for private lawsuits. [12]

Role of citizens in decision-making and legislative processes

Athenian citizens actively participated in decision-making and legislative processes, embodying the democratic ideals of equality and participation. Citizens were eligible to serve in the Ekklesia, the Boule, and the Dikasteria, allowing them to shape the policies that governed their lives. Public office was open to all citizens, regardless of wealth or social status, reflecting the inclusive nature of Athenian democracy. The direct involvement of citizens in governance distinguished Athenian democracy from other forms of government. [2] [4]

An individual's allocation was determined by their citizenship, not by their merit or any kind of buyable personal popularity. As a result, allotment was viewed as a way to stop the unethical buying of votes and to grant political equality to all citizens by giving them an equal chance to hold public office. This also served as a check on demagoguery, albeit a feeble one that did not stop elections from incorporating voter pandering. [13]

There are clear hazards associated with giving responsibility at random to people who may or may not be competent, but the system was designed with safeguards in place to reduce such issues. Teams of Athenians were chosen for elected positions (boards, panels). One individual in a group is more likely to know how things should be done correctly, and those who don't may pick up tips from those who do. Every team member would be watching every other member as a kind of check during the tenure of a certain office. On the other hand, other officials, like the nine archons, performed somewhat distinct roles from one another even if they appeared to be a board. It appears that the Athenians were more concerned with avoiding ineptitude than with stopping someone from abusing their position of authority to continue gaining power. [14]

Principles and values of Athenian democracy

Equality and participation of citizens

Athenian democracy emphasized the equality and participation of citizens in political life. All eligible citizens had the right to engage in governance and exercise their democratic rights. The principle of isonomia, or equality before the law, ensured that all citizens were subject to the same legal standards and procedures. This commitment to inclusivity fostered a sense of civic identity and solidarity among the populace.

To partake in the demokratia, an individual needed to meet specific criteria: they had to be free, male, and Athenian. Initially, during the early

stages of the democratic era, Athenian men were required to have an Athenian father and a free mother. However, by the middle of the 5th century B.C., the law was amended to mandate that citizenship could only be claimed by men with Athenian parentage on both sides. Due to the absence of birth certificates or DNA tests to verify parentage, a young Athenian man's political journey commenced when his father formally introduced him at their local demos, or political unit, vouching for his paternity and providing witnesses to corroborate the claim, as explained by Cartledge.

Athenian democracy operated on a direct basis, with Athenian men constituting the Assembly themselves. Although exact figures regarding the number of Athenian men in the 5th century B.C. are unavailable due to the absence of population censuses, historians commonly estimate the figure to be around 30,000. Among them, approximately 5,000 might regularly attend Assembly gatherings. Additionally, Athenian men served on juries and were chosen by lot annually to serve on the Council of 500.

While certain government positions theoretically welcomed all Athenian men, factors such as wealth and location often determined one's ability to secure a full-time government role or even attend Assembly sessions. Nevertheless, certain positions were exclusively reserved for elites: treasurers, for instance, were invariably affluent individuals, ostensibly due to their presumed financial acumen, and the 10 generals who occupied the highest governmental office were consistently drawn from elite, renowned circles. Consequently, many individuals in Athens were entirely excluded from political participation.

Assuming a populace of approximately 30,000 Athenian men during the advent of democracy, historians estimate that around 90,000 other individuals resided in Athens. This demographic included a substantial portion of non-Athenian slaves, as Athenians were prohibited from enslaving fellow Athenians. Others were categorized as "resident aliens," enjoying freedom but failing to meet the criteria for Athenian citizenship. Additionally, Athenian women and children were ineligible to participate in the Assembly [6]

Rule of law and democratic governance

Central to Athenian democracy was the rule of law, which ensured that government actions were constrained by established legal norms. The term "nomos" referred to the body of laws and legal norms that governed Athenian society. These laws were not arbitrary dictates of rulers but were established through democratic processes, including legislative decrees and judicial decisions. Nomoi encompassed a wide range of legal matters, including criminal law, civil disputes, property rights, contracts, and constitutional procedures.Athenian democracy upheld the principle of legal equality before the law. Regardless of social status or wealth, all citizens were subject to the same legal standards and were entitled to equal protection under the law. This commitment to legal equality helped to mitigate inequalities and foster a sense of civic unity among the populace.Democratic governance in Athens emphasized transparency and accountability in public affairs. Government officials and magistrates were required to conduct their duties openly and were accountable to the citizenry for their actions. Public scrutiny and oversight mechanisms, such as audits and judicial reviews, helped to prevent abuses of power and ensure adherence to legal procedures. [15] The Athenian legal system consisted of a network of courts and tribunals responsible for adjudicating legal disputes and enforcing the law. These included the popular courts, where juries of citizens decided both civil and criminal cases, as well as specialized courts for specific matters such as property disputes or treason trials. Judicial decisions were based on the interpretation and application of existing laws and legal precedents.The rule of law in Athenian democracy served to safeguard the rights and liberties of individuals against arbitrary actions by the state or powerful individuals. Legal protections included the right to a fair trial, freedom from unjust imprisonment, and the right to property. The legal framework provided avenues for seeking redress for grievances and resolving conflicts through lawful means. [16]

Civic virtue and responsibilities of citizenship

In ancient Athens, citizenship was not merely a legal status but a set of responsibilities intertwined with civic virtue and active participation in the

democratic process. Athenian citizens were expected to demonstrate civic virtue through their actions and contributions to society. This included active participation in civic life, defending democratic principles, and promoting the common good. Moreover, the practice of euthynai, or accountability, played a crucial role in reinforcing ethical conduct among citizens. Euthynai required individuals to answer for their actions and decisions, holding them responsible for their behavior in both public and private spheres. This emphasis on accountability served to maintain the integrity of the democratic system and uphold ethical standards within the community. Athenian citizens were expected to engage actively in the affairs of the city-state. This involvement extended beyond voting in the assembly to include serving on juries, participating in public debates, and holding various public offices through a system of sortition (random selection) rather than election.Citizenship entailed a commitment to upholding the principles of democracy. This involved advocating for equality before the law, protecting individual liberties, and safeguarding the institutions of democracy against threats from both internal and external forces.Citizens were encouraged to prioritize the welfare of the community over individual interests. This ethos of collective responsibility fostered solidarity among Athenians and contributed to the cohesion of the city-state. This society placed value on the education of its citizens, particularly in the realms of rhetoric, philosophy, and ethics. Training in these disciplines not only equipped individuals with the skills necessary for effective participation in public life but also instilled a sense of civic duty and moral responsibility.The Athenian calendar was replete with civic rituals and ceremonies that reinforced civic identity and solidarity. Events such as religious festivals, military commemorations, and political assemblies provided opportunities for citizens to come together, reaffirm their shared values, and reaffirm their commitment to the well-being of the polis. [17]

