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Patterns of adaptation towards EU democracy promotion in the Magrib: Tunisia and Algeria compared

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Abstract

Much has been written about external democratization of the EU in central and eastern European countries in the context of enlargement, both at theoretical and empirical level, but less about the eastern and southern Mediterranean countries in the context of association and partnership. The paper deals with patterns of strategic adaptation towards EU democracy promotion policy in the case of Algeria and Tunisia. Expectations about these patterns are derived from the 'bigness' of the state. Big states shall be defined as states in transition in which the special combination of large land mass, a huge (and often young) population as well as significant material or immaterial resources constitute factors leading to a distinctive pattern of adaptive behavior towards external incentives. Big states are able to influence their regions and offer leadership beyond their own borders. Big states do not need to adapt to constraints evolving from the external environment because they have alternative policy options and capacities to exploit choices. In international cooperation 'big' states either seek to enhance autonomy or its influence over other states. 'Small' states, by contrast, are more dependent on their external environment. Due to geographical, geo-economical and geopolitical constraints they neither have the capabilities and capacities to become a leader in the region nor the intention to do so. In international cooperation they seek to behave cooperatively and inclusively in order to gain as much benefits from other states as they need to guarantee its survival. Thus, in the case of Algeria, it is expected that the regime pursues a strategy of contention leading to firm rejection as to external interferences in domestic politics and a strategy of self-determination and leadership in international organizations. Tunisia' strategy, by contrast, is expected to be based on cooperation, inclusiveness and a more adaptive behavior towards external interferences.

1. Introduction

Democracy promotion by external actors is very much en vogue, in political practice as well as in academic research. At the later level, discussions about external factors in democracy building processes within states began when globalization, i.e., the growth of deeper interconnectedness between societies, citizens, and organizations across state boundaries, allowed thinking much broader about democratic change and its respective enabling structures. Democratization literature of the first and second generation defined the term as an entirely domestic process of regime change, directed towards establishing and stabilizing substantive democracy in non-democratic, i.e. authoritarian states. Nowadays, scholars agree on the role external factors play in this process of change. Democracy promotion policy is defined as the strategy of international (western) actors to induce authoritarian states to achieve democratic transition or consolidation. It is a utilitarian concept initiated by foreign actors in order to explicitly provoke change. It is, in other words, a concrete foreign policy goal (Olsen 2000).

Democracy promotion policy is conducted by states as well as non-state actors. As far as international organizations (IO) are concerned much academic research efforts have concentrated on the democratizing mechanisms and effects in the European case. Here, studies focus above all on the Eastern enlargement of NATO and the EU (Schimmelfennig 2003; Vachudova 2005, Jacoby 2006). As compared to Europe, IO democracy promotion policy in the Mediterranean region is still an understudied field, at theoretical as well as at empirical level. In fact, the Mediterranean region is an interesting case for this kind of research in two ways: As far as the supply side of IO policy is concerned, empirical studies have shown that democracy promotion policy is highly effective in cases in which the target state is a member of that organization (Kelley 2004, Ethier 2003, Pevehouse 2002) or in which the target state is recognized as an applicant for membership. Here, studies on EU enlargement give useful insights (Vachudova 2005, Schimmelfennig/Engert/Knobel 2003). However, most of the countries of southern and eastern Mediterranean do not have perspective for membership in the EU, external incentives for change, thus, being much weaker than in the case of the eastern European countries. Concerning the demand side of external democracy promotion, the Mediterranean region is interesting to study because domestic conditions for change differ considerably as compared to the eastern European region, for instance. In fact, studies on EU Eastern enlargement have shown that externally induced domestic change is more likely when there is a clear demand for membership requested by political elites and societal actors. Two domestic driving forces facilitate the emergence of such a demand: First, a demand for EU membership in transitional countries is likely to emerge when there is a strong sense of identification with liberal democratic rules and values of the 'West' among political elites and within society. Second, a demand for membership is likely to occur when economic, financial,

and technical benefits of membership are perceived as being vital for the country's future, for security, political or economic reasons. While both driving forces can more or less be identified in the case of Eastern Europe, they are less evident in the case of the Mediterranean countries. As far as the normative factor of identification with the 'West' is concerned, most of the political elites within southern and eastern Mediterranean countries do not agree with the liberal model of democracy. Furthermore, the values of the 'West' are highly contested within society of Arab countries. As for the more rationalist account of costs and benefits calculation, Mediterranean states do not consider the economic and financial incentives of the EU as beneficent. Often, they do not need European financial and economic help to achieve their own political and economic purposes. Or, as compared to major eastern European countries, the political regimes do not perceive the EU as an actor which guarantees stability and security within their country or their regional environments in the Mediterranean.

Thus, conditions under which Mediterranean countries implement externally initiated political change in domestic contexts remain – as compared to the central and eastern European case - underspecified and poorly understood. The paper seeks to contribute to this demand-side research on EU external democratization by analyzing patterns of strategic adaptation in the case of Algeria and Tunisia. In an introducing chapter the paper briefly describes the common EU approach for democracy promotion in the Mediterranean by applying successively three main analytical categories for democratic change prominent in the EU external democratization literature, i.e. political conditionality, economic and financial incentives and strategic socialization. Expectations about behavior are drawn from geopolitics and neorealist IR theory on the size of state on the one hand, and corresponding foreign policy behavior on the other. Big states shall be defined as states in transition in which the special combination of large land mass, a huge (and often young) population as well as significant material or immaterial resources constitute factors leading to a distinctive pattern of adaptive behavior towards external incentives. Big states are able to influence their regions and offer leadership beyond their own borders. Big states do not need to adapt to constraints evolving from the external environment because they have alternative policy options and capacities to exploit choices. In international organization 'big' states either seek to enhance autonomy or its influence over other states. 'Small' states, by contrast, are more dependent on their external environment. Due to geographical, geo-economical and geopolitical constraints they neither have the capabilities and capacities to become a leader in the region nor the intention to do so. In international organizations they seek to behave cooperatively and inclusively in order to gain as much benefits from other states as they need to guarantee its survival, economically as well as politically. Thus, in the case of Algeria, it is expected that the regime pursues a strategy of exclusiveness and contention leading to an openly declared firm rejection as to external interferences in domestic politics. Tunisia's strategy, by contrast, is expected to be based on

