

Rethinking Euro-Mediterranean cooperation: new approaches for research and education

Alessia Chiriatti
and Ester Sigillò



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Alessia Chiriatti and Ester Sigillò
With Emidio Diodato and Maura Marchegiani

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Introduction

Alessia Chiriatti and Ester Sigillò

The hopes triggered by the outbreak of the so-called 'Arab Spring' in early 2011 have given way in the following years to scenarios marked by numerous elements of concern and alarm. "Dignity" (*karama* in Arabic) was one of the most resonant words in the chants of the protesters who toppled the regimes in early 2011 in Tunisia and Egypt. The protesters' many demands included political pluralism, citizen participation, and socio-economic rights. After eight years the situation is disappointing for all those who saw in the Arab uprisings a possibility of emancipation for peoples who had lived for decades under non-democratic regimes. Eight years after 2011, the record is bleak: on the one hand, certain states have collapsed, with areas of civil war and political chaos benefiting organizations like the Islamic State – in Iraq, Syria and Libya; on the other, authoritarian regimes have survived or – in the case of Egypt – returned to power under a new form.

The only country that makes an exception has been Tunisia, which gave hope for a fully-fledged pathway of democratization. However, the Tunisian success story is more and more threatened by the issue of social inequalities, one of the mainsprings of the 2011 revolution, which seem to have been forgotten and sacrificed on the altar of negotiations and compromises among political forces from different sides which managed to get along precisely by ignoring the socio-economic issue of the most disenfranchised strata of the population. Moreover, pluralism is also threatened today by the return of a certain logic of the state's 'securitisation' fuelled by the threat of terrorism.

The issue of the blurred borders between freedom and security also arises in non-Arab countries. Indeed, the crisis of democracy and civil society has become global and concerns the European Union as well, facing both internal and external challenges. In fact, the European Union itself is under threat from within – its decision-making processes and supranational identity are progressively challenged by Eurosceptic member states – while from the outside – third countries and groups (such as the Islamic State) are questioning its founding values. The consequence is that the EU foreign policy now needs to take into account new parameters, including hostility, reduced attractiveness/leverage with neighbouring countries, hesitations from its own foreign policy ranks, and even fundamental doubts from within (Pierini, 2018).

The EU thus responded to challenges that occurred in the Mediterranean region after 2011 by officially stating that it wants to change the terms of its commitment and the setting of priorities that take into account the demands of each country. At the same time, it reviewed its long-term programmatic policies, such as the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), focusing in particular on the review of the guidelines and principles of conditionality, the key partnership instrument with the countries of the southern shores of the Mediterranean.

But one has to wonder whether the priority given to the instrument of conditionality is sound. Indeed, not only is it notoriously difficult for Southern Mediterranean countries to comply with the conditions it sets, but in addition, the principles on which conditionality is based do not take into account the post-Arab Spring context conditionality, relying solely on the existence of asymmetrical relations between the EU and North Africa, and the assumption that the European model is attractive and relevant for these societies. Therefore, if the EU wants to change the nature of its relations with the countries of the southern shores of the Mediterranean it must rethink in depth how to establish a dialogue on equal terms with the Arab world, articulated around the interdependence and pursuit of common interests. In other words, faced with the changes in the Mediterranean region, it is necessary to rebuild the Euro-Mediterranean partnership and change the paradigm, also thanks to educational and cooperative programmes.

Asymmetrical political relations between the two shores of the Mediterranean have also influenced the field of academic research. Indeed, many academic works focusing on 'EU democracy promotion', or on the 'normative power of the European Union' (Manners 2002) have been conducted by adopting a very biased European perspective, thus neglecting all the specificities of the Arab countries. Therefore, the rethinking of Euro-Mediterranean relations should occur not only at a political level, but also at the level of research and education.

All the objectives mentioned above constituted the rationale that inspired the FEP/IT project ("Formation for Experts in Transnational Euro-Mediterranean Process for the Internationalization and Cooperation between Italy and Tunisia) – born from an idea of the University for Foreigners of Perugia and funded by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. The pilot project has been conceived as a new way of studying and moulding euro-Mediterranean relations on the exemplary case study of relationships between Italy and Tunisia, which represent the bridge of the Mediterranean. Indeed, the two countries represent two strategic partners from both a material and symbolic point of view. For Tunisia, Italy is the gateway to the European Union, the cultural influence of Italy and the development of commercial relations. For Italy, the closest of the Arab countries is the key to the balance of the Maghreb. Tunisia has always played a leading role in the Mediterranean region, thanks to its policy of openness and moderation, asserting its pivotal geographical position in the basin as a central point of activity between Europe and North Africa and between the Maghreb and the Mashrek (Sigillò, 2018).

The FEP/IT project represents one of the first concrete attempts at rethinking the paradigm of cooperation starting from young people from the two shores of the Mediterranean.¹ The programme, in fact, was presented to a small group of ten students (Italian and Tunisian), who attended a total of 90 course hours. The latter were divided into two parts: one (30 hours) in e-learning and the other (60 hours) of classroom attendance at the University for Foreigners of Perugia. At the centre of the educational programme, the project included focus and topics related to security, civil society, intercultural mediation, migration, the use and evolution of mass media, public, European and international law, development cooperation, economy, and cultural heritage. At the end of this course, the students developed one month of project work in a partner institution, Tunisian students in Italy and Italian students in Tunisia, in order to address the political, sociological, environmental situations of the two countries under study, always guided by the spirit of exchange and cooperation.

The strength of the project was in the connecting of students coming from different backgrounds and approaching the study of Euro-Mediterranean relations through different interpretative and communicative instruments, such as using different languages to communicate (specifically English, French, Italian and Arabic). The name of the project itself reveals the effort and the way that students, together with the tutors and university educators, pursued the final goals of the course: students were required to move outside of their 'comfort zone' and come in contact with different cultures, examining in depth the actual models of cooperation and conflict in the Mediterranean region, together with the processes of troubled change and geopolitical transformation mentioned above.

With this approach, the components of this small group, together with the tutors and leading university educators, were put in the condition to interact among themselves with a spirit of cooperation, blending their ideas and background knowledge, even on the fieldwork during the evolution of the project works that the students had been called

on to realize for a period of one month at the end of the educational programme. For the realization of the programme, the leading group's composition and its involvement were fundamental to guarantee from one side the realization and the implementation of the programme in every single step, and, from the other, to intercept the student's inclination and the transnational linkages among the stakeholders involved. Namely, the group was composed by academicians and administrative workers. Prof. Emidio Diodato was the creator and the scientific coordinator of the programme. Dr. Alessia Chiriatti and Dr. Ester Sigillò were appointed, respectively, to the e-learning and classroom lessons. Moreover, they followed the students as tutor before and during the internships' experiences in Italy and Tunisia. Prof. Maura Marchegiani was the International Law advisor, as she actively recommended the students on how to develop their project works during two seminars in Tunisia. Cristina Mercuri was the administrative figure who provided for all the logistic and bureaucratic documents at any stages of the programme, being constantly in contact with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and with the other University for Foreigners' offices.

The comprehensive nature of this project made it possible to bridge two separated fields of study: the first focused on the Mediterranean cooperation, from a political, sociological and legal point of view. It is in fact essential and unavoidable to evaluate how much the Mediterranean region is rich and flourishing as a matching² space between different cultures, even if, at the same time, it could be considered a space of division, disparity and separation (Huber, Nouira, Paciello, 2018). The second is the study of the actual situation of the learning processes in International Relations. Thanks to the choice related to the structure of the educational programme (with a step organized in distance learning and with performances in attendance in the classroom), the FEP/IT programme dedicated great attention to the active learning strategy. Distance learning, together with simulations and games organized during the classes, required the students' participation and decision-making throughout the learning process, allowing for the practicing of real-life behaviours in a realistic environment (Zapalska, Brozik, Rudd, 2012).

The Mediterranean Sea, instead of dividing, puts Europe and Africa together (De Cesaris, Diodato, 2018, p. 13). The education processes at the centre of the FEP/IT project reveals in some way that the notion that the Mediterranean represents a clear fracture line could be rejected: "the historical vantage point allows us to look at the Mediterranean as an area where political, economic and cultural dynamics go beyond pre-defined boundaries based on essentialized notions such as north-south, development/underdevelopment, democracy/authoritarianism or Islam/Christianity" (Cavatorta, 2018, p. 24). Following these directions, this book aims not only to present the output of the FEP/IT project, but also to consider the evolution of the instruments and tools for the educational programmes, specifically related to International Relations and cooperation for peace and development; to put a lens on the geopolitics in Mediterranean space and on the actors involved in this space; to evaluate the situation of the cooperation in the Mediterranean space from the point of view of International Law; and finally, to address the evolution of the FEP/IT programme, thanks to the presentation of the project works drawn up by the students enrolled in the course, that represent the conjunction between the educational sphere and the Mediterranean fieldwork (Italy and Tunisia above all).

The book is structured with chapters linked to all these arguments presented above: Emidio Diodato will explain the change of paradigm in the geopolitical relations, specifically including the role of the actors involved. Ester Sigillò will focus on the EU's response to Mediterranean socio-political changes after 2011 by analysing the policy determina-

cy of its statements and the political cohesion of European member states vis-à-vis the 'Mediterranean predicament'. Maura Marchegiani will draw attention to international law in cooperation specifically related to the Mediterranean dimension; Alessia Chiriatti will illustrate the role of active learning and its approach in International Relations, with specific focus on the FEP/IT programme case study. The last part of this book, with an appendix, will illustrate the project works produced by the students involved in the FEP/IT programme and applied to the Italian and Tunisian cooperation.

Notes

¹ More information can be found at this link: https://www.unistrapg.it/sites/default/files/docs/concorsi-selezioni/181009-bando-fep_it-italiano.pdf

² Considering the UniMed programme, starting for example from the Virtual Exchange Erasmus+ Programme, different students from different cultures have the chance to debate on a same platform, eliminating borders and gates, with a specific interest for the South-south cooperation.

Geopolitics: the study and teaching of international politics

Emidio Diodato

Introduction

In political science, the term geopolitics suggests that politics is determined by geographic factors and it is often recalled how traditional geopolitics was a tool for the foreign policy of dictatorships. If geographers have been able to rehabilitate the term under the guise of critical geopolitics, in political science there is no significant room for critical geopolitics. When territoriality is debated among political scientists, the discussion is in terms of persistence or obsolescence of states rather than in terms of historical changes and transformations (Agnew 1994; 2016). This mental gaze (or “territorial trap”) is misleading since the logic of power embedded in territories deborders sovereign authority over territories (Sassen 2013). IR (International relations) scholars, in particular, do not seem capable of seeing how politics and geography intersect to make the world the way it is. There is a sort of silent treatment given to space in mainstream IR (Agnew 2016a). Furthermore, in recent years there has been a renewed effort to use the term geopolitics with a simplistic attitude. Current international relations are discussed as if hostage to the emergence of continuous security crises. It seems that the raging fashion of geopolitics – which Gearóid Ó Tuathail (1996, 88) critically captured with the expression ‘It’s smart to be geopolitical’ – is coming back.

The aim of this chapter is to present two arguments. The first is that the territorial trap in IR gains its strength from a view of international structure which, by defining itself in terms of itself, excludes the international as a field of social inquiry. As a consequence, a paradigm shift in IR is needed in order to open the trapdoor. Secondly, IR scholars can avoid oversimplifications of the world’s complexities by bringing the social back in IR. This move will require a strong revisiting of the study and teaching of international politics.

The need for a paradigm shift in IR

Paradigm shifts in the social sciences may occur along two different paths: on the one side, there is a pluralistic vision of paradigms; on the other, paradigms are viewed in a narrowly monistic way. In the first case, following Robert Merton (1968, 69-72), many paradigms can coexist in every sub-field of social sciences. In the second case, following Tomas Kuhn (1962), radical shifts between paradigms derive from changes from old to new assumptions shared by the scientific community. According to this last perspective, special stress can be put on the move from traditional geopolitics to contemporary geopolitics. However, as Yosef Lapid (1989, 244) stated, quoting in turn Fred Halliday, “the way forward for [international relations theory] that finds itself in difficulties is not to pursue ‘normalcy’ of the Kuhnian kind but to work towards a diversity of strong paradigms”. According to Halliday (1994, 23-24), “while writing in IR needs to be methodologically aware and explicit, IR itself is not methodologically specific in the sense of raising issues of theory or method distinct from other social sciences”. If we reject the criticism directed against Kuhn about the social sciences as “mob psychology”,¹ then the monistic vision of paradigm and the pluralistic one may converge in IR.

As Emanuel Adler (1987, 4) underlined, quoting Stephen Toulmin, in the social sciences “paradigms ‘are not true’ in any naive sense. Rather they take us further (or less further) and are theoretically more or less fruitful”. Paradigm choices are not a matter of faith, and every change of paradigm develops circularly from a widespread acceptance of preceding ideas. No scientific revolutions are strictly possible if by this, as with early Kuhn, a radical discontinuity is meant (Zolo 1989, 170).²

We do not need ambitious projects of paradigm demolition in IR.³ We need to assume the international as exceeding the political structure of the system in which states operate. In opposition to IR inability to think of the international from a historical and sociological point of view (Rosenberg 2006, 312), world politics can be seen as the concrete or effective reality moulded by those forces acting in the social and physical realms. In other words, the international system has no predetermined or fixed structure that, otherwise, would constrain processes. There are no a priori structures nor structures extrapolated from empirical evidences. By focusing on the changing function of territories, rather than on states as unitary actors, their number or rationality, the geopolitical inquiry will be more indebted to a system-of-action perspective than to political structures of international relations.