Evolution and decline of Athenian democracy

Challenges and criticisms of Athenian democratic system

Athenian democracy faced challenges and criticisms from contemporary observers, who viewed it as chaotic and susceptible to manipulation by demagogues. Concerns were raised about the potential for tyranny and mob rule, highlighting the tensions inherent in democratic governance. (Article 8). However, Aristophanes, the playwright, Plato, the student of Socrates, Aristotle, the student of Plato, and a writer referred to as the Old Oligarch are among the ancient Greeks who criticized Athenian democracy. These ancients thought that democracy was overly inclusive, whereas contemporary detractors are more likely to point out problems with the stringent requirements for political participation. They believed that the common people were prone to making grave blunders and were not always the best individuals to rule. Unlike his own critical-historical approach to history, Thucydides reasoned from his aristocratic and historical perspective that a major shortcoming of democratic government was that the ordinary people were often much too naïve about even contemporaneous events to rule justly. He cites, for instance, false information about Sparta, such as the Athenians' mistaken belief that a Spartan battalion known as Pitanate lochos existed and that each of the kingdom's kings had two votes in the ruling council. According to Thucydides, the "preference for ready-made accounts" of the common people was the cause of this negligence. Aristotle and Plato both decried democratic rule, seeing it as the rich tyrannizing the poor by numbers. They considered it to be blatantly unfair rather than a reasonable society where everyone had equal rights. This is referred to as the distinction between "arithmetic" and "geometric" (i.e., proportionate) equality in Aristotle's writings. [18]

Impact of war, imperialism, and external pressures

The evolution and decline of Athenian democracy were influenced by external factors such as war, imperialism, and external pressures. Military conflicts, including the Peloponnesian War, strained democratic institutions and eroded public trust in the government. Athens' imperial ambitions and expansionist policies contributed to internal unrest and political instability. The burdens of maintaining an empire and prolonged warfare exacerbated existing social tensions, weakening democratic governance. [18]

Athens's rise to power led to tensions with Sparta, culminating in the Peloponnesian War (431-404 BCE), during which Athens suffered significant defeats, including the disastrous Sicilian expedition of 415-413 BCE. This led to the overthrow of democracy in 411 BCE, followed by its restoration in 410 BCE after naval victories against Sparta. However, Athens ultimately succumbed to Sparta in 404 BCE, leading to the dissolution of the Athenian League and the imposition of oligarchic rule by the Thirty Tyrants.

The oligarchic regime, marked by tyranny and repression, was eventually overthrown, and democracy was restored in 403 BCE. However, institutional changes were introduced, including restrictions on the powers of the Assembly and increased judicial oversight. Despite these changes, Athens faced challenges from external powers, including Macedon, which eventually led to its decline as a major political force. [4]

1- Timeline of the Athenian Democracy

Years (B.C)   Timeline of the Athenian Democracy

750   Archaic Athens

500   Principal bodies of government: nine archons selected from the aristocracy, and Areopagus Council consisting of former archons, oversaw laws and magistrates and conducted trials

632/631   The aristocrat Cylon mounts a failed coup to establish himself as tyrant

621   Draco compiles a written code of laws

594   Solon the lawgiver introduced a wealth-based political dispensation

546   Tyranny of Peisistratus and his son Hippias

510   Hippias expelled

508   Classical Athens. 5th century democracy

507   Democracy established: Cleisthenes reforms of citizenship and Council of Five Hundred

490

        Victory against the Persians at Marathon

480   Victory against the Persians at Salamis

487   Selection of nine archons by lot

479   Victory against the Persians at Mycale — end of defensive wars against the Persians

467   Victory against the Persians at Eurymedon in Asia Minor

462   Powers of Areopagus removed. Introduction of pay for court service

460   'First' Peloponnesian War ends with the 30 Year peace treaty between Athens & Sparta

454   First Athenian League

451   Pericles' law restricts citizenship to those whose both parents were Athenians

431   Peloponnesian War, Athens V Sparta

421   Peace of Nicias after indecisive campaigns

415-413   Sicilian expedition of Athenian navy. Athens defeated by Syracuse and Sparta

411   Democracy overthrown by oligarchic coup

410   Democracy restored by the Athenian navy

407   Athens wins the sea battle of Arginoussai

405   Defeat of Athens at Aegospotami

404   Athenian defeat and surrender, Tyranny of the Thirty

403   Democracy restored- Introduction of pay for attending the assembly

395   Corinthian War — Athens unsuccessful

378

358

355   Sacred War — Athens unsuccessful

338

322   End of the Athenian Democracy after defeats by Macedon in Amorgos and Crannon

Factors contributing to the decline of Athenian democracy

Internal strife, political corruption, and social inequality were significant factors contributing to the decline of Athenian democracy. The rise of demagogues and oligarchs undermined democratic institutions and eroded public confidence in the government. [18]

Economically, Athens relied heavily on agriculture, with landowners comprising the wealthy elite. Attempts at income redistribution through fiscal measures proved insufficient due to the inherent limitations of taxing agricultural wealth. The lack of industrial economic infrastructure further weakened Athenian democracy, making it susceptible to manipulation and disenfranchisement. [4]

Despite its demise, Athenian democracy left a lasting legacy, inspiring future generations to strive for democratic ideals and principles. The decline of Athenian democracy underscores the challenges of maintaining democratic governance in the face of internal and external pressures. [18]

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ABOUT HOW GLOBALIZATION INFLUENCES EUROPEAN CULTURE

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Abstract

Romania is an important strategic element between the European countries and the Oriental landscape, because it represents a meeting place of a mixture of ideas, cultures and languages, which motivates, or puts into question the degree to which Romanians belong as a nation to the European space.

Keywords

Unity, Identity, Diversity.

Introduction

Romania is an important strategic element between the European countries and the Oriental landscape because it represents a meeting place of a mixture

of ideas, cultures and languages, which motivates, or puts into question the degree to which Romanians belong as a nation to the European space. The challenge is to give reasons for the cultural belonging of Romania as well as to respond to the challenge of skepticism towards the European membership. This is not a new endeavor, but it is clear that globalization has effects on all nations and Romania has to adapt both in its cultural policies in general, also make them complementary to those of the European Union.