cooperation and inclusiveness leading to a more comprehensive approach towards external interferences, e.g. in human right affairs. The paper, then, describes and compares adaptation strategies towards EU incentives in Algeria and Tunisia respectively and discusses critically in which way and to what extent 'bigness' as a category is helpful to explain state behavior.

2. Democracy promotion by international organizations

Scholars writing on IOs' democracy promotion policy quote above all three mechanisms for change: conditionality, incentives and socialization. *Conditionality* implies the installation or consolidation of democracy before benefiting from advantages promised (but not guaranteed!) by foreign actors. A special form of political conditionality is membership conditionality. It refers to a direct link between admission and behavior. The main underlying logic is "reinforcement by reward". According to this concept, IOs react to the fulfillment or non-fulfillment of their conditions by granting or withholding rewards. Coercion, however, is not a legitimate strategy to reach goals. As compared to other forms of conditionality, the ultimate reward is membership (Schimmelfennig/Engert/Knobel, 2003: 496). *Incentives* are described as economic and financial aid, equipment, counseling, etc. that are given to a third state in order to convince or encourage domestic actors to bolster political change. The main difference between conditionality and incentives lies in the mix of sticks and carrots applied: conditionality implies that reward is uncertain while, at the same time, sanction is readily available. Incentive, by contrast, implies that reward is guaranteed whereas sanctions remain highly uncertain (Ethier, 2003: 100). Finally, democracy promotion policy also implies mechanisms of *socialization*. Socialization is understood as a rationalist mechanism as is conditionality or incentives. According to Kelley, socialization refers to the fact that "the external actor does not link any concrete incentives to behavior but relies solely on *the use of norms*, either to persuade, shame or praise actors into changing their policies" (Kelley, 2004: 428, emphasis added). Thus, socialization means the active diffusion of values. It might also be described as instrumental or strategic socialization.

3. EU democracy promotion policy towards Algeria and Tunisia: Mechanisms for change

Political conditionality

As far as political conditionality is concerned, the overall record in the EU policy towards Algeria and Tunisia is weak. Although political conditionality is formally included in the EU-Algerian and Tunisian relationship, it is rarely applied in practice. The concept had already been introduced in

the first generation of association agreements in the 1990s. Article 3 of those agreements allowed for suspension if human rights, democratic principles of governance or the principles of market economy were not respected. While the suspension clause originally included a threat of immediate unilateral sanction, the language changed with the establishment of the Euro-Mediterranean-Partnership (Barcelona process) and respective bilateral partnership agreements to a more diplomatic approach allowing measures to be taken only after mutual consultation. Article 2 of the Euro-Mediterranean association agreement urges to respect human rights and democratic principles. On the whole, the “acquis constitutionnel” (Schmid, 2003:14), nowadays, consists of two interrelated parts: an “essential element clause” and an “appropriate measure clause”. The essential element clause is included in Article 2 which provides that respect of human rights and democratic principles are “essential elements” of the agreement. Interestingly, article 2 differs in the Tunisian and Algerian case with regards to the role democracy and human rights play within the relationship. Article 2 in the Algerian association agreement holds that

“Respect for the democratic principles and fundamental human rights established by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights *shall* inspire the domestic and international policies of the parties and *shall* constitute an essential element of this Agreement” (Prada Leal/Deka 2004, 4, emphasis added).

By contrast, the provisions of article 2 in the Tunisian case are different in as much as they strengthen the role of human rights and democracy:

“Relations between the parties, *as well as all the provisions of the Agreement itself*, shall be based on the respect of human rights and democratic principles, which *guides* their domestic and international policies and *constitutes* an essential element of this Agreement” (ibid, emphasis added).

Article 2, thus, is more determined on human rights and democracy in the Tunisian agreement emphasizing that both concepts constitute the whole relationship between the parties and all provisions of the agreement. In the Algerian case, the role is minor as both parties agree only on the fact that human rights and democracy shall inspire relationship and shall constitute an essential agreement leaving, thus, much more freedom of interpretation as to the power of these EU norms.

Differences continue in respect of final dispositions of the agreement. While in the “appropriate measure clause” article 104 (Algeria) and article 70 (Tunisia) have exactly the same wording providing that in cases of violation the partners may suspend the agreement jointly and after consultation (unilaterally and without consultation in cases of “special urgency”), the association agreement with Algeria includes a separate declaration annexed to the agreement which further specify the conditionality clause. The declaration defines in which way and to what extent unilateral measures of suspension are warranted. Emphasize is made upon “material breach” of the agreement. A material breach consists in repudiation of the agreement not sanctioned by

rules of international law and violation of the essential elements of the agreement agreed in article 2.