The majority of IR scholars tend to place historical evolutions within structured international systems, despite the plurality of state-formations in the context of international relations. This is particularly true among those scholars who adopt a rationalist viewpoint. On the one side, there are rational realists that argue that the international anarchy operates like a reasonable mechanism, which, by constraining units, orders their interactions. According to Kenneth Waltz (2000, 27), “international political theory deals with the pressures of structure on states and not with how states will respond to the pressures”. On the other side, there are rational liberals who tend to observe empirical regularities in order to generalize about the way in which units behave in pursuing their preferences. According to Andrew Moravcsik (1997, 520), for example, “liberal theory assumes that the pattern of interdependent state preferences imposes a binding constraint on state behaviour”. For constructivism, indeed, social interactions are dynamic relations and, therefore, historically constructed. According to social constructivism there is no single valid methodology nor a universal structure based on truths about the world. However, whenever critical or reflexive stances in IR are related to the notion of social emancipation, new structures are expected to replace the old ones. Social stances are generally related to the possibility of re-structuring the international system, for example on human rights replacing state sovereignty. According to Tanja Börzel and Thomas Risse (2013, 84), unwillingness to comply with international human rights norms would require both “socialization mechanisms” (to link rights-violating states) and “capacity-building” (through the strengthening of statehood in rights-violating areas). A sort of elective affinity of constructivism and humanitarianism in IR emerged as a hidden (or not so hidden) teleology of history (Kratochwil 2017).

Contrariwise, a geopolitical approach will require the placing of the international system within its historical evolution. Human rights have a solid theoretical background in the recognition and empowerment of individuals. But communitarian stances can challenge decisive aspects of human rights’ promotion. Today, almost every political community professes to respect human rights. In the past, humanitarian stances oscillated between the Kantian non-interventionism of the eighteenth century and the Mazzinian-Wilsonian interventionism of the nineteenth century. Of course, traditional geopolitics considered the international system as globally governed by geographical factors. However, by moving towards a re-theorization of geopolitics, the international becomes the output of permanent processes of change, ac-

ording to the different political interpretations of the nexus between societies and the natural environment. It is not a category that scholars can universalize through a set of human values considered as internationally acceptable despite their constructed nature. The conceptual basis of the international system from a geopolitical viewpoint is the earth where human beings live. As Slavoy Žižek (2017) rightly underlined, we can only accept to be just another species on a small planet and affirm that what enforces this acceptance is our very global destructive power. In this sense, we can also recall the words of Agnew (1994, 54) while issuing the territorial trap: “a state is territorial much like life on earth is terrestrial”.

At any rate, by focusing on the international, new analytic concerns and substantive questions emerge:

1) the (a) territoriality of political violence and the move towards international policing (Holmqvist 2012, 228);

2) the tendency towards the agglomeration of economic activities in major cities (Sassen 1994, 51-52);

3) the emergence of networked societies, or the so-called global connectivity revolution (Khanna 2016);

4) the process of national and regional securitization on the background of transnational identity questions (Wæver 1995, 76);

5) the still open process of modern secularization, despite the alleged revenge of God (Kepel 1994).

All these issues are global in scope, but they emerge in different ways in different regions. Territorialism in the space-of-places, on the one hand, and de-territorialism in the space-of-flows, on the other, are coextensive processes in world politics. As Colin Flint (2001, 12) once argued: “the scale of politics should not be our initial concern, but the politics themselves”. This means that historical political structures of the international system are moulded by those forces able to operate in a broader, although regionally differentiated, international environment.

Kuhn (1962, 93) considered transitions towards new paradigms as scientific revolutions. Just like political revolutions, they are inaugurated by a growing sense that existing institutions have ceased to adequately meet problems posed by the environment. It is frequently recalled that Kuhn described these ontological changes with reference to the natural sciences. However, he observed epistemic communities composed predominantly of social scientists and was struck by the number and extent of overt disagreements between social scientists about the nature of legitimate scientific problems and methods. In the social sciences, even more than above, the proverb mentioned by Kuhn (1962, 79) himself applies: “It is a poor carpenter who blames his tools”. In current IR debates, we live in what Kuhn (1962, 47-48) considered as pre-paradigm periods, i.e., those phases of scientific development marked by deep debates over legitimate methods, problems, and standards of solution. These debates often serve to define schools rather than produce agreements. Nevertheless, a new approach may emerge, far removed from a cumulative process, if we reconsider IR from its geopolitical fundamentals. With this goal in mind, in the next paragraph the study and teaching of international politics will be reconsidered as an “added form of knowledge... in the IR/Political Geography dialogue” (Lapid 1999, 899).

The study and teaching of international politics

Inside the states or domestically, geopolitics concerns the timing and spacing of human social activities. It emphasizes the association between power and the settings of social

interaction, including the physical aspects of the place within which they are concentrated. States are containers of power, which spread their action and influence over the whole planet. Exactly this trend has created both the universal recognition of territorial sovereignty and the conflicting erosion of boundaries, with the increasing interdependencies of strategic, economic and cultural life. In other words, national hegemony accrues a dominant group by virtue of its capacity to lead society in a direction perceived by subordinate groups as serving a more general interest. Objective material conditions (economics) and the influence of ideas (politics) constitute hegemony in a single container. States are never fully territorially bound. However, centralized governments can reinforce the capacity of dominant groups to rule as serving a general interest.

Outside of states, the background of geopolitics is the world system as a whole. The contribution of the world-systems theory is relevant in this regard, since it connects intra-state and inter-state plans of hegemony within a single framework. However, the notion of hegemony is elusive when applied to the international system. The general interest cannot be defined in terms of an increase in power of a single state over others. This conceptual difficulty has favoured the affirmation of realists and liberals in IR: according to the former, the rise of a dominant power generates the tendency to polarization through the balancing of powers; according to the latter, there is also the possibility of bandwagon effects that increase interdependence between states. Rationalists, be they realists or liberals, see states as constrained by the international structure exactly for the reason that they are territorial units. However, international hegemonies have historically been raised in contrast to permanent structures. It is in cases of systemic chaos and crisis that the demand for international order becomes more and more general among the political rulers of different states. Thus, the power in the position to satisfy this system-wide demand for order and stability has the opportunity to be perceived as serving a more general interest and to become hegemonic (Arrighi 1994, 30).

Concentrations of solutions to chaos and crisis in certain phases are characterized by policy punctuation as resulting from efficient adjustment to environmental demands. The geographical location of hegemonic states in the course of history has been of primary importance in this regard. Hegemonic forces from the Italian city-states in the ancient Mediterranean to the United States on the current world stage have found successful spatial fixes of allocative and authoritative resources, increasing the size of their container. In this general framework, hegemonic transitions have occurred in times of crisis by relying on the nexus between the space-of-flows of business transactions, on the one hand, and the space-of-places of governments, on the other. The location of powers has become even more binding in the course of history. This trend has been governed by political choices and not by de-politicized economic laws. Nonetheless, far away from a teleological process, this trend has been global in its scope since it has produced an increase in the size of the containers.

The world-systems theory helps in recognizing this process. The changing fortunes of liberal democracies, and the rise of authoritarian powers such as Russia and China, may only be understood with reference to the onset of dramatic global shifts, which have been taking place in the context of late twentieth and early twenty-first century globalization (Öniş 2017). It is important to underline the value of the world-systems theory, in particular with reference to hegemonic succession as a permanent process of geopolitical change and power concentration. This is particularly true for the analysis of today's events in the Mediterranean, where at least three global challenges arise: 1) the migratory pressure from Africa to Europe; 2) Russia's return to regional competition; 3) the new Chinese silk road. However, the tools of the world-systems theory are not always useful in understanding transformations.

In the 1980s, the theory played a significant role in the resurgence of political geography and critical geopolitics. Yet, what had been a fertile organizing framework of space-time interplay, came to be identified in the 1990s as a deterministic straitjacket for geopolitics. Critical focus upon agency and representation was opposed to the axioms of the world-systems theory (Flint 2010).

In the field of political science, the study of international politics can be focused on the interplay between the world-system, on the one side, and domestic politics, on the other. In this regard, the study of domestic fundamentals of foreign policy is relevant since they are the outcome of social forces operating simultaneously on the domestic and international stages. That is to say, “the governments of states and their various agents can develop ‘foreign’ policies based on state identities and interests” (Agnew 2011, 232). The territorial trap in IR arises when scholars view spatial ordering through the lenses of states as fixed and absolute “container[s] of society” (Agnew 1994, 68-71). But if territories are liberated from the fence of methodological nationalism, which equates social boundaries and state boundaries (Chernilo 2001, 98–117; Agnew 2010, 782), then the trapdoor can be opened, and states, and their foreign policies, remain at the core of the study of international politics (Vollaard 2009, 697). What is important to underline in this process is that as a pattern of dialectic adaptation to a complex, multifaceted environment in which multiple informational input flows are processed by different political systems, domestic foreign policies will produce distributions of international changes as a result of the accumulation of social problems. Concentrations of solutions in certain phases will be characterized by bursts of activity and policy punctuation in a specific region, i.e., the result of a more or less efficient adjustment to environmental demands.

Italy and Tunisia represent two important countries in the Mediterranean region: it is necessary to create cultural bridges between these two states that divide the eastern Mediterranean from the western Mediterranean. Political territoriality has changed throughout history, and the functions of boundaries in the different social systems have changed as well. As already mentioned, what has been constant is the tendency towards the concentration of power in increasingly larger containers. In modern times, the tendency has been towards hegemonic dominance within ever wider territories. It is not necessary to accept the general axioms of the world-systems theory to recognize this nexus between historical hegemonies, on the one hand, and the development of world capitalism, on the other (Guzzini 2011). However, today we are witnessing a great economic transformation as the consequence of two events, i.e., the admission of China to the WTO on 11 December 2001 and the effects of the 2007/2008 financial crisis. The Chinese experience, but also the experience of the BRICS, represent different styles of integration into the global political economy based on significant state interventionism involving continued protection of the industrial sector, and control over capital flows. A different kind of capitalism compared to the western one that is in crisis is emerging as a serious rival to the established model of the free market in the United States and the social market in Europe. In the Mediterranean, we are also witnessing two other dramatic processes, namely the difficulties in the European integration process and the radical social changes in North African societies.

Redefining research topics, also involving Italian and Tunisian students, can be a very useful tool for the Italian and Tunisian foreign policy. In this regard, we need to link the study of international politics and its teachings. Role theory can help achieve this goal. Its central concept – role – is a metaphor taken from the theatre. In social science, there are two broad categories of role theory: the structural one relates to the extent and circumstances under which the social structure influence decision-makers; the symbolic-psychological one empha-

sizes how decision-makers are socialized into roles, but are also able to reinvent roles and change social structure (Breuning 2016). Role theory first emerged as an approach to the study of foreign policy with Karl Holsti, who suggested that perceptions, values, and attitudes of decision-makers matter in explaining foreign policy behaviour. Holsti's approach was based on purely primary sources such as speeches, parliamentary debates, radio broadcasts and press conferences of foreign policy officials (Holsti 1970, 256). More recently, the analysis of roles has been based on the use of secondary sources in the form of scholarly accounts. The chapters written by Alessia Chiriatti and Ester Sigillò in this volume contribute to this debate to the extent that the work with the students helps us understand the symbolic-psychological context emphasizing how decision-makers are socialized into roles, also reinventing social structure. Moreover, cooperation has changed during recent years faced with the emergence of highly and constantly networked societies: new challenges are emerging (at territorial levels and stages) centred around the abovementioned questions related to processes of national and regional securitization against a background of transnational identity issues and the still open process of modern secularization, together with other questions concerning the role of actors participating at different levels in the IR debate. The study and teaching of international politics, together with research on this matter, cannot overlook the consideration of the entangled factors related to security, economic and cultural dimensions that find a place in geopolitical analysis.

Conclusion

In international politics, there are as many narratives as there are many agents and roles. Sometimes narratives are one-sided representations, but there are always other sides to consider. The purpose of working with Italian and Tunisian students is to overcome methodological nationalism in the social sciences, also replacing it with both a historical and social understanding of the international.

Moreover, this examination of the evolution of the disciplines through its traditions, debates and paradigms could also be useful, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, for evaluating the significance and roles of theories in International Relations. In fact, this approach justifies, in the face of some criticism, that theory has not divorced from practice. Theory has been considered several times as the "ivory tower" of academia, whereas applied studies are linked to several fields of application, such as the diplomatic practice (Guzzini, 2011). During past decades, classical studies have been important for training professional figures like diplomats, giving them the general and time-independent skills to decipher and respond to changing political situations. Nowadays, the approach needs to be updated, joining the factual teaching (with rudiments and notions from international law, history, economics and politics) together with the so-called "soft skills" of intellectual self-distance, reflexivity, the capacity to respond to changing challenges and to negotiate across national boundaries.