Thus, the cultural diplomacy and its corresponding cultural policies contain an element of deciphering what exactly is the role of Romania in the European context, and by extension, an attention toward the Romanian cultural diplomacy is required. Also, the historical intersecting points of Romania and the Occidental landscape have contributed to the modernization of the country.

This work is part of a broader thesis that argues against the possible critique of Europeanization which says that the unity in diversity entails cultural homogeneity. On the contrary, my argument is that Romania is strongly related with its own past, as well as with its European cultural inheritance, given the cultural, ethnical, and language diversity the country had for the past two centuries, but it is also related to the European Union via the contemporary efforts in the field of cultural diplomacy, policy and social exchange.

As such, I propose an inquiry which favors the view of Romania's membership to the European landscape. The inquiry contains considerations on cultural identity, both of Romania and of the European Union. The idea behind this is to show which cultural elements, or cultural drives, are shared in common between the EU and Romania, as well as to describe how the latter went, or still undergoes, the process of Europeanization.

The Romanian cultural identity and its track towards Europe

The first records of significant cultural, mostly linguistical, exchanges between the Romanian landscape and the Occident is attested by Lucian Boia (2014) as starting with the 19th Century. According to the author's findings, starting with the 1830's there was a shift consisting of languages, traditions and behaviors, from the traditional Slavic heritage to a more Latin one. The Latin replacement of the Slavic alphabet, the pride of belonging to a Latin heritage through our Romanic language, which was promoted by the Transylvanian School, as well as the borrowing of customs, institutions and Western ideologies, which gave us a Constitution, the University, a financial system and so on, are some examples.

Boia (2014) argues that there were three main obstacles that kept Romania from establishing relations and developing along with the Occident:

1)   The national ideal

2)   The problem of modernization

3)   The problem of cultural borrowing.

Firstly, the national ideal consisted in determining the nation state, which would discern which individuals qualify as Romanian citizens. While a clash of ideas was present, between the French and German system, where the former implied an aggregation of individuals that are citizens by virtue of commonly electing a representative, and the latter implied a citizenship based on biological inheritance, common ethnicity and shared cultural elements, it is argued that Romania was closer to the German national ideal.

The second obstacle was the problem of modernization. The Romanian society was overwhelmingly rural in the 19th Century, with prevalent Oriental traditions, a Cyrillic writing system and Slavic customs.

Lastly, the third obstacle is claimed to be the cultural borrowings, between the Slavic vs. the Latin language and traditions, the French vs. the German political systems, the Oriental vs. Occidental alliances and so on.

What would then be the cultural unity of Romania? Boia argues that the answer lies in the Romanian proneness to ideological compromises. Romania was able to find its roots in the historical unifying events, such as the Union of the Romanian Principalities, or the historical contact between the Dacians and the Romans. But the main historical shared root with Europe was the contact with the Latin countries, which was a thorny path considering:

a)   Ideological difficulties: the diversity of ethnic groups (according to the 1930 Census) residing in the Romanian space, such as Hungarians, Germans, Ukrainians, Russians, Bulgarians, Jews, Turks, Poles, Gypsies and so on. This variety implied a lack of consensus of the priorities of the country.

b)   The lack of objectivity: historical analysis is bound to subjective insertions, and therefore we will never obtain an accurate picture of the Romanian reality.

c)   The communist regime's efforts to rewrite the past: this implied an elimination of Romanian tradition and a rejection of Occidental modernization.

All these problems determined a cultural narrative which led to a false idea of national identity. Boia proposes a way out, which is a solution based on linguistics, archeology and cultural belonging. These areas contain irrefutable proofs of what is the Romanian culture, the combination of which

can't be found anywhere else in the specific way they unfolded in this territory. In addition to the Romanian language, architecture and historical contacts with Europe, 'being Romanian' implies a certain hospitality and tolerance.

Having read Girardet, Boia uses his classification of contemporary myths and argues that Romania currently uses all five of them. The myths are:

1)   The Conspiracy. The necessity for identifying a common threat which unites people's efforts against certain injustices, such as the Secret Services, the Great Powers, the Revolutionaries and so on.

2)   The Savior. Because every problem has to be given a solution, the Savior is that symbol that eliminates the conspiratorial threats and restores national peace. For some Romanians, the Savior could be the king Mihai, Ion Iliescu, or any other influential individual in history, recent or past.

3)   The Golden Age. People need to pinpoint a moment in time in which absolute peace existed, and no conflicts or conspiracy threatened the said peace. The Interwar Period, or the days of the Dacians are such examples.

4)   The Unity. As we have seen, the Romanians determined that the correct narrative of the country relies on some historical event which made the separate parts of the country one whole.

Is Boia right in attributing all these myths to the Romanian cultural thought? In a sense we can find all of them in the Romanian culture and social discourse, even though the examples that people choose to substitute for these myths could be arbitrary. These substitutes create an imagined history, which would oppose the real history.

The European cultural identity, Europeanization and subsidiarity

Cultural identity in Europe refers to a certain ideological narrative that has its roots in the Greco-Roman heritage as well as Christianity. However, the promotion of the inherited moral values is crucial to maintaining a collective identity. In this regard, the European cultural identity is best described by the historical inquiry of Burcea Carmen (2014). This enquiry shows that the way European values are spread are through institutions and the European press. On one hand, cultural projects existed since 1945, and especially with the Treaty of Paris in 1951. On another hand, cultural institutes existed since the 19th Century, such as the French Institute, Goethe, Cervantes and so on. Those cultural structures promoted national values but also the European ones.

However, these efforts are considered to be part of the subsidiary role of the Union, in which cultural policies rely on cultural diplomacy, determining an European symbolism, but also on cultural cooperation. What is of interest to us is that Burcea pinpoints the year 1989 as the crucial moment in which the cultural belonging to Europe in face of the globalization and the great powers that emerged was vital. So, the key to understand the cultural identity here is through cooperation, which requires: respect for local cultures, diversity promotion, and assuring the legal framework in which cultures can thrive.