In practice, the conditionality clause enabling suspension of policy, has rarely been used by the EU to pressure Algerian or Tunisian government to fulfill obligations. In the Algerian case, the EU retarded negotiation talks for the partnership agreement during civil war in 1994-1995 due to non-fulfilled obligations in economic restructuring matters and due to the murdering of European citizens on Algerian territory. As for Tunisia, EU Commission suspended funding for the Tunisian League of Human Rights (LTDH) for the 1999 presidential election observation in the framework of MEDA-program when the Tunisian government vehemently protested against this funding (Risse et al 2002, 175).

As a consequence of the EU eastern enlargement, a perceived new divide between the 'ins' and 'outs' at the southern and eastern rim of the EU as well as in view of a need to reframe its regional stability and security, the EU launched the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) in 2004. Formally at least, political conditionality, here, is at the very top of the agenda. Based on the logic of partnership and association the new strategy sets ambitious objectives for partnership based on strong commitments to shared values and political, economic and institutional reforms. Partner countries are invited to enter closer economic, political and cultural relations with the EU, to enhance cross border cooperation and to share responsibility in conflict resolution. The EU offers among others a stake in its internal market and in specific functional cooperation programs as well as further economic integration. ENP, in other words, although distinctive from the question of membership, offers an enhanced cooperative relationship in all major areas of European cooperation. The formal right to access to membership, however, is excluded. Instead, a new system of political conditionality is established. Speed and intensity of the relationship with the EU – it is said - will depend on the willingness and capability of each partner country to engage in this framework. The extent of benefits depend on the degree of commitment to "shared values", notably democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law. As a consequence of weak compliance towards conditionality within the former relationship and in order to improve monitoring of these commitments, the EU follows mechanisms and instruments included in the conditionality regime for the CEECs and also the Western Balkan states. In fact, one of the critiques about the former system holds that no mechanism has been set up in the framework of Barcelona to monitor and take initiatives on human rights violations in the countries party to the accord (Amnesty International 2002). Like the former two types of enlargement processes, the ENP envisages extending twining and technical assistance. Similarly, monitoring mechanisms as the Country reports are modeled on the Opinion progress reports of the Commission and the Annual reports for the Western Balkan. Also Actions plans for each country are introduced in the new framework. Together with the Country reports, Action plans constitute the main instruments of inducing and monitoring

compliance in human rights issues, good governance and democratic institutions (Magan 2006). Finally, at the institutional level, compliance towards conditionality is aimed to be monitored by an enhanced system of institutions adapted from the enlargement process. Progress in compliance shall carefully be monitored in the committees and subcommittees established by the agreement and which shall meet more frequently than in the Barcelona framework.

Economic and financial incentives

Instead of political conditionality, EU democracy policy towards Algeria and Tunisia is above all based on incentives or “positive conditionality”, i.e. enforcement through the definition of concrete goals coupled with appropriate incentives without, however, including sanctions in cases of non-fulfillment. Incentives comprise economic cooperation as well as financial and technical assistance. Economic cooperation is based on the project of a free trade for industrial goods. In fact, the partnership agreements call for significant economic liberalization on the part of Algeria and Tunisia. Corresponding costly domestic political and economic reforms shall be mitigated by technical assistance, training, as well as financial compensation through the so-called MEDA (Mediterranean Assistance) program. The funds, together with concessionary loans through the European Investment Bank (EI), are designed to bolster private enterprises and support privatization. While the ultimate purpose of economic and financial incentives is the same – free trade for industrial goods – the instruments to compensate adaptation costs differ considerably. In fact, Tunisia has been one of the major beneficiaries of MEDA-program. The overall total granted to Tunisia over the period 1995-2006 exceeds EUR 1 billion (around 12% of available funds) while Tunisia’s population represents only 5% of the population of the Mediterranean region. As far as functional fields of support are concerned, funds has been implemented above all on macroeconomic issues and governance support (32%), on economic cooperation and the private sector (25%) and social issues such as education, health, employment (24%) (European Commission 2007b: 10-11). Algeria, by contrast, is only sixth placed among countries receiving MEDA-program financial assistance. The overall total granted to Algeria over the period 1995-1999 and 2000-2006 is around EUR 500 Mio. While MEDA I focused on developing the private sectors and the country’s socio-economic balance, MEDA II targeted preparation for the entry into force of the association agreement (European Commission 2007a: 13-14).

In both cases, thus, most of financial assistance is focused on economic liberalization. ENP does not really change these prerogatives. As for Algeria, main planks of the 2007-2013 national indicative programs in the framework of the association agreement are the reform of the justice system, the economic growth and employment as well as improvements in basis public services. Tunisia, for its part, objectives are similar. The NIP indicates: economic governance,

competitiveness and convergence with the EU, human resources and improvements in employability as well as sustainable development. Although the main strategy for development is now much more focused on “good governance” as recommended by the World Bank (World Bank 2003) the EU still bases its policy on the prominent assumption that economic development and liberalization will lead to greater political liberalization and, in the end, to democratic institutions. Strong economic incentives combined with moderate or symbolic political pressure on governments shall lead to economic reforms based on the “Washington consensus” which, then, shall slowly reduce the government’s power, expand the influence of the private sector, and promote the rule of law (Dillman, 2002: 66).