The consideration of this approach is moreover important if we use it to reconcile the theories with what is represented by the applied studies (Wallace, 1996), in order to teach and to continue to research them. Theories are used to describe the observable actions of those individuals and actors directly involved (like pluralism), or to focus on observable behaviour (like realism and liberalism) (Gormley-Heenan and Lightfoot, 2012).

When connecting these links, it is functional to affirm that, firstly, all empirical analysis implies theories and that they are not something to be added on later during a second

step or at the end of the process. Secondly, in times of changing patterns of knowledge which is important and useful for cross-national communication and transnational negotiations, the teaching of theory can help the construction of citizenship and cultural and contextual awareness. Thirdly, “teaching and researching in theory, including fundamental research, has been a major ingredient in moving academic communities out of the (semi-)periphery” (Guzzini, 2011, 14). Again, when considering the analysis of (traditional and critical) geopolitics, it is useful to read the world order and the predominantly historical passages. In the application, basically, analysing the international policies under the geopolitical lenses represents the bridge between observation and decision (at the decision-making levels).

Notes

¹ In his first works, Kuhn seemed to suggest that the move from one paradigm to another was a matter of faith, or what Imre Lakatos called “mob psychology”. This would make any notion of an inter-paradigm debate contradictory. On the issue of incommensurability between paradigms in IR see Whigt (2002, 31).

² For Kuhn’s modified stance on this subject see Kuhn (1981).

³ On this point see Zielonka (2012, 502-525).

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The Challenges of Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation under the prism of international law

Maura Marchegiani

Introductory Remarks

The field of international development cooperation generally poses particular challenges, due to all its characteristics, which have obviously influenced its structure and nature, as well as the legal approach towards it.

First of all, it is a recent legal phenomenon, which only acquired its normative, conceptual and systemic autonomy during the 20th century and in particular after the Second World War as a result of the idea that development could be universalized to the advantage of all humanity.

Secondly, it is a very large, heterogeneous and varied phenomenon, because it is articulated at a universal level, as well as at a regional level, with formulas and characteristics that change significantly according to the circumstances and which are based on sources differing greatly one from the other in terms of their nature (binding or soft law), their structure (bilateral or multilateral standards), and their effectiveness (therefore they may be guiding principles, or programmatic standards, or even simple performance requirements).

It is finally a sector where the protagonists (i.e. primarily the donor States on one side, and the receiving States on the other) are on a deeply skewed plane, and seeing that the protagonists of the international law are the creators and at the same time the subjects of the legal obligations, this obviously has consequences once again on the content of the standards in terms of development cooperation, as well as on the synallagmatic nature of the relationships that will be created.

In this context, the Mediterranean space is a laboratory entirely emblematic of the asymmetrical nature of cooperation; indeed, it represents a small synthesis of various contrapositions, especially in a geo-political context, full of still unresolved endogenous tensions. And in time this has prevented a real overview of the Mediterranean (as observed with the failures of the Barcelona process, as well as the Union for the Mediterranean), in a context that has recently been aggravated by the migration crisis.

Because of all these characteristics, the law of development cooperation is a very fragmented legal phenomenon, since it is articulated on different levels. It is also an interdependent and cross-cutting discipline that affects several sectors of international law, in particular concerning international economic law, environmental law and the protection of the rights of the individual. In addition, it also touches on areas other than law, such as technological innovation, ecology, pollution, health issues, sociology, zootechnics, and it is therefore necessary to make a coordinated effort among all the different issues and tensions that are at stake.

The evolution of the notion of “development” in international law

The major challenge that development cooperation poses is therefore very complex, and it can be summed up precisely by the attempt (yet again) at finding a common thread in a such a vast, evanescent and fragmented theme.

A possible key to reading would consider the purpose of the main objective of cooperation which is, or should be, the promotion of human development. In fact, it has recently been stated that there is an increasingly close binomial between development cooperation and the protection and promotion of human rights. In other words, the concept of development is no longer exclusively tied, as it was originally right after the II World War, to strict productive growth, but is centred on the human being, and from here the concepts of sustainable development and social development arise. In this sense, the affirmation of the idea of an individual right of access to development takes place in a double perspective in terms of international law. It is based primarily on a strictly classical intergovernmental dimension, that is to say, in the less developed countries' right, during the process of formation, to participate satisfactorily in the dynamics of the global market and international economic dynamics. There is, however, an individual dimension, centred on the right of peoples, as well as the right of every individual, to participate in development decision-making processes and to benefit without discrimination from economic growth. It is also clear that these two dimensions have as ultimate beneficiary the individual, the human person. The most recent dynamics and practice in the field of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation can therefore be analysed under this particular prism, notably the gradual affirmation of an individual right to development.¹

To this end, after a brief historical-legal framework describing the evolution of the global development cooperation discipline, some of the most recent and controversial instruments used for regional development cooperation will be analysed.

The cooperation is obviously based on an exchange, an exchange through which the various actors involved get richer: cooperation is not a question of a unilateral reception, nor especially of volunteerism: at the base, there are always interests, of strategic, economic or political nature, to establish a regime of cooperation. These are normally mutual interests, not necessarily coincidental, but there must be an exchange of interests. From this point of view, after having traced the characteristics and aims of development cooperation in general, a concrete dimension will be explored, through the analysis of a specific dimension of development cooperation between the countries of the Mediterranean Sea. This is a context particularly problematic and at the same time fascinating, given that Mediterranean Sea represents a large liquid border between the Countries of the northern and southern shores and between which there is a profound asymmetry.

The Mediterranean context makes it possible to reflect on one issue which is therefore valid on a universal scale: development cooperation represents a sector to be managed with extreme caution. Even today, in fact, the borders of most of the former colonial States have remained those designed together by the European chancelleries during the Berlin Conference of 1873. Moreover, economic relations have often remained standing and, in some cases, been strengthened by unilaterally exerted pressure on various fronts and even by military interventions, as in the specific cases of relations between Mali and France or between Libya and Italy.

The emersion and the evolution of the legal question of development at an international level

In the framework of international relations between States and international Organizations, the process, through which the development cooperation model has evolved, has been characterized by the dynamism of the actors involved and by the flexibility of the instruments used.

The idea of development cooperation is in fact based on the finding of a profound asymmetry, which starts from the assumption of a structural distinction between developed and developing countries, a symptomatic distinction characterised by a certain rigidity, as it is based on a sort of hierarchy deriving from the level of development, which therefore sees the advanced countries as a model to imitate and, more or less at the bottom, the backward countries, that must be transformed, from a structural, economic and social point of view, in order to advance and pursue the model of the developed countries.²

Although the different historical phases are all characterized by profound social and economic gaps with strong inequalities in the distribution of natural resources and economic wealth, profound and epochal changes have become necessary in the international community to allow the question of development to acquire an autonomous dignity on a political and legal level.

The end of the Second World War and the birth of the UN have in fact favoured the affirmation of two geopolitical processes of particular importance such as, in particular, the passage from the era of so-called coexistence to that of international cooperation on the legal and institutional level,³ as well as the affirmation of the principle of self-determination of peoples, which put an end to the colonial era. These circumstances constituted the factual and legal preconditions for the affirmation of the notion of “international development law”.

The UN Charter in particular recognizes the interdependence between political, economic and legal factors as an essential component characterizing international society.⁴ Cooperation therefore acquires a broader dimension and systemically invests in many sectors of international relationship life, including the sector of peace and security, as well as that of economic and social cooperation, in full awareness of the link between economic and social cooperation and the establishing of lasting peace conditions.⁵

It is therefore within a more general dimension that the theme of development must be framed: the processes of economic growth cannot be considered merely in their “productivistic” dimension, but also in their interactions with other equally important sectors that international law regulates and considers worthy of protection. It is in this dimension that the integrated concept of human development takes shape, considered that it concerns the relations of interdependence and admixture that are established between international development law, human rights, international environmental law and peace processes.⁶

Despite having played and continuing to play a fundamental role in stimulating and coordinating development cooperation, it must nevertheless be clarified that the UN does not have adequate tools for global economic governance, nor the financial resources to carry out direct interventions.

The European Union as an international actor of development cooperation

The UN represents the typical expression of institutionalized cooperation at a universal level, even if the limits that characterize its structure and functioning do not always allow the Organization to respond adequately to the needs of the current international community. At a regional level, instead, more or less successful attempts are being made to develop models of development cooperation through forms of commercial, economic and in some cases even political integration that not only aim to create a mere coordination in the respective actions, but also aspire to pose as the typical institutional form assumed by the international law of interdependence.

In this perspective, the typical model at a regional level is the EU, which has always included development cooperation in its external action, even if, with the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, this sector has been the subject of a profound revision.

Title III, entitled Cooperation with third Countries and humanitarian aid, explicitly states the objective of outlining a complete and satisfactory set-up of the subject, which is achieved primarily through the clarification of multiple legal bases of the action aimed at development cooperation, as well as economic, financial and technical cooperation with third countries.

According to the broad picture outlined in articles 208 ff. of the TFEU, the development cooperation policy sets the goal of reducing and eliminating poverty in developing countries, through the attribution to the EU of a parallel concurrent policy. In this perspective, Member States and the EU are required to act in compliance with the principle of coherence, understood not only in its negative sense, or in preventing the hypotheses of contradictions in sectoral and transversal interventions, but also in its positive meaning, i.e. to ensure full compatibility between the development cooperation policy and all other related policies.

In implementing the development cooperation policy, the criterion of internal and external complementarity of the interventions of the EU and the Member States is in force to guarantee the effectiveness of aid on the basis of a rational coordination and coordination between the institutions and the governments, promoted by the Commission, which does not exclude the possibility of joint actions however. Respecting the competences of the EU and the Member States in cooperative matters, both the EU and the Member States cooperate with third States, beneficiaries of direct assistance, as well as with the international Organisations in the typical form of cooperative multilateralism (art. 211 TFEU).

In this dimension, the most recent cooperation strategies developed by the European Union appear to be aimed at pursuing other interests with respect to the typical and classic objectives of development aid.

Cooperation with Third States in the management of the migratory flows in the European Union perspective

This attitude is particularly evident in the initiatives implemented in terms of external relations and in particular in the new partnership framework for cooperation with third countries, especially in Africa, drawn up by the Commission last June and in the initiatives connected thereto.⁷ In fact, this initiative starts from the idea of promoting an innovative use of the existing international cooperation instruments with the countries of origin and the origin of the flows, with the risk, however, of producing purely rhetorical reflexes and ending simply by increasing the interdependent relationship between the concepts of development and security, so that development cooperation is exhausted in “serving” security-related needs, denaturing, in essence, the very idea of cooperation.

The pursuit of specific interests, in a logic of reciprocity, is indeed traditionally based on large-scale partnership programmes and not only for the management of migration with third countries of origin and transit flows.⁸ Moreover, this approach represents a constant feature in the external dimension of European policies on immigration and asylum, especially in the last fifteen years.⁹

It is therefore clear that development cooperation cannot be based on mere “charity”, but rather, on the search for mutual benefits and the pursuit of the interests of each of

the parties. This also applies to migration policies: in developing a renewed partnership strategy with third countries, in order to cope with the exceptional dimensions of the current migration crisis,¹⁰ it is therefore clear that the objective of guaranteeing adequate management of migration flows can also be pursued through the granting of a series of benefits for the countries of origin and transit of flows.

Within the framework of large-scale partnership programmes for the management of migration with third countries of origin and transit flows, the European Union and the Member States are used to ensuring not only the supply of vehicles, support staff and infrastructures for the treatment and management of migrants, but also, to an increasingly incisive extent, a series of advantages in terms of access to and participation in institutional forms of cooperation,¹¹ provision of preferential mechanisms for the entry of citizens in the countries of destination,¹² and aid to development,¹³ given the commitment by third countries to guarantee greater control of their outgoing borders.

The objective of guaranteeing adequate management of migratory flows through the granting of a series of benefits for the countries of origin and transit of flows, in a logic of reciprocity, therefore represents a constant feature of the external dimension of European policies on the subject of immigration and asylum, especially in the last fifteen years. In exercising this prerogative, however, the European Union, the Member States and Third States all have the obligation to respect, each in its own sphere of jurisdiction, the substantial and procedural limits that international law enforces, with particular regard to respect for the rights of applicants for international protection.

The new EU partnership framework for development cooperation

The recent initiatives implemented by the European institutions to deal with the migration crisis, however, present some problematic profiles, which concern, *inter alia*, the question of their full compatibility with the international obligations incumbent in various capacities on the European Union and its Member States.

The partnership framework developed by the Commission in June 2016, aimed at cooperation with individual Countries of origin or transit,¹⁴ has been repeatedly recalled by the European Council, which defines it as an innovative strategy to deal with the exceptional dimensions of the current migration crisis and to counteract its root causes.¹⁵ This instrument has been designed, in the Commission's strategy, to pursue rapid and operational repatriation of irregular migrants; apply the necessary levers for the rapid achievement of tangible results in the fight against immigration, making use of all relevant EU policies, mobilizing spheres of competence of the Member States and seeking synergies with Member States to ensure effective collaboration in the management of the migration phenomenon with the countries of origin and transit of migrants.