The Maastricht Treatise from 1992 assures the cooperation in the international education and a promotion of cultural diversity. However, cultural priorities were still largely neglected, despite historical efforts in this direction, starting with the Cultural Convention in 1954. But there is a cultural shift happening in the past decades, since we notice an increase in investment in the cultural projects. Burcea exemplifies the Culture strand which gathered 236.5 million euros, followed by the 1.46 billion of the Creative Europe programs, and also the 15 billion euros for Erasmus+.

Romania is part of the European network in terms of politics and culture, which necessitates a constant process of cultural and economic development. Europeanization is the process by which we appropriate the European tools to develop our nation. It implies an economic subordination to the European Union. According to Oana-Andreea Ion (2015), Europeanization is a difficult process of structural change, and adaptation to European policies. What we are interested here is the cultural restructuring this process entails, which contains the diffusion of culture, borders, authorities, by becoming subordinate to an international authority and so on.

Ion's analysis shows that Europeanization is understood in a narrow sense in which its utility is assessed, rather than clearly defining the process. However, there is a transfer of good practices, adaptation, and factors of change, through which Europeanization means implementing European policies, and since this process doesn't have a theory in itself, we can associate it with the process of integration in the EU, because there is an overlap between the two. There are some risks in this kind of integration which need to be mentioned:

- withdrawal, which when the national scene cuts ties with its European connections;
- inertia, the lack of change, delaying and all the actions that go against the European efforts to develop infrastructure;
- absorption, referring to the receiving of economic funds, followed by superficial or formal changes inside a country just to maintain an image and assure funds continue to flow.

The guiding principle of the Europeanization is the subsidiarity principle. This means that the level of independence that a subordinated authority of the EU is regulated, in the sense that EU is a central authority that may, or may not, intervene in the Romanian economy, insofar as Romanians find ways to deal with political and cultural challenges that emerge.

It is not by chance that 1989 was a turning point for both Romania and the Union, since what makes possible any cultural exchange for Romanians is having determined their identity. So in a sense, Romania was one step behind the EU, such that cultural exchanges could only enrich the identity-seeking post-communist country. In other words, the EU gave Romania tools to put forward its values.

Challenges and the way forward

I will now present an analysis that will result in possible critiques to the Romanian integration process. For this purpose, I borrow Lähdesmäk's critique of the unity in diversity.

The author pinpoints how the cultural identity was produced. Starting off the presupposition that language shapes and replaces cultural practices, the main concern of the European identity is its cultural inheritance, and the cultural policies it entails are based on ideological purposes. First, the author argues, there was this drive of unity that emerged due to past conflicts, which necessitated a corresponding series of symbols of recognition. Then, a slogan emerged, of unity in diversity, without canceling diversity in the process of unification. Afterwards, celebrating diversity without losing it became the main European drive.

Particularly in the case of the Capitals of Culture, beyond determining a coherent cultural identity, the program seeks to repurpose cultural events as tourist attractions. The purpose would be that tourists may feel attracted to visit said EU member state, and once they immerse themselves in that particular culture, that cultural richness will be associated with the European inheritance.

For these reasons, the slogan of unity in diversity is considered an ideological mechanism, which to some entails a form of Eurocentrism. In

addition, if cultural identity is split between diversity and unity, and if the unity is a result of cultural inheritance, the author argues that the association of the two concepts leads to semantic ambiguity.

Thus, a longer skeptical argument emerges: If we accept that the European cultural identity is determined by the economic sphere, then culture is being instrumentalized, which is at least immoral. If we accept that there is unity in diversity, we commit a semantic ambiguity, because the two concepts, diversity and unity, lead to incompatible practices. And to be particular, how does Romania not lose its identity if the skeptics are right?

A simple reply would be that reciprocal instrumentalization isn't immoral, and thus, it is a way through which the Romanian culture can carry its inheritance in the future. But as we have seen, absorption might occur. A symbiotic relationship will only stagnate the development of this country, meaning inertia, and this is not far from giving reasons to withdraw from this cooperation.

Consider globalization. It is a worldwide phenomenon which asks identity question both to nation-states, as well as bigger entities, such as the USA and the EU. One particular question is who are we? And there is little to no reason, in our context, to give into skeptic arguments. The connection between culture and economy is not something new. Culture is an exchange between societies, which is always possible only insofar as the economy is concerned, and only then we can talk about cultural growth and development, when there is a strong economy going. So, in a sense, culture instrumentalizes the economy.

This turn of the skeptic argument is seen in the connection that Oana Pârvu (2014) makes between the culture and quality of life. The argument is that the importance of culture might surpass the importance of other sectors, since the significant growth in the past decades shows a shift towards cultural practices, with the example of the cultural sector surpassing, by stats from 2003, the engineering sector, with stats from 2001, by 383 billion euros.

Furthermore, Pârvu shows that the development of new technologies impacted the grants for cultural programs, with a success rate of 28% in implementing the Creative Europe programmed in Romania in 2014. One could notice that the efforts doubled in the patrimony sector of Romania, since digitalization and infrastructure entailed 'importing' the bureaucratic content online. This also helped create new jobs for the youth for investing in the cultural future of the country.

In addition to these developments, according to the Strategic Framework of the European Commission, we can notice activities that promote cultural diversity, financial aid, cultural mobilities for artists, and anything that contributes to the European identity. Furthermore, we notice in the agenda for 2007 that there is intensive research into the impact of technology on culture, through projects like Digital4Culture, which works on copyright initiatives, audiovisual implications and so on, but also the promotion of a shared European history, such as through the 2018 Agenda.

If anybody is still convinced by the first part of the skeptical argument, that of economy determining culture, all these examples show that they work in tandem, and where we have a poor economy, even the culture stagnates, which makes the state unattractive economically. The cultural enrichment the EU gave Romania is unprecedented historically.

Next is the unity in diversity issue. My argument for the commonalities of the Romanian and European heritage is a part of the answer. Romania after the 1989 was a place in which circulated particular myths about right and wrong, and about subjective histories that divided, and still divide today, some groups of people. However, the tools the EU gave it only made possible the realization that we live under those myths. So not only are we capable of better assessing our own past, but we are actively creating our identity 'from scratch', without giving up our language, architecture, hospitality, tolerance and identity. So, the answer is a 'no' for the fears of cultural homogeneity. Our history is that of cooperating with a vast diversity of ethnicities and nations. At the same time, our history is that of Romania, of our shared culture and traditions. But our culture is evolving alongside the economy.

In conclusion, the EU ideology for a cultural identity is not something artificial, because at a nation-state level it is also important to start from a drive of unity in order to discover what belongs, which should be cherished, and what is that of others, which should be respected.