Strategic socialization

Although to a much lesser extent, EU democracy promotion policy towards Algeria and Tunisia also include a strategy of active diffusion of European “moral” norms, i.e. political, social and human rights, as well as democratic values and rules. Goals are to be achieved in two ways: promoting and reinforcing the “idea” of (liberal) democracy within Algerian and Tunisian civil society on the one hand, and developing shared beliefs and expectations about appropriate (democratic) behavior through dialogue among political and bureaucratic elites on the other. As for the former, the EU has launched so-called MEDA-projects on democracy in the mid-nineties. These projects, initiated and implemented by the European Commission are directed towards the media in order to reinforce its place in society and against the government, towards the urban youth in order to make Islamist parties less attractive to them, and, finally, towards women’s groups (Algeria case). On the whole, however, EU funding for human rights and democracy aiming at supporting civil society rather than government activities, is rather weak. As for the Tunisian case, for instance, only 3% of total granted MEDA financial assistance has been given to civil society projects in 1995-2005. Furthermore among these funds, only two of the committed projects have successfully been implemented in MEDA I (Karkutli/Bütznier 1999: 110) Again for MEDA III, tendencies are rather modest for the Tunisian case. Preparation and implementation of projects committed to the media and justice have been considered by the Commission as delicate “due to their very nature” (European Commission 2007b: 11). Progress on the political aspects of the relationship, thus, has been considered as slow and for some of them – such as freedom of expression and association – very slow. By consequence, in scheduling the period 2007-2013 and in view of serious difficulties in implementing MEDA III programs such as on media, justice and support for NGOs, the Commission recommends not to focus on civil society and human rights issues but instead, to concentrate on strengthening the rule of law by improving the mechanisms of good economic governance (European Commission 2007b: 13). As for Algeria, MEDA figures for the issue of democracy and human rights seem to indicate that cooperation works better than in the Tunisian case, at least during

the last years. For instance, after signing the agreement, cooperation in general, became much more efficient in quantitative terms. Rates of payment improved significantly until 2003 reaching nowadays 28% of the amounts committed under MEDA approaching, thus, as the Commission document underlines, the norm. But even quality has improved. The Commission underlines that Algerian authorities now have been fairly open and receptive in the context of MEDA III generation program supporting Justice, NGO and the Media (European Commission 2005: 2; 6). However, as compared to Tunisia, only around 5% of total granted of the period of the last 25 years, i.e. from the first cooperation agreement in the 1970s until now, has been committed to, implemented in or are previewed for projects in civil society.¹

As far as political dialogue is concerned, the goal is to erect foundations for dialogue and modest cooperation within the multilateral framework of Barcelona in order to avoid clashes between Algeria and France, for instance, over issues of internal interference. Hope was vested in an ongoing dialogue between officials on both sides as well as among parliamentarians and the civil societies. These opportunity structures shall motivate Algeria and Tunisia to adapt its behavior – adaptation in the sense that a common understanding of democracy, human rights standards, and the rule of law would evolve facilitating reforms within the country. Political dialogue is expected to result in some kind of socialization processes by which shared norms and beliefs are internalized in Algerian and Tunisian domestic practices.

4. Bigness as analytical category

Geopolitics and its neorealist corollary in IR analyze foreign policy behavior of states from an outside perspective upon the state's international position and respective relative powers. They are preoccupied with explaining behavior of states by looking at their physical attributes (Cavatorta 2001, 177). Among those structures are population, territory, gross domestic products, export volume and military capacity leading to different degrees of capacities and vulnerabilities as to the impact of the external environment on their account of preferences. The capability of small states, for instance, was frequently questioned due to their vulnerability towards international political and economical pressure. Small states, it was said, have limited diplomatic power and military strength and, thus are unable to defend themselves from their larger neighbors (Thorhallson 2006, 9). They were considered as having only little international power and a foreign policy which is rather reactive than proactive. By contrast, large states distinguish from small states in as much as they pursue a proactive foreign policy (Keohane

¹ Own calculations based on the various project sheets published on the homepage of the delegation of the European Commission in Alger.

1969). Population, for instance, determines the development in social and economic terms whereas the natural resources impact on the way economic development evolves. Assuming that states are rational self-interested actors and that their overall preference in foreign policy is to guarantee its own security and stability (defensive realism) or to seek for autonomy or influence (offensive realism) small and large states do pursue different interest in international cooperation. While small states might enter international cooperation in order to improve their voice opportunity structures vis-à-vis larger states, for instance (Grieco 1995), large states might be interested in international cooperation in order to gain more influence on states than they would gain by virtue of their bilateral relations. Small states are weaker in the sense that they are hardly in a position to control the influence coming from the international environment. Large states are stronger in the sense that they have the potential capability to successfully defend or increase their autonomy or influence upon others.

Ottaway/Herbst/Mills (2004) have applied these assumptions about foreign policy behavior on transitional states and the way these states adapt towards external democratization efforts. They assume that external democratization is extremely difficult to succeed in what they call 'big' states. Big states are states in transition in which the special combination of large land, a huge (and often young) population as well as significant (natural) resources constitute factors leading to specific political dysfunctions at the political, economic and societal level. Big countries are distinctive with regard to geography, population and economic size along with their regional role (perception) and political orientation. Big transitional states have the potential and the willingness to influence their regions and offer leadership outside their borders. As far as the impact of international factors is concerned, big states are less constrained by conditionality or other forms of incentives; they have alternative policy options and are able to exploit choices. Small transitional states' population, by contrast, is small as it is their territory and they do not have significant material or immaterial resources. Katzenstein (1985), for instance, argues that small states are more adaptive towards the external environment than large ones. He elaborated outcomes and processes across different policy sectors for seven small European countries with regard to the adjustment of their industrial policies and their foreign economic policy preferences. The author coded typical forms of behavior by comparing small state behavior with large one. His argument is that small states differ from large ones in their basic conditions. As for economic openness, for instance, small states' behavior is much more orientated towards international liberalization because the economic structure is less diversified than that of large states. Small states are heavily dependent on the import of investment goods and other products for which their domestic markets do not offer sufficient economics of scale (ibid: 87). Although applied to western industrialized small states, the case of small transitional countries is similar since those states are strongly affected by changes in the external environment, particularly in larger systems of states to which they belong. These changes can have serious

destabilizing impacts for their regimes. Economically, they are rarely, if ever, self-reliant and depend to some degree on more advanced nations to provide them with the consumer goods they lack and with technological assistance (Deeb/Laipson 1991: 221). Large countries, in this respect, do have more choices.