However, this initiative gives rise to a considerable number of critical remarks. In fact, from the wording of this communication, the approach does not appear particularly innovative, because in reality it proposes to exploit the already existing instruments of the EU and the Member States in the field of cooperation in order to stem migration to Europe.

It also clearly emerges that the Union's greatest concern is not development cooperation, but rather, to ensure that the flows are contained. What prevails is a logic of deterrence, which represents for the EU the main objective to be pursued in relations with third Countries. More generally, this new partnership framework risks cementing a shift towards a foreign policy that only needs one goal, to curb migration, at the expense of European credibility and the ideals that, at least abstractly, the EU encourages and promotes,

such as the protection of fundamental values and human rights.

A further element of concern lies in the fact that the financing proposed in the partnership would require an overall re-orientation of the European Union's development planning towards the objective of ensuring a decisive brake on migratory movements. This approach, if corroborated, would risk posing as an unacceptable contradiction with the commitment to use development cooperation with the aim of eradicating poverty, as sanctioned by the Lisbon Treaty. Indeed, in the most traditional and authentic sense of the concept of development cooperation, aid should benefit people in need, and should not instead be used as a lever for controlling migration.

Some critical remarks concerning the external dimension of the EU approach to migration

Forms of international cooperation, such as those to which the European Union has paid increasing attention, risk being essentially preordained to the pursuit of interests strictly connected to the need for security and containment of migratory flows, as they do not point to the actual creation of a link between European States and beneficiary States of aid, a link that can only be based on effective and equitable cooperation and not on a latent, continuous subordination. Moreover, such tools are not completely compatible with the aims of international cooperation, as they end up being simply instrumental to the pursuit of interests other than the logic of cooperation, representing a "stretch", which ends up "bending" the instruments of cooperation to the satisfaction of the European Countries' own interests, without becoming in any way functional to the development of the Countries receiving aids.

In order to guarantee a holistic approach to migration, able to pursuing the needs of development cooperation, it is indeed necessary to point out that such proposals do not represent a real change, a concrete turnaround in the management of humanitarian emergencies, such as those currently signified by the mass exodus.

In this perspective, while the Mediterranean Sea represents a synthesis of these contrasts, contradictions, profound asymmetry and structural imbalances between the northern and southern Countries, it is also a place for contamination and continuous transit¹⁶. It is a plural sea which separates and combines, found between the lands without belonging exclusively to any of them and "which has left its sign on every side of the other". It is a Middle Sea, with a vocation for a universalism that is not dogmatic or *a priori*, but syncretic and *a posteriori*, living on translations, which does not ask to burn one's roots, but to renew them thanks to a comparison with the other, a vocation for exchange in which both interlocutors are enriched without any unilateral reception.¹⁷

Notes

¹ In the Report of the Secretary-General "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" (A/59/2005, 21 March 2005), Kofi A. Annan stressed the close interdependence between the security dimension, that of peace and that of development and recognised « that threats are interlinked, that development, security and human rights are mutually interdependent, that no State can protect itself acting entirely alone and that all States need an equitable, efficient and effective collective security system; and therefore commit themselves to agreeing on, and implementing, comprehensive strategies for confronting the whole range of threats, from international war through weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, State collapse and civil conflict to deadly infectious disease, extreme poverty and the destruction of the

environment” (II. Freedom for Fear, Paragraph 6, lett. a).

² When in 1949 the American president Truman defines the south of the world as “underdeveloped”, a new page in history opens up.

The hateful opposition between the superior races and the inferior races that had established itself in the era of colonialism has disappeared, but a new form of hierarchy is affirmed, that between the “modern” countries and the “backward” countries, which is not based on structural contrasts (related to race, ethnicity or religion), therefore ideally accessible to all, but which is however symptomatic of a rigidity that is based on the scale of development.

³ Until the nineteenth century, relations between states were essentially limited to the creation of post-war or post-crisis balances and to this end it was sufficient to meet periodically or as needed in the context of diplomatic conferences.

The era of cooperation was born when, at the end of the nineteenth century, and as a consequence of the sudden development in the communications and transport sector, some strictly technical interests were shared by a group of states or by the international community as a whole. This process led to the creation of new institutions, administrative unions, embryonic forms of international organizations, aimed at stable cooperation between States on certain issues to be jointly addressed (Union for Communications, the format of envelopes of letters for example) on issues which evidently did not yet touch the dynamics of development, but which had the merit and role of institutionalizing cooperation between states.

With the birth of the League of Nations, established by the Covenant of 1919, at the end of the first edition of the GM, more far-reaching goals were pursued as the Society set itself the goal of establishing more favorable conditions for the peaceful coexistence of peoples and for the development of all energies human, and already the notion and the term “development” was already glimpsed (see in particular art. 22).

⁴ The Charter of San Francisco has accentuated, with respect to the Pact on the League of Nations, the interest for economic and social cooperation, which represents one of the main objectives of the UN, as emerges in particular from articles 1.3 and 55 of the Charter, entirely dedicated to the International economic and social cooperation. However, these are provisions with a vague, very broad, programmatic content, which do not confer specific and incisive powers on the international organization.

⁵ See UNCTAD, Investment Policy Framework for Sustainable Development, UNCTAD/DIAE/PCB/2015/5, which adopts the approach of a deep structural asymmetry in economic and political relations.

⁶ The concepts of human development and sustainable development were established during some important international conferences that marked some important milestones in the historical and legal evolution of the concept of development cooperation (see, *inter alia*, Stockholm Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, 1972; Agenda 21, UN Conference on Environment and Development, *Copenhagen Accord, 2009*; *Paris Outcome, 13 December 2015*).

⁷ Communication of the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council and the European Investment Bank, on the creation of a new partnership framework with third countries under the European Agenda on Migration, 7 June 2016, COM (2016) 385 fin.; Conclusions adopted by the European Council on 15 December 2016.

⁸ In this regard, see the Declaration on principles relating to the external aspects of migration policy, Edinburgh European Council, 11-12 December 1992, Presidency Conclusions, DOC / 92/8 of 13/12/1992, Annexe 5, Partie A, in to which the Community and its Member States at that time the Community and its Member States already committed themselves to implement a coordinated action “within their respective spheres of competence”, to favor “the conclusion of bilateral or multilateral agreements with countries of origin or transit in order to ensure that illegal immigrants can be brought back to their countries of origin”, taking into account the “practice followed in these States with regard to readmission” (in particular Point XVI, paragraphs 6 and 7).

⁹ This approach was subsequently expressed with particular clarity by the Seville European Council, on 21 and 22 June 2002, which emphasized the importance of “ensuring the cooperation of the countries of origin and transit in matters of joint management and control borders and readmission” and to provide third countries with the “technical and financial assistance necessary for the purpose”, providing “adequate resources within the framework of the financial perspectives” (Par. 34).

¹⁰ In this regard, compare the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council and the European Investment Bank on the creation of a new partnership framework with third countries under the European Agenda on Migration, 7 June 2016, COM (2016) 385

final.

¹¹ Consider, for example, the propensity to conclude readmission agreements with the EU, which are considered advantageous from a political, economic and financial standpoint. On the subject, with specific reference to the area of North Africa, E. A. MRABET, *Readmission Agreements. The case of Morocco*, in *European Journal of Migration and Law*, 2003, p. 379 ss.

¹² One of the most widely used incentives in practice is precisely the start of negotiations for the conclusion of visa facilitation agreements, which have often been conducted in parallel with the negotiations concerning, in particular, the conclusion of readmission agreements. Compare the negotiations on readmission with the Russian Federation, Ukraine, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, the Republic of Montenegro, Serbia.

¹³ On this argument, F. De Vittor, *Respingimenti in mare ed 'esternalizzazione' della protezione: il confine territoriale come limite agli obblighi di tutela*, in M. Meccarelli, P. Palchetti, C. Sotis (ed.), *Ius peregrinandi: il fenomeno migratorio tra diritti fondamentali, esercizio della sovranità e dinamiche dell'esclusione*, Macerata, 2012, pp. 183-205, especially p. 193 ss. and the doctrine quoted.

¹⁴ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council and the European Investment Bank on establishing a new Partnership Framework with third countries under the European Agenda on Migration, COM(2016) 385 final, 7.6.2016.

¹⁵ In this regard, see the Conclusions of the European Council of 22-23 June 2017, available online, mentioning also the controversial Statement between the European Union and Turkey of 18 March 2016.

¹⁶ For this vision, see in particular I. Chambers, *Mediterranean Crossings. The politics of an interrupted Modernity*, Duke University Press, 2008.

¹⁷ In these terms, F. Cassano, *Mediterraneo contro il conflitto tra le civiltà*, in E. Triggiani (ed.), *Europa e Mediterraneo. Le regole per la costruzione di una società integrata*, Editoriale Scientifica, 2010, p. 35 ff.

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The EU's response to the Arab Uprisings: a shifted paradigm?

Ester Sigillò

Introduction: testing the coherence of the EU's democracy promotion

The EU's projection in the Mediterranean region has always been characterized by a trade-off of interests and values. After decades supporting authoritarian regimes under the supremacy of the fight against terrorism, the so-called 'Arab Uprisings' occurred between December 2010 and February 2011 offered a great opportunity to Brussels to reshape its discourse on the promotion of democracy, and even its credibility in the Mediterranean region. Indeed, the official acknowledgment of the EU missteps of the past was a first attempt of the EU to show its commitment towards a 'paradigm shift', as the old one, based on the prioritization of stability, had proved to be an expression of a short-termism no longer sustainable after the socio-political changes occurred in 2011. Stemming from these considerations, the principal goal of this chapter is to verify whether the renewed policy of democracy promotion of the EU in the Mediterranean has substantially changed beyond rhetoric.

With the end of the Cold War, the EU started to build its discourse on democracy promotion. Indeed, with the Council Resolution in 1991, 'democracy' was included among its foreign objectives (Bicchi 2009). Moreover, the Maastricht treaty explicitly stated that the development and consolidation of democracy is one of the core objectives of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). With the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the EU has enhanced its commitment to the projection of its norms and values, confirming the 'promotion of democracy' as one of the main goals of the EU:

The Union's action on the international scene shall be guided by the principles which have inspired its own creation [...] and which it seeks to advance in the wider world: democracy, the rule of law, the universality and indivisibility of human rights and individual freedoms (Art. 21 TEU).

However, declaratory objectives of the EU's foreign policy partially change if the focus is shifted to the Mediterranean region, which has always been characterized by security concerns. Indeed, since its origins, the Euro-Mediterranean dialogue has embodied two potentially contradictory goals: stability and democracy (Santini 2013). The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) created in 1995, and the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) launched in 2004, were conceived as two 'policy patchworks' encompassing different actions, which may be at odds one with the other due to the puzzling interests of the EU and its Member States in this geographical area.¹ In particular, since their origins, the EU policies in the Mediterranean have always pursued the objectives of both democracy and stability. However, after the events of September 2001, and with the consequent adoption of the European Security Strategy (ESS) in 2003, the EU policy in the Mediterranean has increasingly been driven by the 'securitization paradigm', at least until the outbreak of the Arab Springs. Therefore, since the institutionalization of the EMP in 1995, we can observe a persistent trade-off of interests and values of the EU's projection in the area.

The outbreak of the Arab Springs represented a key opportunity for the EU to reshape its democracy promotion discourse with greater vigour:

We must show humility about the past. Europe was not vocal enough in defending human rights and local democratic forces in the region. Too many of us fell prey to the assumption that the authoritarian regimes were a guarantee of stability in the region. This was not even Realpolitik. It was, at best, short-termism – and the kind of short-termism that makes the long-term ever more difficult to build.²

This official statement of the former Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy represented a watershed of the EU's official declarations, oriented towards enhancing the rhetoric on democracy promotion in the aftermath of the 'Arab Spring'. Indeed, the European Commission (EC) and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (High Representative) issued two Joint Communications, in March and May 2011, the *Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity* (PDSP) and the *New EU response to a Changing Neighbourhood* respectively, which were presented as evidence of the EU's changed approach towards the Mediterranean.³

Notwithstanding the existence of dense literature focused on the EU's democracy promotion, theoretical approaches have been insufficiently backed by empirical research, while empirical studies on the EU's democracy promotion after the 2011 often miss the link with a theoretical background. In this light, this chapter aims to 'test' the *coherence* of the EU's policy, between its declaratory objectives and its concrete measures taken in the aftermath of the 'Arab Spring'. In particular, I will analyse two dimensions of the EU's action to respond to the socio-political changes of its Southern neighbourhood: the *policy determinacy*⁴ of the official statements and documents that the EU issued in the immediate aftermath of the first events of the so-called Arab Spring and the *political cohesion* of the EU's actors, revealing the level of support of the EU's Member States to the common policy agreed upon.

Interests vs. values: the Janus face of the EU's projection in the Mediterranean before 2011

Since the kick-off of the Euro-Mediterranean dialogue in the '70s, the EU policies in the region have been characterized by a latent tension between the EU normative discourse and its realistic outcomes (Pace 2007). In fact, notwithstanding the attempt to undertake a comprehensive approach launched with the Barcelona Process in 1995, various scholars have argued that, over the time, the political objectives of the EU have failed due to the prioritization of security over other issues (Youngs 2003).