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EUROPEAN POLICIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

European policies for sustainable development represent a complex and integrated response to global environmental, economic and societal challenges. These policies aim to promote sustainable progress that balances economic with ecological and social needs. The paper explores the evolution of these policies in the legislative and strategic context of the European Union, highlighting the main initiatives and strategies adopted to achieve the sustainable development goals set for 2030. The analysis focuses on the effectiveness of these policies in promoting a green and inclusive future, as well as the challenges and the opportunities associated with their implementation.

Keywords

Sustainable development, European policies, European Union

Introduction

Achieving sustainable development is a crucial goal for the European Union, which aims to balance economic progress with environmental conservation and social justice. European policies play a vital role in directing the efforts of member states and EU institutions in this area. Integrating sustainability principles across different economic sectors and implementing strategies for an ecological transition are pivotal actions. This paper seeks to explore the primary political and strategic frameworks that influence the EU's sustainable development agenda, evaluating their effectiveness and relevance in the present context. Thus, the cultural diplomacy and its corresponding cultural policies contain an element of deciphering what exactly is the role of Romania in the European context, and by extension, an attention toward the Romanian cultural diplomacy is required. Also, the historical intersecting points of Romania and the Occidental landscape have contributed to the modernization of the country.

Content

Sustainable development

The World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) defined sustainable development in their influential report "Our Common Future," also known as the Brundtland Report. This definition describes sustainable development as the approach to fulfilling current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The goal is to find a harmonious balance between economic growth, social well-being, and environmental protection.

The European Union adopted its sustainable development policy in 2001, with a revised version introduced in 2006, outlining a "long-term vision of sustainability." This vision emphasizes the interconnection and mutual benefits of economic growth, social cohesion, and environmental conservation. In 2009, the European Commission's review underscored the persistence of unsustainable practices, highlighting the need for intensified efforts to address these issues. Despite this, the Commission recognized the EU's progress in integrating sustainable development into various policies, including trade and development, and noted the EU's leadership in combating climate change and advocating for a low-carbon economy. The EU has formally declared sustainable development as one of its long-term objectives, as articulated in Article 3, paragraph 3 of the Treaty on European Union.

Environmental policy

The EU's environmental policy comprises the objectives, priorities, regulatory frameworks, and implementation mechanisms aimed at promoting the sustainable use of natural resources and preventing environmental degradation.

At the national level, environmental policy includes all administrative, legal, fiscal, and financial guidelines, principles, and regulations designed to ensure economic and social development in a way that is interdependent with ecological requirements and balance. The core idea of environmental policy is to harmonize human activities with the natural environment by replenishing the resources used [1].

Effective implementation of environmental policy requires addressing critical issues and objectives, which must be thoroughly assessed before adoption. These points must be supported by action and implementation plans that achieve optimal results with minimal costs and effort. Therefore, for an environmental policy to be genuinely effective and relevant, it must address all six of its components: legislative, administrative-institutional,

educational-informative, economic-technological, social, and international cooperation, considering the available resources in each area and ensuring observable impacts at specific points in time.

Legal basis

Relevant legal foundations for the European Union's environmental policy are found in Article 11 and Articles 191-193 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). These provisions grant the EU the authority to address various environmental concerns, including air and water pollution, waste management, and climate change. However, the EU's actions are limited by the principle of subsidiarity and the requirement for unanimous consent in the Council on matters involving fiscal policies, territorial development, land use, water resource management, energy source selection, and energy supply structure.

The origins and evolution

The development of the EU's environmental policy began at the Paris European Council in 1972, following the first UN environmental conference. At this council, European leaders recognized the need for a Community environmental policy to complement economic growth and initiated an action program. The Single European Act of 1987 introduced "Environment" as a new category, establishing the first legal framework for a coordinated environmental strategy. This policy aimed to protect environmental quality, human health, and promote the rational use of natural resources. Subsequent treaty amendments reinforced the EU's commitment to environmental protection and increased the European Parliament's role in shaping this policy.

The Maastricht Treaty of 1993 formalized the environment as a distinct policy area within the EU and introduced the codecision procedure, making qualified majority voting in the Council the norm. The Treaty of Amsterdam, effective in 1999, required environmental protection to be integrated into all EU sectoral policies to promote sustainable development. The Treaty of Lisbon, enacted in 2009, established "combating climate change" (2.5.2) as a distinct objective and emphasized sustainable development in international relations. The Treaty of Lisbon also granted the EU legal personality, enabling it to enter into international agreements.

Key stakeholders in environmental policy

The European Commission's General Directorate for Environment

The General Directorate for Environment is a constituent of the European Commission, which comprises 40 general directorates and services. The Directorate General for Environment, commonly referred to as DG Environment, has the primary goal of safeguarding, preserving, and enhancing the environment for both present and future generations. In order to accomplish this, it puts forth policies that guarantee a substantial level of environmental preservation inside the European Union and that safeguard the well-being of EU residents [2].

European Union Environment Council

The Environment Council of the European Union consists of environment ministers who convene quarterly. Decisions are made through a qualified majority vote in the regular procedure involving the European Parliament.

The European Community is responsible for ensuring the harmonious and balanced growth of economic activities that prioritize sustainable development and maintain a high level of environmental quality [2].

The European Parliament's Committee on Environment, Public Health, and Food Safety

The Environment Committee, which was founded in 1973, was the twelfth specialized committee. Subsequently, the organization experienced growth in both its membership, extending from 36 to 135 individuals, and its influence, owing to its increased tasks and the growing interest from the public. The committee has the responsibility of formulating environmental policies and implementing measures for environmental protection. Specifically, their objectives include addressing issues such as air, soil, and water pollution, waste management and recycling, substances and preparations, noise levels, climate change, and biodiversity protection. They also focus on promoting sustainable development, implementing regional and international measures and agreements related to environmental protection, restoring damaged environments, ensuring civil protection, and collaborating with the European Environment Agency [2].

The European Environment Agency

The primary objective of the European Environment Agency (EEA) is to furnish up-to-date, pertinent, and accurate information pertaining to the environment. AEM assists the entities in charge of formulating and executing the environmental strategy at both the European and national levels, as well as the general public.

Objectives of environmental policy

The environmental policy of the European Union, as outlined in Article 174 of the European Commission Treaty, aims to achieve the following objectives: Safeguarding, safeguarding, and enhancing environmental quality; Ensuring the protection of human health; Promoting the responsible and efficient use of natural resources; Encouraging international cooperation to address regional environmental issues and beyond.