Thus, in terms of EU democracy promotion policy, it should be expected that the Algerian regime pursues a strategy of confrontation and self-reliance while Tunisia' strategy, by contrast, is expected to be based on cooperation and inclusiveness.

4. Strategies of adaptation: Algeria and Tunisia compared

Algeria

Algeria is a big country in terms of population, territory, national GDP and other key economic data. With its location at the crossroads of Europe and Africa as well as of Occident and Orient, and its large agricultural and extensive natural oil and gas resources, Algeria is crucial for the stability of Europe. These factors determine Algeria's pattern of strategic behavior towards EU democratizing incentives. Strategy can be described as self-determination (exclusiveness) as far as negotiation position and political conditionality are concerned, contention with regards to economic and financial incentives and a strategy of openly declared rejection in issues dealing with human rights, the rule of law and democracy.

A strategy of *self-determination (exclusiveness)* becomes evident when analyzing negotiation process for the association agreement. When the EU suspended negotiation talks for partnership agreement in 1994-95, this form of sanctioning did not matter to Algeria because Algerian economy is to a large degree rich of revenues from natural energy resources. Algerian economy does not need trade with the EU to nurture its own population as long as international oil and gas prizes increase. In fact, the oil boom has allowed Algeria to rapidly increase its fiscal revenue on an unprecedented scale. Energy revenues have made Algeria even a net creditor towards the rest of the world (European Commission 2007a: 9). Self-determination became once again evident when the Algerian authorities, for their part, explicitly slowed down negotiation talks in 1997 and 1998 although the EU Commission encourages them to pursue talks. Again, Algeria was not pressed to conclude the association agreement because the world prizes for oil and gas increased considerably and did not necessitate structural adjustments of the Algerian economy anymore (Morisse-Schilbach 1999: 117; 2001). The fact that Algeria only signed the agreement in 2002 further confirms this argument. Finally, empirical evidence for a strategy of self-determination is demonstrated by the recently launched ENP. Here, Algeria is the only country (beside Ukraine, rejecting ENP, however for other reasons) which openly

declared for several times that it would not participate in the ENP. Only recently, the Algerian ambassador to the EU in Brussels, Halim Benattallah, once again made clear that Algeria wants to be outside the framework arguing that the existing framework within Barcelona and the association agreement perfectly corresponds to Algerian's interests in relations with the EU. As compared to other partnership agreements as in the Tunisian case, for instance, Algerian authorities succeeded in introducing policy areas of interest such as energy cooperation, personal mobility issues (visa), cooperation in counter-terrorism and transport into the agreement.² Considering the fact that all these issues being now part of the ENP strategy, Algeria, thus, - it is said - does not need to be part of ENP because the existing framework roughly covers already what is in the interest of Algeria. Algeria, arguing from a position of strength vis-à-vis the EU, has been able to negotiate specific deviations from the Barcelona framework.

Contention is also part of the Algerian strategy vis-à-vis economic cooperation and financial incentives. In fact, EU governments hoped for a long time that Algeria's need for access to the European market would be acute enough for the concrete offer of a preferential trade agreement to provide sufficient motivation for progress on political reforms (Young, 2004 [2001]: 105). But reality is different: Algeria has a range of opportunities to deal with EU incentives. The regime can extract advantages from the international system's globalization as a whole energy export being the most beneficent one. Furthermore, Algerian economy is less depended from trade with the EU than Tunisia, for instance. In 2004, the EU was the destination of only 54% of its total exports and the source of only 54% of its total imports (European Commission 2006a: 58). Negotiation, thus, dealt less about economic than political issues. Here, two points of divergences became evident during negotiation talks. Interestingly, the EU made serious concessions on both of them. In general, Algerian interests in the relationship with the EU are much more political than economic. Prevention of terrorism and free movement of persons, not trade with the EU are traditionally on the agenda for negotiations and talks. Concessions of the EU emerged with regards to article 2. In fact, Algerian authorities had been able to negotiate a deviating, say weaker article 2 on human rights and democracy because they had a powerful leverage. As compared to the Tunisian case, for instance, counter-terrorism is part of the agreement. Constantly accused of human rights violations during the civil war, the regime has used the 11 September attacks to legitimize its own fight against armed Islamism and finally, itself as the guardian of the Algerian state. 9/11 enhanced the Algerian negotiation position because it helped to reaffirm the regime's assessment of the Islamist "threat" and to find those international support it has been seeking for so long (Martinez 2005: 22-23; Garçon 2003: 390-91; Zoubir 2005: 179). Counter-terrorism, in sum, makes the Algerian authorities a credible, but also powerful interlocutor for the EU. Another field of

² El Watan 4.September 2007, "Alger exprime son refus".

concession is the debate about readmission. Also not being part of other association agreements like that for Tunisia, Algerian authorities negotiate from a position of strength. Due to a rising flow of migrants to the European territory, the EU is more interested in negotiating a readmission clause with Algeria than with Tunisia, for instance. The Algerian regime, however, preferred for a long time bilateral agreements with each EU member states knowing that some countries had less severe immigration policies than other (Morisse-Schilbach 1999: 117). Algerian authorities only began to negotiate with the EU when justice and home affairs such as visa policy provisions became part of the EU Commission's negotiation mandate. Since then, Algeria requests from the EU a more open and favorable visa policy for Algerian citizens wishing to travel to EU-Europe.³