In particular, some analysts tended to criticize the discrepancy between its declarations and the implementation (Attinà 2003; Philippart 2003; Pace 2009); whereas others specifically subscribed to a more realistic interpretation of the EU approach towards the Mediterranean, definitely at odds with its proclaimed normative *ethos* (Cavatorta, Kritzinger and Gomez 2008). Therefore, there is a general consensus at an academic level that the EU policy in the Mediterranean has been oriented towards prioritizing the stability of the region following a 'securitization paradigm', thus fuelling the complaint about the EU's 'double standard' in this specific region (Cavatorta and Pace 2010).

One of the main reasons behind the EU's contradictory approach stems from the endless Western concerns linked to the fear of the rise of radical Islam, seen as a potential threat to the political stability of the region. Moreover, the legacy of the colonial past of

some member states has represented another ingredient to add in order to explain the persistence of the EU's 'securitization' paradigm. Linked to these factors, the sensitivity of certain member states in the proximity of the Southern neighbourhood is another relevant aspect that allowed Rosa Balfour to talk about the 'logic of diversity' among member states (Balfour 2013). Indeed, some European countries have been more concerned about terrorism, illegal migration and trafficking of arms than others.

An emblematic example of the 'logic of diversity' among EU's member states was the position of some countries on occasion of the ministerial conference for the signing of the Barcelona Declaration, where Southern member states expressed their willingness to exclude references to democracy in the document due to security concerns. Indeed, this cautious approach was typical for those member states which were geographically more affected by security issues concerning the Mediterranean, whereas Northern member states were more oriented towards a stronger commitment to democracy assistance in the region.

According to these considerations, the EMP and the ENP have been labelled in the academic debate as two 'security policies' rather than two complementary instruments of the EU's democracy promotion in the region (Youngs 2002). Indeed, since its creation in 1995, the EMP has been defined as an 'asymmetric partnership', differentiating the amount of EU funding to the Mediterranean countries depending on the strategic interests of the member states (Marquina 2003). Moreover, the launch of the ENP in 2004 and its operationalization through the creation of bilateral Action Plans (AP) in 2005 seem to be the consequential response of the EU to the terrorist attacks of September 2001 in New York, March 2004 in Madrid and July 2005 in London. Therefore, this policy seemed to be conceived "as a means to deal with specific EU security concerns" (Barbé and Johansson-Nogués 2008: 86) under the spectre of terrorism stemming from radical Islam, thus embracing a scenario of the 'clash of civilization' paved by Huntington between Western-values and Islamic extremism (Huntington 1996).

Another element to be added to the analysis is that the ENP was designed after the launch of the European Security Strategy (ESS) adopted in 2003, which attempted to keep a comprehensive approach including a combined definition of interests and values (Sjursen 2012). In fact, according to the report on the implementation, the ESS "established principles and set clear objectives for advancing the EU's security interests based on [...] core values".⁵ However, this led to the risk of downgrading the norms and values at the service of the EU's political and economic interests.

Indeed, the classic paradigm of democracy promotion adopted by the EU has always been pictured within the framework of neoliberal values on the basis of the 'modernization theory', which connects the process of democratization with economic variables (Lipset 1959). Democracy promotion has therefore been understood as a natural consequence of the gradual expansion of the markets and rule of law elements; and this also seemed to be the approach of the ENP once it entered into force. Therefore, the spread of its core values taken as a necessarily 'good thing', has been considered by scholars as an interest *per se* of the EU, aimed at creating stability which represents a security concern for the EU (Pace 2009). Indeed, the main argument cited by the EU was that the process of political liberalization and democratization have served to bring about peaceful coexistence within Europe and that these successful processes can be emulated elsewhere.

However, a model that fits the EU may not necessarily be adaptable to the context of the Mediterranean region.⁶ Patricia Bauer defines the shift of EU politics from a multilateral

system (EMP) to a bilateral one (ENP) as a further step leading to a “strategic short-term stabilization of authoritarian systems”. Indeed, the enhancement of bilateral relations with each Mediterranean country, has given rise in certain aspects to a greater fragmentation of the Euro-Mediterranean dialogue and the loss of the normative role of the EU which has retreated to a “better known role of economic and trade actor pursuing its own security through bilateral contractual frameworks” (Santini 2013: 130).

The launch of the multilateral dimension with the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) in July 2008, at the initiative of the former French president Nicolas Sarkozy, emblematically represents the last stage of the institutionalization of the Euro-Mediterranean relationship. However, according to some scholars even this initiative is based on the particularistic interest of certain member states. In this, France wanted to keep the leadership in the Mediterranean, thus leading to a ‘double track’ policy which undermines a coherent and comprehensive discourse of the EU in the Mediterranean (Roy 2012).

The EU argument of ‘values serving EU interests’ are emblematic in the speech of the former Commissioner for External Relations and ENP:

The EU doesn't believe in imposing reform, but we do want to do all we can to support the region's own reforms quite simply because we believe that democracy, good governance, rule of law, and gender equality are essential for stability and prosperity. This has always been an objective of the Barcelona process and it is the cornerstone of the Neighbourhood Policy.⁷

Therefore, if on one hand the potential contradictions between stability and democracy within the comprehensive EU policy towards the Mediterranean does not necessarily mean that these issues are inevitably damned to be at odds one with the other, on the other it is quite evident that the EU's official discourse on democracy promotion seems to be hijacked by security concerns. The main justification of the EU concerning its reluctance to accept the democratically elected Islamic governments was based on the consideration that the “central tenets of Islam were fundamentally incompatible with democracy”, the latter intended as ‘liberal-democracy’ mirroring the Western experience (Youngs 2003: 51). Therefore, any alternative to the EU model of democracy has been rejected to date, according to the logic of ‘our size fits all’ (Bicchi 2006).

The rejection of other alternatives to the authoritarian regimes, labelled by Michelle Pace and Francesco Cavatorta as the ‘paradigm of authoritarian resilience’ syndrome (Pace and Cavatorta 2012) has been an inexcusable mistake of the EU, which has disregarded the importance of grass-roots civil society organizations (CSOs). Indeed, according to many scholars these actors can have a crucial role as facilitators of democracy from the bottom due to their social agendas that support the weakest layers of society (Schumacher 2011). There is evidence of this argument in some interviews in Brussels, where an official of the EEAS, who for obvious reasons decided to remain anonymous, argued that “charity is not the business of the EU”⁸, thus showing quite a narrow understanding of the term ‘civil society’, as the EU is still neglecting the inclusiveness of crucial targets within the social fabric of Arab countries. As a matter of fact, the NGOs selected for big projects are Western-based advocacy groups which prevent local advocacy networks from growing stronger and becoming better interconnected (Panebianco and Rossi 2012).

Thus, among the many voices calling for a more flexible approach towards the Arab world, some stress the importance of a more sustainable model based on a deeper engagement of a particular category of social actors, which have so far been excluded from the EU programmes of democracy promotion (Cavatorta and Durac 2010; Fioramonti 2012). Bicchi has shed the light on the EU approach based on a ‘securitization paradigm’ rather

than on a genuine democracy promotion *per se*, which becomes particularly emblematic looking at the implementation of EU programmes of democracy assistance (Bicchi 2009). As it stands, the system created by the EU to strengthen the local CSOs is for the main part based on projects built upon the competitive mechanism of grants and calls for proposals, as a result, once the NGOs have applied, the EC is primarily involved in the process of selection.⁹

The programmes of democracy assistance adopted by the EU have been conceived solely to address registered NGOs closer to western values. However, the only registered NGOs in the Mediterranean countries were those embedded with authoritarian governments, called GONGOs,¹⁰ which usually received large governmental funding, thereby enjoying a high degree of professionalism that put them in a privileged rank for attracting the EU grants. Consequently, the EU's aid paradoxically 'assisted' the 'puppet' NGOs under the authoritarian regime's control (Cavatorta, Kritzinger and Gomez 2008). The unsettling linkage between the EU and the authoritarian countries was so evident that several scholars argued that NGOs in the Mediterranean very soon became the "agents and guardians of western interests", thus tending to adapt more to the 'Eurocentric paradigm' than to their own domestic agenda (Khakee 2010).

Last but not least, several analysts claimed the complete lack of implementation of the use of conditionality, which was considered, at least at a declaratory level, the linchpin of the ENP to promote democracy; therefore "limiting any potential for normative impact in the Mediterranean region because of the lack of coherence in the EU's policy" (Pace 2009: 39). Indeed, the EU's tendency to collaborate with authoritarian regimes has deeply delegitimized its declared objectives.

The EU's policy determinacy after 2011: framing the idea of civil society

Following the first uprisings in December and January 2011, in Tunis and in Cairo respectively, after some hesitation due to old friendships and alliances, the EU has caught up on its relative initial non-action with a wide range of declarations expressing solidarity with the protestors. Indeed, the EU's first reaction to the events that unfolded in the Mediterranean was rather cautious because the uprisings were upsetting the old regimes, and with them, also the *status quo* welcomed over decades by the EU.

The EU's response to the events unfolding in the Mediterranean started with the Council Conclusions on 4 February 2011 which assigned the High Representative and the EC "to develop a package of measures aimed at lending European Union support to the transition and transformation processes" and adapted the ENP's instruments in response to the so-called Arab Spring. The Council Conclusions in fact showed that after the outbreak of Uprisings, the EU's discourse on democracy support changed, characterized by a greater cohesion at a horizontal, but also a vertical level. Indeed, the EU member states, traditionally considered the main obstacle to a cohesive European discourse, have also gradually acknowledged the importance of a cohesive approach, at least at a declaratory level, to the EU's policy of democracy promotion.

After the overthrow of Mubarak's regime, based on the Council Conclusions, the EU issued two Joint Communications, in March and May 2011 respectively, attempting to upgrade its democracy promotion policies in the Mediterranean: the *Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean* (PDSP) and *A New Response*

to a *Changing Neighbourhood*. Indeed, for the first time since the birth of the EMP, at least at a declaratory level, these documents marked a shift in the EU approach with a more democratic focus, while stability and security goals were officially side-lined (temporarily).

Due to limited space, the analysis will focus just on most relevant official documents, with particular focus on the first Joint Communication of March 2011 (PDSP), as it actually includes all the new concepts that represent the *leitmotif* of the EU's overall strategy in the Mediterranean in the aftermath of the Arab awakening. As the most significant document referring to the EU's response to the 'Arab Spring', the PDSP is particularly useful in assessing the EU's commitment to democracy, hence its relevance in testing the first dimension of the model of coherence outlined by Thomas, namely the 'policy determinacy'.

At a first glance, the Communication of the EC and the High Representative seems to tackle the majority of these criteria. In particular, through the reiterated use of some key-words, the EU reshaped its old paradigm based on a paternalistic approach with a new one oriented towards a bottom-up approach based on the empowerment of the civil society. Indeed, a Joint Staff Working Document of 2012, reporting the activities undertaken in 2011, states: "Throughout 2011 the EU has provided assistance to countries engaged in democratic transition while acknowledging that democratization must be owned and driven by the people of the countries concerned". However, beyond a radical shift in the rhetoric, the EU's official documents appear too vague, therefore unlikely to generate a concrete break with the flawed paradigm of the past.

The Communication of March 2011 is the emblematic example of the EU's difficulty in breaking free from the entrapment of its old paradigm. In fact, after a first look at the text, a persistence of past mistakes is observable, such as a discrepancy between a liberal framework and socio-economic rights. Indeed, there is evidence of the gap between the preamble, including an emphasis on both liberal and social rights, and a second part, including more concrete provisions, where the reference to socio-economic issues is only expressed in relation to 'development', thus the link to 'social rights' simply disappears. A clear example is the concept of 'social justice', which is mentioned in the preamble, whereas in the second part, it is only implicitly considered.

As mentioned above, the reiterated presence of some key-words seems to suggest a shift in the EU's approach to democracy promotion. Indeed, the PDSP emphasizes the importance of 'democratic transformation and 'institution-building' and the role of civil society, which is mentioned 14 times in the text. However, looking more in detail, the emphasis on the 'supportive' role of civil society seems to implicitly downgrade the civil societies' actors to retain a passive and marginal role, instead of acting as proactive facilitators of democracy. More specifically, sentences extracted from the document seem to confirm this interpretation:

A thriving civil society can help uphold human rights and contribute to democracy building and good governance, playing an important role in checking government excesses. A range of non-government (NGOs) and civil society organizations (CSOs) can provide much-needed support for the reforms.

No word is spent on repairing to the mistakes of the past, so many times pointed out by numerous scholars, such as the lack of accountability of the NGOs which have often been limited by 'restrictive registration practices' or subjected to financial control by the government. Moreover, there is another 'significant silence' throughout the analysis of the text, namely, that referring to some actors which are implicitly and arbitrarily excluded

from the categorization of civil society, such as “independent trade unions and non-state linked CSOs acting on labour issues”. Indeed, local trade unions are only mentioned in the last paragraph referring to the ‘Support to the Social Dialogue Forum’ and not linked to the discourse on ‘civil society’. The sole, hasty reference to this category in the aforementioned paragraphs refers to “European trade unions” which can “offer their expertise”, thus considering again the beneficiaries as passive actors subjected to the active role played by the EU.