The European principles for the environment

The "Polluter Pays" principle holds that the party responsible for pollution should cover the costs associated with the pollution control measures implemented by governmental authorities. Put simply, the expenses associated with these interventions will be evident in the production expenses of the goods and services that are responsible for the pollution.

The principle of preventive action: it is founded on the overarching principle that it is more advantageous to prevent something from happening rather than having to deal with it afterwards;

The precautionary principle: mandates the implementation of precautionary measures when an activity poses a potential risk to the environment or human health, even if there is not yet conclusive scientific evidence of a cause-effect relationship;

The principle of high environmental protection states that the environmental policy of the EU is designed to attain a significant level of safeguarding.

The principle of integration stipulates that environmental protection regulations must be incorporated into the development and implementation of other community policies.

The proximity principle seeks to promote the accountability of local communities in managing the waste and pollution they generate.

Action Programs

Since 1973, the European Union has created and implemented a series of Action Programs aimed at protecting the environment. These programs have distinct features and purposes.

- Initial Action Program - 1973-1977
- The Second Action Program - 1978-1982
- The Third Action Program, which took place from 1983 to 1986, was implemented.
- The Fourth Action Program, implemented from 1987 to 1992, was a strategic initiative.
- The Fifth Action Program for Environmental Protection, implemented from 1993 to 1999, and the Sixth Action Program, implemented from 2001 to 2010.
- The seventh environmental action program (2014-2020)
- The primary objective of the eighth action program is to expedite the process of transitioning to a more environmentally friendly state, while ensuring fairness and inclusivity. The organization's objective for the year 2050 is to achieve "a high quality of life while staying within the ecological boundaries of the Earth".

Since 1973, the Commission has formulated multi-annual Environment Action Programs (EAPs) that establish forthcoming legislative initiatives and objectives for EU environmental policy. The 8th European

Environmental Programme (EAP) became legally binding in May 2022, serving as the European Union's agreed-upon framework for environmental policy until the end of 2030.

The program reiterates the European Union's dedication to the 7th European Environmental Action Programme (EAP) goal for 2050, which aims to guarantee a high standard of living for everyone, while also taking into account the ecological boundaries of the world.

The new program aligns with and expands upon the environmental and climate goals of the European Green Deal. It establishes a structure to facilitate the attainment of six key objectives: The aim is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and achieve climate neutrality by 2050; Efforts will be made to increase the ability to adapt to climate change, strengthen resilience, and reduce vulnerability; The focus is on promoting a growth model that restores resources, separates economic growth from resource use and environmental degradation, and speeds up the transition to a circular economy; The goal is to eliminate pollution, including air, water, and soil pollution, and protect the health and quality of life of Europeans; Biodiversity will be protected, conserved, and restored, with a particular emphasis on improving air, water, soil, forests, freshwater, wetland, and marine ecosystems; Climate and environmental pressures related to production and consumption will be reduced, especially in the areas of energy, industrial development, buildings and infrastructure, mobility, and the food system.

Consumer and health protection policies

Consumerism

Consumerism is an economic, social, and political phenomenon that emerged in the 20th century due to various production and consumption models implemented after capitalism and reinforced by advertising. It refers to

economic policies that prioritize consumption, focusing on the freedom of choice of consumers to influence producers' choices in product type and manufacturing. In the modern economy, market efficiency ensures consumer sovereignty, who may perceive themselves affected by the widespread diffusion of the consumer phenomenon but are essentially expressions of their freedom of choice and autonomy.

Consumer rights protection policy in the EU

The EU's consumer protection policy has evolved over time, focusing on protecting consumers' health, safety, and economic interests. The EU's objectives include promoting consumers' right to information, education, and organizing to protect their interests. The New Consumer Agenda, adopted on November 13, 2020, aims to strengthen consumer resilience for a sustainable recovery [3].

Five key priority areas are covered in the updated 2020-2025 agenda: green transition, digital transformation, enforcement and effective remedial measures, responding to specific consumer needs, and consumer protection in a global context. The green transition aims to overcome new challenges to consumer rights and ensure sustainable products and lifestyles are accessible to all, regardless of geographic location or income. Initiatives such as the "Farm to Fork" strategy, EU biodiversity strategy, zero pollution action plan, and sustainable finance are being launched to promote sustainability.

Digital transformation aims to create a safer digital space for consumers, protecting their rights and ensuring a level playing field for innovation. Enforcement and effective remedial measures are supported by the New Regulation on Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC), which strengthens online capabilities of enforcement authorities and cooperation mechanisms. Responding to the specific needs of consumers, based on social circumstances or individual characteristics, is also a priority [3].

The EU's consumer protection policy aims to protect consumers' health, safety, and economic interests, while promoting their right to information, education, and organization.

The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) establishes the EU's health policy, dividing its responsibilities between the EU and its Member States. The EU's primary role is to improve public health, prevent and manage diseases, mitigate health risks, and harmonize health strategies. The EU's public health policy aims to protect and enhance EU citizens' health, support modernization and digitization of health systems, enhance European health resilience, and prepare states for future pandemics. The EU has successfully implemented a comprehensive health policy through the Health for Growth strategy and secondary legislation, including the EU4Health program, which will continue funding for 2021-2027 [3].

Programs financed by EU funds in the field of public health

The forthcoming "EU Health" program (2021-2027), in conjunction with other funding and initiatives, will contribute to the resolution of health concerns from several angles. Climate change mitigation encompasses efforts to tackle health issues that are caused or worsened by climate change. These include a rise in fatalities due to heat waves and natural disasters, as well as changes in the transmission of water-borne diseases and diseases carried by insects, snails, or other cold-blooded animals [4].

Simultaneously, the Parliament formed a dedicated Commission, known as BECA, to combat cancer from 2020 to 2022. In 2021, this Commission unveiled its European Plan to address cancer, encompassing measures for prevention, early detection, treatment, and disease monitoring. The implementation of this plan is also backed by the NextGenerationEU program. The allocation of these funds, amounting to 806.9 billion E, aims to enhance and update healthcare systems throughout all EU nations, thereby improving hospitals' access to cutting-edge technologies and essential medical supplies.

The European Union's energy strategy

Energy has always been a cornerstone of European integration. The Treaty on the European Coal and Steel Community (1951) and the Euratom Treaty (1957) focused specifically on coal and nuclear energy, two major sources [5].