Finally, an *openly* pursued policy of *rejection* is part of Algerian adaptation strategy. With regards to human rights issues, the regime declared on many occasions that any external intervention in Algerian internal affairs would be firmly rejected. For instances, Algerian authorities interrupted the negotiations talks in 1997-1998 because the increase of external pressure for mediation and diplomatic intervention following a new wave of violence and atrocities in Algeria has been perceived as clear rupture with the sovereign right of any state to solve its internal problems on its own. Strategy of rejection corresponds with traditional patterns in Algerian foreign policy. In fact, more than any other North African country, Algeria traditionally, vigorously opposes any role for outside actors in Algerian domestic affairs, whether by governments, international institutions or nongovernmental organizations unless authorities themselves ask for financial support as it was the case during the financial crisis in the mid-nineties when Algeria accepted, although reluctantly, restrictive international structural adjustment programs imposed by IWF and World Bank (Lesser, 2001: 10). Despite military stalemate and political deadlocks combined with a serious economic and social crisis which might once again end in riots similar to those of 1988, as some predict (Garçon 2003), there is a traditional reluctance to openly accept the need for assistance or mediation by outside powers. The country remains sensitive to the notion that a foreign power could intervene in its internal affairs. Although more pragmatic visions of foreign policy leaders emerged within the last years, Algerian officials, nevertheless, still underline strong alternative political option of the country when they state that "the country is a leader rather than a follower when it comes to shaping its domestic and international policy" [Acacem, 2005: 156). This strategy of firm rejection towards external interferences is confirmed with regards to ENP. As it has been shown in section three ENP is more about political than economical leverages as compared to the Barcelona framework. Algerian authorities, therefore, have emphasized doubts when underlining that the ENP framework is similar to the conditional regime of IMF and World Bank, the latter,

³ Le Quotidien d'Oran, 31 May 2006, „Politique de réadmission contre visas“.

however, being considered as failed.⁴ The recent increase in MEDA III funds for civil society projects might, in this sense, be interpreted as being only lib services towards EU democracy promotion.

Tunisia

Tunisia is a small transitional state in terms of population, territory, key economic data as trade and FDI dependency, for instance. Its geographic proximity to Europe is similar to that of Algeria. These factors significantly determine the course of its foreign policy, i.e. the adaptive behavior towards EU democracy promotion. Tunisia adaptive strategy can be described with inclusiveness as far as negotiations and political conditionality clause are concerned, cooperation with regards to economic and financial incentives and a strategy of disguised adaptation in issues dealing with human rights, the rule of law and democracy.

It comes as no surprise that Tunisia, by virtue of its smallness as well as its proximity to and deep interwovenness with the EU has been the first southern Mediterranean country signing up the Barcelona agreement with the EU in 1995. Correspondingly, Tunisia has been one of the first five Mediterranean countries assigning ENP. In fact, a strategy maximizing *inclusiveness* to the EU seems to be evident. The association agreement is of vital interest of Tunisia international status. Asking about the role of the association agreement for Tunisia's international place as former Third World state, president Ben Ali underlined that this is "our bridge to the status of a developed nation" and a "concrete illustration of the respect Tunisia enjoys". Tunisia "is proud of it (the association agreement) in that we are determined to use it as our ticket to join the elite of developed countries" (quoted in Geyer 1998, 101-102). Negotiation with the EU on association agreement, thus, took only two and a half years indicating that process had been smooth and productive on both sides. With regards to the ENP, the EU/Tunisia Action plan of 2005, jointly prepared by Tunisia and the EU, notes that rapprochement with the EU represents a constant and fundamental foreign policy choice for Tunisia. ENP will allow Tunisia to strengthen the strategic foundation of this choice whilst respecting its national identity and characteristics. Tunisia, in joining ENP, wants to give a new dimension to every aspect of the relationship with EU and accepts therefore deepening their political, economic, social, cultural and scientific ties with the EU as well as on issues of security and environmental cooperation accepting, thus, the more obvious conditionality regime under ENP. With regards to readmission, for instance, Tunisian authorities have stated their willingness to discuss EC readmission agreement linking its engagement with parallel discussions on further socio-economic development into EU rules and norms (European Commission 2004: 11).

⁴ Le Quotidien d'Oran, 2 September 2007, „La politique de voisinage et le fait accompli“.