The detachment of ‘labour organizations’ and ‘trade unions’ from the concept of the CSOs shows that the EU is still entrapped in an old logic of narrow understanding of civil society. Thus, even if this omission does not necessarily mean that these actors cannot be included in the EU programmes of democracy promotion, this disregard is still quite alarming, as these groups, considered illegal for the main part by the authoritarian regimes, have actually had a crucial role during the uprisings, “presenting a set of political demands around which mobilization occurred”. Therefore, they should deserve a specific place in a document such as the PDSP, which was conceived to ride the democratic wave of the ‘Arab Spring’.

This omission is also alarming as the lack of specification could be used as an excuse in multi-level decision making, in particular by some member states to exclude these particular actors, as this is not explicitly mentioned in the text. Consequently, this disregard for the protagonists of the Arab awakening determines an unsettling failure of the EU’s policy in its effort to support democracy. Indeed, this is another crucial shortcoming showing the weak commitment of the EU to shift the paradigm from the legacy of the old logics of interests.

Finally, this omission is going to worsen the situation as the financial support of the EU to these “social partners” does not seem to be provided by the same EU instruments conceived to support CSOs, such as the ENPI or the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR). Indeed, the document seems to oddly emphasize the funding role of the member states instead of the EU: “This is an area where we should maximize the assistance that Member States can offer [...] to develop a platform for civil society, political parties, trade unions and associations”. As a matter of fact, these specific ‘social partners’ have not been considered to date in the EU annual reviews, where traditional instruments for support to civil society such as the ENPI and EIDHR are included, and they are still not mentioned in relation to the concept of democracy or human rights.

Some words also need to be spent in reference to another relevant text, stemming from the strategy outlined in the PDSP, namely the document launching the new ENP. Notwithstanding the emphasis stressed on its innovation, this document has an undeniable ‘original sin’ however, as it was not specifically conceived as a response to the ‘Arab Spring’, although its drafting was already in progress during the outbreak of the uprisings.

In spite of this Achilles’ heel, this document actually includes one of the most innovative concepts of the EU’s reshaped approach in the Mediterranean after 2011, namely, the term of ‘deep democracy’. Even if this emphasis on the ‘deepness’ of democracy seems to implicitly admit the EU’s missteps of the past linked to the complicity of authoritarian regimes of the region, the concept *per se* would suggest a stronger commitment of the EU to support democracy. However, although this term was emphasized several times in the High Representative’s official speech in the document, there is still a lack of consensus on the substance of its definition.

Moreover, the document launching the renewed ENP is worthy of mention because it

reiterates the support for civil society through the launching of the Neighbourhood Civil Society Facility and the European Endowment for Democracy (EED). While on one hand this could sound interesting, on the other “in searching the 400 pages one finds nothing specific on how these two initiatives would be organized, which one might say is deeply disappointing”.

Although these two instruments were defined in other documents, the lack of determinacy on their implementation in a document such as the ‘revision of the ENP’, which indeed represents the pillar of the EU strategy in the Mediterranean, leaves a large space of ambiguity for diverging interests of the member states. Therefore, according to the considerations mentioned above, the EU does not discuss what the substance of its democracy exactly is. In essence, this conceptual vagueness is a symptom of the absence of a common Euro-Mediterranean ground on this issue. This ambiguity has led to different understandings of the conceptualization of democracy, thus weakening the implementation of the declared objectives.

In conclusion, despite some rhetoric changes, it seems that the EU has not radically reshaped “its normative objectives to fit the rather different socio-political setting in the Mediterranean”. Moreover, the vagueness of certain official documents such as the PDSP and the review of the ENP, alongside some inconsistencies at a declaratory level, leaves greater leeway for the EU, and in particular its member states, to act according to their own discretion without following any precise common approach. Therefore, it seems that even if the EU has changed its discourse, this ‘rhetorical variation’ is still too vague and too linked to a mere rhetorical level to prevent the EU’s strategy from coming up against incoherencies with its declaratory objectives once testing the implementation of the EU policy on the ground.

The EU’s political cohesion after 2011

This section analyses the ‘political cohesion’ of the EU, thus testing whether the EU member states pursue a cohesive and faithful support of the common policy agreed upon. Indeed, as democracy promotion is mostly an intergovernmental policy of the EU, its formulation and implementation are the results of a ‘smallest common denominator’ stemmed by the compromises reached among the member states. Thus, the analysis of this dimension of coherence is particularly interesting, as before 2011, the EU’s policy in the Mediterranean was settled on two tracks: that of the EU emphasizing human rights and democracy promotion and that of bilateral relations of member states, and in particular of the European Southern countries, which were more concerned about the issues regarding the Mediterranean.

Therefore, the variable at stake is quite controversial, as the research of evidence on diverging interests of the member states was particularly difficult due to the reluctance of European countries to admit their responsibility as *veto players* at the EU decision-making level. Notwithstanding the difficulties in providing evidence, some scholars have already pointed out a certain differentiation among those countries addressed by the EU’s new policy in the Mediterranean: “Brussels smiled at those [countries] most vigorously sponsored by the individual member states”. Indeed, the internal cohesion of the EU is threatened when the major European countries are unable to make a shared decision because of the presence of strategic interests. Evidence of this lack of coherence can be observed in the weak coordination between the EC and the activities of the member states, as the EC has traditionally experimented difficulties in getting information from the EU countries

according to their bilateral funding with third countries.

Recent studies have highlighted the individual strategies of the member states with respect to the Mediterranean in terms of spending and priorities. For example, in 2004 17% of the overall aid budget of Sweden was allocated to the sector of 'democratic governance', while France allocated 1% to the same sector. More generally, studies on European foreign policy have emphasized the crucial role of some member state and found that the tensions among them can have significant impacts at the level of policy-making, in particular when the interests at stake affect France, Germany and the United Kingdom. Indeed, even in the aftermath of the so-called Arab Spring, debates in Brussels continue to divide the EU member states within the Council in Brussels. The debate is mainly focused on the instrument which still represents the anachronistic leverage of the EU in the Mediterranean, namely, 'conditionality'. The terms of the debate focused on those countries arguing that 'more for more' (positive conditionality) should also imply 'less for less' (negative conditionality), and those which want to deal 'exclusively in carrots'. This is confirmed by those actors directly involved in the debates, which have admitted this 'logic of diversity' among national positions in the concrete implementation of the EU policy. Indeed it is still observable an old logic of division that characterized the Barcelona process, where Northern member states such as Germany, Sweden and Denmark are keen to use a stricter approach to conditionality, whereas the Southern countries such as Italy, Spain and France, more affected by security concerns regarding their Southern neighbourhoods, are 'more flexible'. Moreover, the decision to put all funding addressed to the neighbourhood of the EU into one pot has generated a sort of 'zero-sum game' between the Southern and the Eastern *volets*, which contribute to divide the member states between 'East-prioritizing and South-prioritizing camp'. Therefore, democracy promotion seems to be affected by the resonance that the region or even a single country might have in relation to the EU and its member states.

Indeed, the interests of the European member states in North Africa continue to exist even after 2011. The colonial legacy of some countries, is still a relevant factor which explains the 'securitisation bias' of the EU's democracy promotion. In particular, the three big Southern countries, namely Italy, France and Spain, continue to have "substantial national interests at stake", in particular in trade, energy and investment sectors, and they host the biggest North African immigrant communities.

Therefore, the result is an incoherent mix of different voices generating a hybrid and flawed response based on issues at odds: a renewed emphasis on a bottom-up approach alongside the opposite top-down logic of 'more for more' leading to a certain fuzziness at the implementation level. In fact, although different goals might seem compatible at the 'norm-building' and 'strategic formulation stages', they often clash during implementation. The next section will illustrate at an empirical level the case in which a vague policy formulation could hamper a fully-fledged implementation of the declared objectives.

From theory to practice

This section is an attempt to trace the dynamics of implementation of the EU's civil society assistance in the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region after the outbreak of Arab uprisings. The core financial instrument of the ENP is the ENPI (from 2014 ENI) which mostly funds Annual Action Programs (AAPs). From an analysis of projects funded by the EU from 2010 to 2013 there is not any variation in the EU's policy of civil society assistance. Even after the launch of the new programmes, the ENP remains "awfully unfunded"

(Isaac 2012). Indeed, the Spring Program offered 350 million from 2011 to 2012 and the Neighbourhood Civil Society Facility €22 million from 2011 to 2013 which needed to be shared among all the countries of the Southern Neighbourhood engaged in the transition. Therefore, notwithstanding the EU's effort to undertake specific measures to target the new issues raised with the Arab uprisings, the action appeared really weak when contextualized to the needs of each country. Moreover, up until 2012, the amounts were similar to those allocated in 2010, with the EU priorities concerning energy, security, investments and trade rather than democracy promotion. Thus, there is no trace of projects funded by an instrument specifically established by the EU to respond to the 'Arab Spring'. Finally, as of the end of 2013 there is a first change with an amount of 90 million EUR allocated for socio-economic development and civil society support under the umbrella of the SPRING Program. However, the renewal of the EU approach seems to be very slow, with the bottom-up approach quite disregarded. Indeed, the actors deployed to implement the projects continued to be Western-based consultancies.

The analysis of the call for proposals with the EIDHR and NSA-LA is relevant in order to assess the concrete commitment of the EU to civil society. The first contradiction here can be observed in the effectiveness of these two instruments, specifically conceived to include civil society, still slowed by their bureaucratic machine (Youngs and Brudzinska 2012). Indeed, many local and grass-roots CSOs refrain from applying it due to being blocked by the complex technicalities of the 'call for proposals' procedure. Moreover, the requirement to contribute with a minimum of 10% of the overall budget is another brake that tends to prevent many weaker local NGOs from applying. Last but not least, the call for proposals is only available in English, which could be an obstacle undermining access of Arab grass-roots CSOs. If the EU were to engage faith-based grassroots CSOs, this would in fact be an invaluable added value for the declared bottom-up strategy of the EU, which would show its efforts to overcome the fears of the past. According to these considerations, it seems that the EU machinery, which should be built specifically to foster the empowerment of civil society, so as to enhance a bottom-up approach, seems instead to constitute a closed system only accessible to the most expert Western NGOs.

The EU has approached civil society and impinged upon its nature and functioning in indirect and direct ways. Indirectly, the EU can contribute to democracy and human right promotion through civil society by altering the structure in which CSOs operate, for example by raising the interconnectedness between CSOs and the state on the one hand, and CSOs and the grassroots on the other. Directly, the EU would enhance the agency of CSOs engaged in democracy and human rights promotion. Whatever the actions taken by the EU, a narrow conception of civil society has an impact on the outcome of its civil society assistance. The method of the NGOs empowerment remains flawed, as pivotal actors of Arab civil society are not taken into consideration. Indeed, when the EU attempts to strengthen civil society as a means of promoting democracy, it concentrates on a very narrow set of organizations: mainly professionalized NGOs dedicated to advocacy. Yet, the majority of the 'democracy groups' funded by the EU do not have the legitimacy of constituencies and there is a wide range of other types of organizations, from cultural to religious, which often play a crucial role in political transitions (Carothers 2000; Challand 2006). Moreover, there is a considerable debate in the field as to whether NGOs, the work of which focuses mainly on social issues and services, make as much contribution to democracy as those that focus specifically on democracy (Carothers 1999; Pace, 2009).

Therefore, liberal democratic understanding of civil society forms an important part of

the EU's concrete policy of civil society assistance and it has an impact on the effectiveness of the policy of assistance itself (Challand 2006). In certain cases, it might even have unintended negative consequences. Indeed, the considerable emphasis the EU places on the 'watchdog' function of CSOs might also unbalance state-society relations and weaken the credibility of fragile new state institutions. Finally, the EU's determination to focus its engagement on liberal and Western-style NGOs may inadvertently serve to heighten social fragmentation and increase competition with Islamic NGOs that are more and more active across the region (Behr and Siitonen 2013).

Moreover, civil society organizations that accept the Western donors' support often come under suspicion or are seen as less legitimate and authentic than organizations that receive no external support (Al Sayyid, 1995). This is considered to be crucial, as dependency on external funding can negatively affect the internal accountability of an organization. Therefore, paradoxically, Western civil society assistance risks to undermine the legitimacy of the organizations it seeks to promote. Finally, civil society in Arab countries can be a source of democratic change, but it is not inherently so. Similarly, the outcome of civil society promotion is not necessarily equivalent to the establishment of a democratic regime. Indeed, donors can indirectly contribute by creating a situation of heteronomy where local actors are not able to define their own priorities but have to follow the conditions and working modalities set up by external donors (Challand 2009).

Furthermore, the 'new' overall approach is still built on the concept of 'more for more', which actually is an old top-down instrument used by the EU (Tocci 2012). This seems to be in contrast with the aim of pursuing a new bottom-up approach based on the ownership and empowerment of civil society. This strictness of conditionality finally discourages local recipients that prefer to accept grants from other donors. At the end of the day the EU promises more than it delivers. This is also due to the same barriers to access. Calls for proposal of the EU continue to be very technical and unavoidably tend to exclude the neediest recipients.