Efforts to create a unified European energy market have increased over the decades, culminating in the inclusion of EU energy policy in the Treaty of Lisbon (2007). This treaty also clarified the roles and responsibilities between the EU and its member states in energy matters. Article 194 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU details the goals of the EU's energy policy: maintaining a functional energy market, ensuring a secure energy supply, and promoting energy efficiency, conservation, and the development of new and renewable energy sources.

The EU's current energy policy is based on the Energy Union Strategy (COM/2015/80) introduced in February 2015. The strategy aims to create an energy union that provides reliable, sustainable, and affordable energy for both households and businesses within the EU. In 2016, the Commission launched the "Clean energy for all Europeans" package to implement this strategy. By May 2019, all legislative proposals in the package were approved, completing the Energy Union [5].

In addition to this, the "prepare for 55" initiative, alongside NextGenerationEU and REPowerEU, aims for a fair, competitive, and green transition by 2030. This involves enhancing legislation across energy, fuels, climate, transport, buildings, land use, and forestry sectors. "Prepare for 55" offers significant opportunities for developing, implementing, and exporting low-carbon technologies and green jobs.

The foundation of the EU's energy efficiency policy is the Energy Efficiency Directive 2012/27/EU, amended in 2018. This directive sets mandatory measures to help the EU achieve a 32.5% increase in energy efficiency by 2030 compared to 2007 levels. Measures include energy-saving targets, efficiency retrofits, mandatory energy certificates for buildings, minimum efficiency standards for products, energy labels, smart meters, and enhanced consumer rights.

To achieve these goals, the EU funds research, innovation, and development through the Horizon Europe 2021-2027 program, which is the main instrument for advancing energy research. The program has a budget of €95.5 billion (in 2018 prices), including €5.4 billion from the NextGenerationEU initiative [6].

Conclusions

Over recent decades, European policies aimed at sustainable development have significantly expanded, reflecting a growing consensus on the necessity of sustainability for future well-being. Despite these advancements, implementing these policies faces several obstacles. A major challenge is ensuring coherence across various levels of government—local, national, and European Union—so that policy directives and initiatives are harmonized and effectively executed. Additionally, mobilizing sufficient resources to support ambitious sustainability goals remains difficult, often requiring substantial financial investment and coordination.

Nonetheless, there are clear areas of progress demonstrating the potential for meaningful change. Investments in green technologies have increased significantly, aligning with global technological trends and market demands for cleaner, more sustainable solutions. Similarly, biodiversity conservation initiatives have expanded, reflecting a deeper understanding of ecological interdependencies and the critical need to protect natural habitats.

Integrating sustainability into all sectoral policies continues to be a crucial effort. This integration is vital not only for consistent environmental stewardship but also for the holistic development of economic and social policies that benefit all citizens. In conclusion, while the journey towards complete sustainability is complex and challenging, the strategies and policies adopted by the European Union thus far represent significant progress in the right direction.

Further driving this progress, European integration—encompassing economic, political, and social dimensions—is largely supported by EU institutions and programs. These bodies are designed to promote development, foster innovation, and facilitate research across member states. Central to all European policies is a fundamental commitment to the welfare of its citizens. The EU remains dedicated to upholding and enhancing "European heritage," prioritizing the right to life and ensuring a clean, sustainable, and healthy environment for present and future generations.

As highlighted throughout this paper, European initiatives in the health and energy sectors are critical in guiding us toward a brighter future. Collaborative efforts across these sectors are essential, emphasizing the importance of unity in achieving broad-based developmental goals. It is through collective action and shared commitment that we can build a sustainable future for ourselves and for generations to come.

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ETHNIC NATIONALISM VS. CIVIC NATIONALISM[1]

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Ethnic nationalism: basic characteristics and implications

Ethnic nationalism is an ideology that defines the nation based on a common ethnicity, cultures, languages, and ancestry. Unlike civic nationalism, which emphasises shared political values and inclusive citizenship, ethnic nationalism root's national identity in common heritage and cultural homogeneity. This form of nationalism has been a significant force throughout history, shaping political boundaries and influencing social dynamics. While it can foster a strong sense of belonging and unity among members of the same ethnic group, it also has the potential for exclusion and conflict. This essay explores the main features of ethnic nationalism, its historical context, and its implications in the modern world.

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[1] The essay was originally written in Romanian, and translated in English with the support of the DeepL website (https://www.deepl.com/translator)

Defining features of ethnic nationalism

At the heart of ethnic nationalism is the belief that the nation is defined by a common ethnicity. This includes ancestry, heritage and often blood ties. Members of the nation are seen as part of an extended family with a common ancestry. Ethnic nationalists stress the importance of a homogeneous culture, which includes a common language, traditions, customs, and religious practices. Preserving these cultural elements is seen as essential to maintaining the nation's identity and unity. Ethnic nationalism relies heavily on historical narratives and myths that highlight the nation's ancient origins and continuity. These narratives often celebrate past glories, struggles and achievements, promoting a collective memory that unites members and strengthens their sense of belonging. The concept of homeland is crucial in ethnic nationalism. Nationhood is often linked to a particular territory that is considered the ancestral homeland of the ethnic group. Territorial claims and disputes can arise when several ethnic groups claim the same region, leading to potential conflicts. Nation membership is usually exclusive, based on ethnic criteria. This exclusivity can lead to marginalisation or exclusion of those who do not share the same ethnic origin. Ethnic nationalists often draw clear boundaries between members of the nation and outsiders. Ethnic nationalists seek political sovereignty and self-determination for their ethnic group. This may manifest itself in seeking autonomy, independence, or greater political power within a larger state. The aim is to ensure that the ethnic group has control over its political destiny and can preserve its cultural identity. Ethnic nationalism often uses emotional appeals to foster a strong sense of belonging and loyalty among its members. Symbols, rituals, and ceremonies play a significant role in uniting the community and strengthening ethnic identity. Ethnic nationalists usually resist assimilation into broader national or global cultures. They see such processes as threats to their distinct identity and advocate the protection and promotion of their unique cultural and ethnic traits.