As far as economic and financial incentives are concerned, firm *cooperation* is central piece of strategy. Tunisia was one of the rare Arab and Mediterranean countries that recognized the importance of the European integration process for its own destiny. This derives from the close links between Tunisia's security interests and economic growth and from the dependence of its prospects for growth on trade relations. For instance, Tunisia's central planners realized already in the 1960s that negotiation over preferential trade arrangements would be of vital interest of the Tunisian economy, and in the end of its internal security. As one of the first countries in the Mediterranean Tunisia's authorities established specific cadres of EC technocrats equipped to deal with the complicate issue of supranational economic policymaking in Brussels (Deep/Laipson 1991: 231). Nowadays, Tunisia is the MENA country with the highest degree of integration in the European economy. The EU's shares of import increased to 70% by the end of 2004 while the share of Tunisian exports to the EU rose to more than 80% of total export (European Commission 2006a: 58.). Among export products, textiles and agriculture is relevant whereas the most important import sectors from the EU are manufactured goods, tourism and above all FDI.⁵ As for the latter Tunisian leaders continually show significant efforts to portray Tunisia's small, extroverted economy as stable and healthy and therefore suitable for foreign investment. With a view to the single European market, for instance, Tunisia followed a two-track strategy. One has been to promote the idea of Tunisia as a platform from which non-EC countries can enter the EC taking advantages of Tunisian's associative and benefits. Second related strategy consisted of encouraging partnerships based in Tunisia in which Tunisian manufacturing enterprises would benefit from outside investment and technology and the jointly produced wares could then compete on new markets, in the EC or elsewhere (Deeb/Laipson 1991: 281-82). Tunisia's strategy is to promote its advantages as an offshore manufacturing area for European companies – particularly in textiles based on the availability of a cheap and skilled labor force and the geographical proximity of Tunisia to the European markets (Spencer 1993: 39). Accordingly, it is expected from Barcelona and ENP that these frameworks will change perceptions and strategy of foreign direct investors substantially so as to invest more in the Tunisian economy. FDI shall be convinced by legitimizing Tunisia as a credible and reform-oriented partner. Credibility and legitimacy are enhanced by virtue of its close institutional embodiment with EU both on political as well as bureaucratic level as well as of its firm commitments to harmonize Tunisian regulation with the rules and norms of the EU, especially in terms of privatization and diversification (Martinez/Hibou 1998: 11). This strategy of concentration on the EU as main trading partner is precarious making Tunisia's small and open economy vulnerable to external economic shocks. In order to deal with this challenge Tunisia, interestingly however, does not look for strategies to diversify trading partners. Instead,

⁵ Tunisia is the country with the highest amount of FDI inflows among MENA countries. FDI was around 8 billions Euro at the end of 2004 as compared to Algeria, for instance, with a total of 0,8 billions Euro (European Commission 2006a: 65).

Tunisian authorities seek to even deepen relationship with the EU beyond trade including cultural, educational and technological ties. As a Tunisian official remarked: "We must watch the EC closely. Where it goes, we must follow" (quoted in Tessler/Entelis/White, 1995: 443). This almost integrationist position can be further exemplified by looking at the adaptive behavior towards conditional programs of international financial institutions. Unlike Algeria, which consistently sought to avoid dependence on international financial institutions perceiving them as limiting sovereignty, Tunisia always showed (as in the 1980s) close ties to these bodies along with a firm willingness to adhere to conditionality terms (Dillman 1998: 2). The overall strategy consists of giving foreign investors a clear incentives and condition under which to bring capital to the country's economy, especially in the energy, tourism and manufacturing sector.

Finally, the strategy of firm cooperation and integration into the EU system of rules and norms in economic and commercial affairs becomes evident when looking at the structural adjustment program of the Tunisian government. Although emerging in most Mediterranean countries signing partnership agreements with the EU, governmental programs tightening the nexus between the state and dominant private sectors in view of the free trade area has mostly advanced in Tunisia. In fact, President Ben Ali set up a whole range of new state-controlled institutions to guarantee a firm governmental control on preparing business. As a result of the association agreement the government introduced a *Plan de Mise à Niveau* that provide for a highly state dominated process of reform (Youngs 2004 [2001]: 68). Sadiki even goes so far as to suppose that the extraordinary rigid upgrading program of the Tunisian government leading to significant modernization at levels enabling business to emulate standards of developed country, might reflect the strategy of the government to improve future candidacy for EU membership (Sadiki 2002: 127). The strategy of the ENP to integrate associated states into EU regulations in functional policy areas such as environment, single market or transport, might, in this respect, explain Tunisian enthusiasm for the ENP.

As sensitive towards EU interference in its domestic political and societal affairs as Algeria which vigorously declares rejection, Tunisia prefers to *disguise* rejection and contention while promoting at the same time *adaptation* in human rights and democracy affairs. As a matter of strategy, far fewer cases compared to the Algerian case, are reported in the media with regards to rejection on political issues. Although Tunisia considers ENP as a means of establishing its relations with the EU on a more individual basis declaring, thus, its willingness to discuss all subjects in this context (European Commission 2004: 5), including issues of human rights, the rule of law and democracy, practice deviate seriously from this engagement. For instance, Tunisia rejected funds in the framework of MEDA about a project on FDI improvements and on support for the *Banque tunisienne de solidarité*, because implementation and control of this project by the EU Commission was perceived as not to be in line with methods of governments'

control and implementation of external aid (Martinez/Hibou 1998: 11). In a similar way, MEDA democracy challenged the way the Tunisian governments treats groups of the civil society such as human rights NGOs. Although perceived by southern NGOs as highly useful, MEDA funding flow has been criticized as being too slow and application and selection procedures opaque and not transparent. This is why Tunisia, as Jünemann indicates, had been able to block the funding of projects that were originally been considered as eligible and already approved within the framework of MEDA democracy program.⁶ Interestingly, in order to avoid further political tensions with the Mediterranean countries such as Tunisia, the EU Commission decided not to finance southern NGOs that represented ethnical minorities or that were close to the Islamist political movement anymore (Jünemann 2002: 95, 103). In order to avoid influence of the EU on domestic affairs, the main strategy of the Tunisian government seem to consist in retarding already approved projects of Tunisian civil society agents, particularly in the human right issues systematically. At the same time, however, it pursues an adaptive strategy in order to avoid damages with regards to reputation and legitimacy of the country as a quasi-developed state in the world. President Ben Ali – it is said – does not hide abuses. In some cases, he forms an investigate committee. Besides, the promotion of the values of human rights has become, it is said, a basic component of school curricula and of the training of law-enforcement cadres (Wood 2002: 99).