Conclusion

The Arab uprisings represented an extraordinary opportunity for the EU to reframe its approach in the region, especially in the sector of democracy promotion and civil society assistance. On the basis of the evidence gathered throughout the analysis of declaratory objectives, the EU's discourse on democracy promotion seems, at first glance, to be characterized by a greater coherence. Indeed, the two Joint Communications of 2011 were presented by the EU as the cornerstone of a shifted paradigm based on raised awareness built on the missteps of the past. The new declared approach of the EU is more oriented to a greater commitment in those issues closer to the internal agenda of the beneficiary countries rather than the security concerns of its member states. In fact, looking throughout the official documents we came across terms like *deep democracy* and *sustainable stability*, the emphasis of which implicitly recognized the mistakes of the previous EU policy in the Mediterranean based on a narrow democratization agenda. This apparent radical change of the EU official declaration is certainly striking, as the approach of the EU in the Mediterranean region has often been described by many scholars as subjected to double standards, where the EU foreign agenda towards its Southern Neighbourhood was rather imbalanced in favour of a securitization paradigm. Therefore, the *mea culpa* of the EU, publicly expressed by Commissioner Füle's speech, was more than welcome, if not due, as the events in the Southern Neighbourhood marked a sort of point of no return, from which

the old paradigms founded on the support of authoritarian regimes and on the maintenance of the *status quo* at all costs were no longer sustainable.

However, the persistence of the same old paradigm based on an ongoing prioritization of 'security' over 'democracy' issues and a narrow conceptualization of civil society is likely to deteriorate the EU's impact on the region. Through the analysis of the official EU document, we actually witnessed a widespread vagueness around the declared commitment of the EU to democracy promotion. This superficiality was assumed to be the result of a minimum common denominator generated by the pool of conflicting interests within the EU, and in particular among the member states, which are still reluctant to abandon their strategic interests in the area. In fact, on deepening our research through the test of *political cohesion* we find that the 'security imperatives' have not disappeared, but still represent an obstacle to the development of a coherent external action of the EU.

Therefore, on the basis of the findings obtained from the 'coherence test', it can be affirmed that the EU's policy of democracy promotion in the aftermath of the 'Arab Spring' is characterized by a certain degree of incoherence generated by the persistence of security concerns. In other words, the 'security's bias' is still one of the factors explaining the EU's incoherent approach toward the region. After testing the coherence at a methodological level, we moved on to the empirical analysis in order to find out the consequences generated on the ground by an incoherent policy of democracy promotion. Indeed, the vagueness present in the official documents which should launch the shift towards a new paradigm, finally gives leeway to member states to act at their own discretion, side-lining the common action of the EU. Therefore, a vague policy resulting from a difficult compromise generates a flawed implementation in the field.

Through a systematic analysis of the implementation of the most relevant instruments at the disposal of the EU for the democracy assistance, we realized that the events of the 'Arab Spring' did not actually have such a great impact on the EU's support to civil society. Indeed, the findings at hand showed that the new instruments of democracy promotion, such as the SPRING Programme or the Civil Society Facility, which were presented as the new revolutionary instruments specifically conceived for the implementation of bottom-up actions for the support of civil society, proved to be a drop in the ocean rather than a concrete action to support civil society. Paradoxically, the EU's policy of civil society assistance has deepened the fragmentation of civil society, by providing funding only to Western-based consultancies and neglecting grassroots movements. As a matter of fact, recipient countries face severe conditions for receiving finance or are even neglected by EU programs addressing civil society.

In conclusion, the EU's heightened interest in its Southern neighbourhood in the aftermath of the 'Arab Spring' has not translated into a real change of policy. On the contrary, it has contributed to making it even more difficult to discern a regional strategy amid the fragmentation of initiatives and processes. More specifically, despite the post-Arab spring rhetoric, EU shows a resistance to change that stands out in an area of ongoing transformation. While the recent policy initiatives are often summarized with the motto 'more for more' the picture of the ENP in the post Arab-spring context is rather 'less for the same', as the same principles are applied and less funds are disbursed. While the EU had already abandoned its attempts at region-building in the Mediterranean before the Arab uprisings, its response to changes in the area has further weakened its long-term vision for the region, to the point that it is currently questionable whether there actually is one.

Notes

- ¹ The EMP stemmed from the Barcelona Declaration in 1995 is built on three baskets: political and security cooperation; economic and finance (including a free trade area); enhancement of social and cultural ties.
- ² S. Füle, European Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighborhood Policy, *Speech on the recent events in North Africa*, Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET), European Parliament, Brussels, 28 February 2011.
- ³ European Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, *A Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean*, Joint Communication to the European Council, the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, COM(2011) 200 final, Brussels, 8 March 2011; European Commission and High Representative to the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, *A New Response to a Changing Neighborhood. A review of European Neighborhood Policy*, Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, COM (2011) 303, Brussels, 25 May 2011.
- ⁴ The test of the grade of commitment of the EU institutions and its member states to the declaratory objectives is a first element to understand whether the common policy is consistent or rather vague, and whether a certain degree of vagueness might cause a weak implementation of the objectives.
- ⁵ Council of the European Union, *Report on the implementation of the European Security Strategy – providing security in a changing world*, S407/08, Brussels, 11 December 2008.
- ⁶ Many scholars moved criticisms to the ‘modernization theory’ that the EU wished to apply to the Mediterranean, considering that the neoliberal paradigm that the EU wanted to reply beyond its borders is unlikely to reproduce the same effects, a fortiori this model is also currently suffering in many European States due to the financial crisis. See: Bicchi, F. 2006. Moreover, other scholars pointed out that the ‘modernization model’ actually lacks casual relationships, giving some examples like China, where economic development is not linked to democratization. See: S. Panebianco and Rossi, 2012.
- ⁷ B. Ferrero-Waldner, *The Middle East in the EU’s External Relations*, Speech of the former European Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighborhood Policy Madrid, 11 January 2007.
- ⁸ Interview with an official of the European External Action Service, Brussels, 16 April 2013.
- ⁹ European Parliament, *Improving the EU’s support for the civil society in its neighborhood: rethinking procedures, ensuring that practices evolve*, Directorate-General for External Policies, Brussels, 23 July 2012, p. 27.
- ¹⁰ GONGOs are organizations registered as NGOs, but keeping unofficial close links with governmental authorities.

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Learning methods in International Relations

Alessia Chiriatti

Introduction

International Relations (IR) scholars are often concerned about the effects of their topics, but they sometimes overlook the impact on their students, which represents the most immediate, and possibly, one of the most important outputs of research. If there is one area of IR as a discipline that has been systematically overlooked or undervalued by the academic community, it is the area of IR pedagogy. Perhaps it is because excellent teaching attracts lesser rewards in the higher education ecosystem than excellent research. Also, there is a stark dichotomy between ‘research’ and ‘teaching’. More importantly, the ‘teaching and learning’ agenda is currently making strides in higher education across Europe, as indicated by initiatives related to the so-called Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) or the Teaching Excellent Framework (TEF) in the UK¹.

The FEP/IT programme, conducted by the University for Foreigners of Perugia thanks to the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ and International Cooperation funds is a valid case study useful for analysing the situation of the learning mechanism and ability, together with education, at the university level. In this perspective, one of the questions that triggered the construction of the educational course has been how has learning changed during the last century? What are the most suitable and appropriate learning methods for a course in which different cultures have the chance to stay in touch and debate on the same topics? And how to teach International Relations and which are the most efficient instruments that could be applied and easily perceived by the students?

The project being analysed is more useful if put under a lens in order to consider the intercultural dialogue and civil society “as a strategic approach to advance cooperation with Mediterranean partners also in other policy areas” (Panebianco, 2018, 394). As explained in this book, the EU’s democracy promotion in the Mediterranean countries on the southern borders is fostered by continuous challenges (mainly represented by the turmoil that exploded after the so-called Arab Springs in 2011) and by an exchange of values, bottom-up strategies and thematic networking to provide a more receptive context for cooperation (Malmvig, 2005). On the other side, it is important to evaluate the characteristics and role of the actors involved in the process of democracy promotion (at a regional, institutional and transnational level), thus trying to understand the evolution and development of the IR’s debate on the framework at the basis of Euro-Mediterranean relations. During the period covered by the FEP/IT courses, this aspect has been on one side the basis for analysing the impact of the IR’s topics on students and the way in which the latter learn mechanisms for understanding geopolitical problems and issues, and transposing the acquired instruments in practice².

Thanks to this starting point, this chapter attempts to analyse in depth the International Relations field and the instruments, classical (traditional) and interactive, for teaching this complex and composite discipline at a university level. In this perspective, International Relations, through the numerous matters included in the degree course, represent an important field of evaluation for several reasons: the civic value and composition of the courses, in which political, historical, economic and law matters find their place in a structural design and need proper instruments to be learnt; the institutional meaning of the

courses, through the possible and future ruling class receiving an appropriate education; the level of analysis, the IRs are able to investigate, having effects on the social structures, global civil society and the diversity of non-political social systems (Temby, 2015).

Undoubtedly, IRs also express themselves through a specific professionalization that gives the students a wide range of applications. For this reason, the research will investigate the link between the learning mechanisms, ability and instruments and the labour market. The main questions to analyse in this field are as follows: Which are the main skills required in international relations jobs (such as diplomacy, foreign affairs, II.OO., etc.)? How can a course, structured in a classical (traditional) or interactive way, transmit the complexity of the International Relations' skills and concepts? Is there a different perception among the students of what they have learned from the different courses?

The learning mechanisms and ability, together with the greater knowledge, have been evaluated³ in all their most significant outcomes (Krain, Lantis, 2006): "Factual Knowledge" (the information students need to know in order to solve problems), "Conceptual Knowledge" (an understanding of the interrelationships between different ideas), "Procedural Knowledge" (knowing how to do something), and "Metacognitive Knowledge" (one's awareness of learning) (Pettenger, West, Young, 2014).

The changing patterns of IRs

International Relations are developed in a political space that we could define as global. At the same time, the evolution of IRs as a discipline (and consequently of teaching IRs) has to be considered as complex and on a large scale.

The history of International Relations as a discipline has a long tradition: it could have a different classification and denomination, related also to the historical analysis of international politics.

In the Italian university system, its origin could be traced back to when, in 1875, a course of *International Law* and *History of International Relations* was held in the School of Social Science in Florence (after named faculty of Political Science "Cesare Alfieri"). In the same period, a course on *Diplomacy and History of Treaties* was introduced at the University of Bologna: later it also took on the denomination of *Diplomacy and International Law* and was finally called *History of Public International Law and International Relations* (Pettenger, 2014).

In Italy in 1939, the first competitive exam was proclaimed for teaching *History of Treaties and International Politics*⁴. The *History of International Relations* obtained its autonomy from *International Law* as a discipline with the creation in 1925 of the Political Science faculties (De Leonardis, 2015).

Looking at the evolution of the discipline in the Anglo-Saxon world, the definition given in the first chapter written by British historian, journalist and diplomat, Edward Hallett Carr in his *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-39* is enlightening: he speaks about the beginning of a science. "The science of international politics is in its infancy. Down to 1914, the conduct of international relations was the concern of persons professionally engaged in it" (Carr, 1939, 1). He starts to explain the relationship between the foreign policy and the party politics in democratic countries. He stresses the historical and profound change affecting the science of international politics, that happened with the war of 1914-1918. In fact, war and international affairs started to be no longer just a matter related and linked to professional soldiers and diplomats. On a discipline level and in order to respond to a popular demand (then transmitted to a university context), the science of international

politics was created in order to collect, classify and analyse facts and draw inferences. In this way, scholars and academicians could be ready to investigate the purpose facts and deductions can be put to. The process seems to lack this logical order, because the human mind works backwards, and the aims and purposes of research should logically follow analysis and be guided by initial impulses.

At the same time, even considering these methodological aspects together with the differences between physical science (in which theories are constantly observed in practice in the laboratory, finding conclusions supported by a report on true facts) and political science (in which there are no such facts), the purpose, as in physical science, is not irrelevant and separable from it: it is itself one of the facts. Moreover, it is important to underline how much the role of human behaviour can change the perspective in political and international science. The concept of agency helps us to explain how much the human dimension is central in the political theory: political activities are carried out by agents whose agency inheres in their power to produce effects. In politics, agency is generally reserved for human actors, and more controversially, it is sometimes attributed only to particular categories of persons (Glynos and Howarth, 2008). As explained above in this book (see Diodato's chapter), the human dimension is fundamental in international geopolitics, with its timing and spacing: the States' power is spread over the whole planet, fighting the boundary constraints and increasing interdependence among economic, strategic and cultural life. None of these factors can be overlooked in teaching and learning IR as a discipline, especially considering the latter as a lens on facts and changing interactions inside the world order, the analysis of which could be reached through research and debate. Another aspect also worth stressing is the role of the actors in this analysis.