Historical background and evolution

Ethnic nationalism has deep historical roots and has significantly influenced the formation of modern nation states. In the 19th and early 20th century, the collapse of multi-ethnic empires such as the Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman and Russian empires provided fertile ground for the rise of ethnic nationalist movements. These movements sought to create nation states based on ethnic lines, often leading to redrawing borders and significant population shifts. After the First World War, the principle of self-determination was implemented, as advocated by US President Woodrow Wilson, leading to the creation of new nation states in Europe. However, this process also led to ethnic conflict and population displacement, as the newly drawn borders did not always align with ethnic realities on the ground. In the post-World War II era, decolonisation further fuelled ethnic nationalism as the newly independent states faced the challenge of nation-building. Many of these states contained diverse ethnic groups within their borders, leading to tension and conflict as different groups competed for power and recognition.

Contemporary implications

Ethnic nationalism continues to shape political landscapes around the world, with complex and often contradictory effects. Ethnic nationalism can serve as a powerful tool for cultural preservation and empowerment. It mobilises people to protect their heritage, language, and traditions, fostering a sense of pride and unity. The exclusivity inherent in ethnic nationalism can lead to social fragmentation and conflict, especially in multi-ethnic societies. When one ethnic group tries to dominate or exclude others, it can lead to marginalisation, discrimination and even violence. Ethnic nationalist movements continue to seek greater autonomy or independence for their groups. Examples include the push for independence by the Catalans in Spain and the Kurds in the Middle East. These movements can lead to significant political change but can also pose challenges to existing state structures. In an

increasingly interconnected world, ethnic nationalism presents a counterforce to globalisation. While globalisation promotes cultural exchange and integration, ethnic nationalism emphasises cultural distinctiveness and resistance to external influences.

Conclusion

Ethnic nationalism, with its emphasis on common ethnicity, cultural homogeneity, and historical continuity, gives its adherents a strong sense of identity and unity. However, its exclusivity and potential for marginalisation pose significant challenges, particularly in diverse and multi-ethnic societies. As the world continues to grapple with issues of identity, migration, and globalisation, understanding the dynamics of ethnic nationalism remains crucial. Balancing the preservation of ethnic identities with the need for inclusive and cohesive national communities is a critical task for both policy makers and societies. Navigating this balance requires a commitment to diversity, equality, and mutual respect, ensuring that ethnic nationalism does not become a source of division and conflict.

Civic nationalism: defining features and contemporary relevance

Civic nationalism, often contrasted with ethnic nationalism, is an inclusive form of nationalism that defines the nation based on shared citizenship, values, and political principles rather than ethnicity or cultural heritage. This ideology emphasises the role of the state and its institutions in promoting a common national identity, regardless of the diverse backgrounds of its citizens. In the modern world, civic nationalism provides a framework for unity in pluralistic societies, promoting democratic values, equality, and active citizenship. This essay explores the main features of civic nationalism, its historical context, and its implications for contemporary society.

Defining characteristics of civic nationalism

Civic nationalism is inherently inclusive, welcoming all individuals who subscribe to the nation's values and political principles, regardless of their ethnic, racial, or cultural background. It promotes equality before the law and equal participation in the political process, ensuring that every citizen has equal rights and responsibilities. At the heart of civic nationalism is a commitment to shared political values such as democracy, freedom, justice, and human rights. These values form the basis of national identity, creating a sense of belonging among citizens who might otherwise have diverse backgrounds and beliefs. Civic nationalism places a strong emphasis on the rule of law and the principles of constitutionalism. The nation is linked to a legal and institutional framework that guarantees rights and freedoms, ensures the fair administration of justice, and outlines the responsibilities of citizens and the state. Civic nationalism encourages active participation in the political process. Citizens are seen not only as subjects of the state, but as active participants in the democratic process. This includes voting, engaging in public debate and contributing to civic life through various forms of community involvement. Education plays a crucial role in promoting civic nationalism. Civic education promotes understanding of national history, political systems and the values that underpin the nation. It aims to develop informed and engaged citizens who are committed to the common good. Unlike ethnic nationalism, which seeks cultural homogeneity, civic nationalism embraces diversity. It recognises that a nation can be strengthened by the diverse contributions of its citizens, provided they are united by a shared commitment to the nation's values and principles.

Historical background and development

Civic nationalism emerged prominently during the Enlightenment and was influenced by the democratic revolutions of the 18th and 19th centuries. Thinkers such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau and John Locke laid the philosophical foundations of civic nationalism, upholding the principles of

popular sovereignty, individual rights, and the social contract. The American and French Revolutions were key events that embodied these ideas, establishing nations based on shared political values rather than ethnic or cultural ties. In the 19th and 20th centuries, the concept of civic nationalism evolved as more states adopted democratic government and sought to integrate diverse populations into a single national identity. The expansion of citizenship rights, the development of public education systems and the establishment of legal frameworks to protect civil liberties all contributed to the growth of civic nationalism. In the aftermath of the Second World War, the promotion of civic nationalism became closely associated with efforts to rebuild war-torn societies and to prevent the resurgence of authoritarianism and totalitarianism. The establishment of international institutions such as the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights reflected a commitment to the principles of civic nationalism on a global scale.

Contemporary implications

In today's globalised world, civic nationalism offers a compelling model for building cohesive and inclusive societies. As nations become increasingly diverse due to migration and globalisation, civic nationalism provides a framework for unity that transcends ethnic and cultural differences. Civic nationalism promotes social cohesion by fostering a sense of belonging among all citizens, regardless of their background. By emphasising shared values and active citizenship, it helps integrate diverse populations into a unified national community. The emphasis on democratic values and the rule of law in civic nationalism contributes to political stability. Ensuring that all citizens have a voice and that their rights are protected creates a stable and just society in which conflicts can be resolved through democratic means. In an era of rising populism and extremism, civic nationalism provides a narrative that emphasises inclusion, equality, and the rule of law. It provides a basis for resisting divisive ideologies that seek to exclude or marginalize certain groups. Civic nationalism has global relevance as nations around the world grapple with issues of identity, migration, and integration. It provides a model for building national unity in diverse societies, promoting democratic governance and respect for human rights.

Conclusion

Civic nationalism, with its focus on inclusiveness, shared political values and active citizenship, provides a powerful framework for promoting national unity in diverse societies. Focusing on the principles of democracy, equality and the rule of law, civic nationalism offers a path towards building cohesive, stable, and just societies in an increasingly interconnected world. As nations continue to navigate the challenges of diversity and globalisation, the ideals of civic nationalism remain as relevant as ever, offering a vision of unity that respects and celebrates diversity while upholding the fundamental values that bind a nation together.

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