But adaptation goes even further. Unlike in the Algerian case, there are also signs of –although modest - socialization into EU norms. The EU has been successful after using hard pressure in the joint EU-Tunisia association council during the UK presidency in 1998 to convince Tunisian official to change course in particular human rights cases. The Tunisian government initially refused to discuss individual cases. The EU had an impact in as much as authorities while being firm on the rejection of overall ideas on democratic freedoms of the ‘West’, released prisoners and left bans on some human rights groups. Youngs supposes that pressure of the EU even led to some kind of changes in the domestic discourse of Ben Ali who, for instance, had made human rights a center piece in its speech at the 1998 RCD congress (Youngs 2004 [2001]: 77). But even on a more political level, Tunisia is a more active interlocutor as compared to Algeria. As one of the first southern Mediterranean countries adopting an ENP Action Plan in 2005, Tunisia has entered into far-reaching undertakings on democracy, governance and human rights. In this context, the Tunisian government has accepted the establishment of an

⁶ Incidence is reported as follows: The Tunisian League of Human Rights concluded in 2002 a contract with the EU Commission which should help to finance restructuring and modernization of the League’s administrative apparatus. While receiving the first slice of funding in 2002, the second related slice had been blocked by the respective Tunisian bank on request of the Tunisian ministry of internal affairs in 2003 for reason interpreted unanimously as of pure political nature. Tunisian authorities continuously block funding of the EU Commission in order to retain control on certain civil society agents, particularly those engaging in human right affairs, others, however being beyond any suspicion (Limam XXXX: 328; Mack 2005: 8).

intergovernmental sub-committee for human right issues in the framework of the association agreement (European Commission 2007b: 5) although its implementation being retarded as EU Commission documents note with regrets (European Commission 2006b: 2).

Table 1 summarizes the two patterns of strategic adaptation towards EU democratizing mechanisms in the case of Algeria and Tunisia.

Table 1: Patterns of strategic adaptation

	Algeria	Tunisia
Political conditionality	Self-determination (exclusiveness)	Inclusiveness
Economic and financial incentives	Contention	Cooperation
Socialization (norm transfer)	Firm Rejection	Disguised adaptation

6. Conclusion

The aim of the paper was to collect and to systematically compare empirical material on adaptive behavior of Tunisia and Algeria with regards to the three democratization mechanisms prominent in the EU literature on CEECs. Following conditions of bigness as an analytical framework providing expectation about behavior, it comes as no surprise that a) Tunisia and Algeria adapt differently and b) that the adaptive behavior of Algeria resembles typical patterns of big states whereas Tunisia seems to be the prototype of small transitional states behavior, similar to Singapore and Taiwan of today or Greece and Spain at the time of their accession to the EC. Bigness as an analytical category helps to focus on divergence and counterbalances, in this respect, the overwhelming majority of studies treating Algeria and Tunisia as convergent cases in terms of its democratization process. In fact, regarding literature on both countries two features are discernible: convergence as for the process and degree of democratization and predominance of domestic factors explaining these processes. In fact, in both countries factors such as political culture (Addi 1994), religion (Leveau 1993a; Reif/Tessler 2005), level of economic development and rent-seeking (Zartman 1991; Dillman 2002, 2001; Bustos 2003; Joffé 2002a, 2002b; Murphy 2001, Henry 2005) weakness of civil society (Sadiki 2002a, Jünemann 2002; Feliu 2005), the elite strategic choice for high level of coercion (Murphy 1997; Sadiki 2002b; Chourou 2002; Hibou 2006; Volpi 2000, 2006; Garçon 2003) or lack of democratic opposition (Willis 2002) are identified as factors explaining the low level of democratization. While both countries, apparently, have the same democratization process and

degree, it remains puzzling in which way and to what extent these findings fit in with clearly different adaptation strategies towards EU democracy promotion and apparently, some impact of the EU in the Tunisian case. One reason could be that in both cases (as in other Mediterranean countries) EU transfer of norms and rules is highly dependent on public agents. In both cases state elites, for instance, seek to use resources from the international economy to shape and sustain a coalition of winners from economic reform and whose members are not interested in democratization. Both regimes implant reforms demanded by the EU, but both regimes do that by creating new mechanisms to regulate actors, expand regime power and expand coalition (Dillman, 2002: 69, 71). Economic incentives in regimes like Tunisia and Algeria lead to side payments, rents and compensations constantly nourishing the state and its subordinated structures so that the regime is able to continue to distribute benefits to its winning coalitions, hence to avoid substantive democratization. Domestic structures, in other words, are mediating factors between external incentives for change and domestic politics leading, thus, in the case of Tunisia and Algeria – although highly different in terms of their bigness – to similar practices. Despite long lasting and outstanding relationships with the EU, it is plausible to deduce from this, that democratization process in both cases is above all a determined domestically. Adaptive behavior to the EU democracy promotion policy and reported impacts might, in this sense, be interpreted as lib services in both cases, more in the Algerian than in the Tunisian. As a first cut, condition of bigness, is good in explaining different foreign policy behavior. A second cut, however is needed to explain convergent outcomes despite divergent strategic foreign policy behaviors. While in the Algerian cases reported strategic adaptation nicely fits in with democratization outcomes (big state - strategy of contention, rejection and self-determination - low level of democratization) the Tunisian case is puzzling. Here, the reported foreign policy behavior of cooperation, inclusiveness and disguised adaptation contrasts with low level of democratization.

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