Educational literature highlights the need for a more reflective approach to the relationship between theory and practice (Korthagen and Kessels, 1999). The use of theory also provides possibilities for the student's emancipation: studying theories and applying them in practice is useful for more broadly encouraging and supporting their capacity to become independent, autonomous thinkers. On the other hand, and according to a more critical approach, the people's understanding of their positioning in the system and the use of power reveals how much education can help us (Biesta, 2010). Moreover, emancipation flows from the recognition of this positioning, while social science has the task of making it visible and revealing the power structures, mainly through the use of theory and the introduction of competing approaches. The application of a theoretical framework is a mechanism to understand or attempt to explain 'real world' events or phenomena (Marsden and Savigny, 2012).

However, the contemporary 'real world' of politics and international relations is characterized by issues that transcend disciplinary boundaries: for example, in order to analyse and study phenomenon like climate change, terrorism or globalization, it is important to make reference to theories from both International Relations and Political Science, without disaggregating the domestic from the international, and thereby rejecting the realist paradigm. This approach underlines a sort of changing pattern in IR and in its education and, in this way, it seems that Political Science and International Relations are interlinked disciplines able to usefully inform each other.

Obviously, approaches, cultural dimensions and paradigms have changed in the last decades: they have been particularly shaped not only by the development of the debates on IR, but also by the extraordinary divisiveness that has characterized recent decades, starting from the Cold War, passing through the changing polarization and the new chal-

lenges of the XXI century. Some might reasonably question the intellectual insight of international relations scholars, who for the most part failed to anticipate the end of the Cold War and collapse of the Soviet Union, the 9/11 attacks on the United States and their consequences, and the emergence and failure of the Arab Spring, to say nothing of the political forces that led to Brexit in the United Kingdom and the surprising outcome of the 2016 United States' presidential election. Thinking specifically of the EU cooperation with Mediterranean partners, in which the FEP/IT programme finds its roots, in the 1990s it was explained via a constructivist interpretation: "actors working together on a specific project are exposed to common values, ideas and stimuli that help the development of a common language that is eventually conducive to a more secure and cooperative environment" (Panebianco, 2018, 395). As explained in this book (see Sigillò's chapter) the Barcelona Declaration devoted its third chapter to the "Social, Cultural and Human Partnership": this step was adopted by the 27 countries in order to react to the emergence of the clash of civilization. Today, new challenges are threatening the Barcelona framework, or are at least rendering the implementation of the Declaration rather difficult. If in the decades before the social-constructivist paradigm it was useful to understand the tendencies and needs of the cooperation and emphasize the role of culture, identity, norms and communication, the security-related issues prevailing in the Euro-Mediterranean political realm now endanger cultural cooperation. Moreover, intercultural dialogue is menaced in particular by systemic constraints, such as poverty, migration, unemployment, and violent ideologies. For this reason, new analytical tools are required to understand the ongoing trends.

The tuition is moreover driven by the students' interest and demand, specifically in most professional programmes and graduate schools on international affairs (Gavin, 2018)⁵. Innovation and knowledge of the trends and mechanisms that have profoundly altered political, socio-economic, and cultural forces around the world, such as globalization, interdependence, and populism, have also deeply changed the spectrum for analysing the world, together with the instruments of understanding. International affair programmes are more capable than other disciplines and professional programs of helping us to understand and develop solutions to the complex, vexing, and ever-changing array of global challenges and opportunities. Moreover, global policy schools can be engines of much-needed change and reform in higher education, enlarging and innovating on what, to whom, and how international affairs is researched and taught. Finally, these programmes are attracting new audiences in the world of international affairs, acting as bridges between the worlds of thought and action, among different generations and communities, and among the public, private, and non-profit sectors.

A second argument for evaluating this changing pattern in teaching IR is related to the fact that new learning methodologies, in particular thinking relating to the gamification tools, are useful on one hand for to improving the so-called soft skills; on the other, for better understanding and applying the level of analysis in International Relations. At this stage, it is important to mention Andrew Moravcsik's suggestions on the ontological question of who the actors in international politics are (Moravcsik, 1997). The author uses three 'images' to explain state behaviour: this implies that the concept may not be so easily dispensed with. Individuals, states, the international system and other popular nouns in IR have been examined as analytically distinct, notwithstanding the fact that their ontological status is a matter of ongoing debate and division. Applying these concepts and images, using them to play an active role, for example in a simulation, helps IR students

and scholars address the ambiguities that arise in examinations involving multiple realms (or 'levels') of social organization, such as the relationship of levels of analysis with agent and structure, global civil society and the diversity of non-political social systems⁶.

The debate surrounding the level of analysis in International Relations sprang up in the late 1950s when Kenneth Waltz (1959) published his classic text, "*Man, the state, and war*", although the term was coined by Singer (1961). He argues that all three levels are needed, but that 'the key variable is not the system itself, but the way in which that system is perceived, evaluated, and responded to by the decision makers in the several and separate states' (Singer 1960, 461). In his classic text, Waltz posits three images as independent variables for explaining state behaviour as the dependent variable (in his specific case, the decision of a state to go to war): the individual; the State; the international system. Singer completely redefined what the levels of analysis are. Here, he says that systems consist of parts and a whole, a 'micro- or macro-level of analysis'. Every system has these two levels, and so the choice to employ the state and international system levels (and apparently eliminate the individual one) is not arbitrary, but rather flows logically from the decision to study the international system, and the acknowledgement that states are its constituent elements by definition. This definition of levels of analysis is consistent with Wendt's distinction between micro- and macro-levels of structure (Wendt, 1999), and as such does not replace Waltz's (Waltz, 1959) three levels, but instead compliments them. Singer's state level is not the same as Waltz's as the latter's is an independent variable and the former's a subset of the international system level which portrays that level from the standpoint of the states – what Wendt (Wendt, 1999) and Buzan (Buzan at all, 1993) refer to as the interaction (or micro) level. The debate on the level of analysis has been mentioned by several authors and academicians: for example, Hollis and Smith's (1990) conception of levels of analysis entails hierarchical groups of aggregation whose behaviour represents independent variables for the level below, and dependent variables for the level above, while the debate between Wendt and Hollis and Smith continued among other scholars (Carlsnaes, 1994; Jabri and Chan, 1996), specifically on the fact that Hollis and Smith conflate them with agents and structure. The fact that the concept has been used in so many different ways indicates a demand for language that will give expression to these various related concepts.

The key point to be explicated here is that an agent-structure problem exists at every level of analysis. Analytically, the debate on the "levels of analysis" involves the question of the relative weight that should be attributed to the units as opposed to the system as a whole (Hollis and Smith, 1991). With regard to the simulation and to the game theory for example, as mentioned later on in this paper, these instruments could help the analysis of relationships among two or more actors, assisting international relations theoreticians in explaining the interactions among the actors it considers, and practitioners in the field for influencing those interactions in order to benefit the actors they represent. Considering the different levels of analysis in IR and using them as analytical device, in fact, means that the observer and analyst may choose to focus on the international system as a whole, parts of the system in interaction with each other, or some of its parts in particular.

Facing epistemological and physical boundaries: distance and active learning as a new approach to IR

In recent decades, rapid technological innovation has facilitated a convergence between traditional face-to-face and distributed (or technology-mediated) learning environments. These blended learning environments try to take advantage of the strengths of both archetypal learning environments (Graham, 2006). The term blended learning is relatively new in higher education and in corporate settings. Researchers recognize the potential for transforming learning when combining both face-to-face and technology-mediated instruction (Garrison and Kanuta, 2004; Graham, 2006; Graham and Robison, 2007). Blended learning must capitalize on the strengths of both online and face-to-face modalities in order to create a more active learning environment (Graham and Robison, 2007).

Active learning in the college classroom has been strongly advocated (Maier, Keenan, 1994) and used (Smith, 1992) to promote educational goals in a variety of college disciplines. It requires students to work together in small groups to experience, analyse, criticise and solve problems instead of simply taking notes (Cooper & Mueck, 1990). Active learning provides practical experience and promotes learning via experiential learning techniques. For example, active learning with simulations and games enables students to actively experiment, test and apply what they have learned in other and more complex situations (Lewis, Williams, 1994). The goal is to let students experience something new and then encourage reflection about their experience. This reflection helps active learners develop new skills or new ways of thinking (Kolb, 1984).

Active learning is a student-centred approach in which the responsibility for learning is placed on the student, often working in collaboration with classmates. In active learning environments and formats, teachers are facilitators rather than one-way information providers. Active Learning is a branch of informal learning, a pervasive approach in which there are no set objectives in terms of learning outcomes and the knowledge is built via participation or creation, in contrast with the traditional view of teacher-centred learning via knowledge acquisition. The presentation of facts, instead of being introduced through straight lectures, is de-emphasized in favour of class discussion, problem solving, cooperative learning, and writing exercises. Other examples of active learning techniques include role-playing, case studies, group projects, think-pair-share, peer learning, debates, Just-in-Time Teaching, and short demonstrations followed by class discussion. Moreover, active learning moves its steps in the methodology and in providing a toolkit for teaching throughout some passages, that could be explained such us: (1) think globally, act locally, working in a global framework that concerns macro dynamics, long-term processes, a variety of players and a complex system of causes and effects; (2) develop a specific open mindedness and free access for all, thanks to the idea that the web platforms focused on active learning will be free forever, without any restriction in relation to the user's qualification or to the formal enrolment of a specific partner university; (3) develop interactivity, thanks to triangular communication among students, teachers, professors and educational managers, born from practices of reciprocity, that builds a network of people who improve a dialogue on topics related to discipline, web-platform usability and so on; improve creativity, helped by the user experience, the scientific literature on the topic and the technology development, that determine the processes and the methodology of development of active learning. Moreover, active learning, together with distance learning, helps diversity. Different experiences, points of view, attitudes and skills can truly enrich the process. Using active learning means that methods and activities should be designed

considering the people involved in the group, inside and outside school.

The evolution of teaching and learning through technology integration is apparent at all levels of education (Adcock, 2008). The teachers' and students' roles, together with the education profession, have undergone many changes⁷: with the use of technology, in fact, the classroom is not limited to four walls with a teacher using direct instruction, where the teacher's role is often not the centre of learning but a facilitator of the learning activities. From the other side, it is clear that over recent decades the integration of technology in education reveals many advantages (Lou, Abrami and Apollonia, 2001). It is apparent, therefore, that teacher preparation programmes have a responsibility to help all teachers learn to meld technology into the curriculum more effectively. Mehlinger and Powers (2002) state that "not to know what technology is available to assist children educationally, and not to use it thoughtfully, is evidence of instructional malpractice" (26). Specifically, in courses in which a digital portfolio is provided, digital learning can help the teacher in the classroom to understand whether the students are learning well or if adjustments need to be made to improve the teaching and learning situation. Moreover, the digital portfolio is useful for monitoring the courses and documenting and recording the individual progress of all the figures involved in the teaching progress (both students and teachers) in correlation to standards and/or principle set up for their course (Adcock, 2008). At this point, there are several instruments to evaluate these skills and steps, such as anonymous surveys and gamification⁸ tools.

One of the most important tools used in this regard is the Moodle. Moodle (an acronym for Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment, an environment for modular, dynamic, object-oriented learning) is an e-learning platform, or a didactic tool, with full web access and use, which supports the traditional teaching classroom and allows the teacher to publish and make available to students the teaching material of the lessons, conveying communications, publishing information on the course and lessons, and administering tasks/exercises, tests, etc. The concept of Moodle itself has been almost entirely replaced by the MOOC, particularly in the international context. A MOOC is "a course of study made available on the Net, free of charge, for a large number of people". More specifically, a MOOC can be defined starting from the meanings attributed to the terms that make up the acronym: Massive (the course is designed for a large number of participants); Open (the course is freely accessible by anyone anywhere who has access to a fast internet connection; the course can be used for free); Online (all aspects of the course are provided online); Course. From these constituent elements we can identify the main novelties of the MOOC phenomenon with respect to the previous experience of e-learning. The new MOOC format does not exclude simultaneous use in support of classroom teaching (the so-called blended approach), thus opening up in two directions with expansion of the audience (Third Mission) and optimization of the use of resources (savings in the use of physical spaces and re-functionalization of the teaching hours).

One of the most important contributions of the MOOC revolution is the possibility of monitoring and evaluating the teaching activity and its use in a much richer and more articulated way. With significant implications for improvement and greater effectiveness of the training offer. The extraordinary amount of potentially available data poses some challenges however – both methodological and technical – which are not easy or of immediate solution. Moreover, at the moment, lifelong learning (LLL) is the main expansion pool of the MOOCs. About three quarters of worldwide learners have a university degree.

Thanks to the dematerialisation of the training contents and the potential for dissem-

ination and access everywhere at all times, the educational cycle has expanded from the traditional five years to the entire work experiences, with the possibility for universities to become protagonists of this expansion. All the interactive instruments also face the need to identify forms that encourage students to continue their educational activities, dealing with and overcoming possible problems like getting bored or abandoning, by introducing processes of engagement inspired by game design. In this phase, the so-called Gamification is very important: its origins date to between 2008 and 2010, as a set of techniques that allow the player to always pay great attention and face continuous challenges with a reward (not necessarily economic). Considering that the study is not a game, the challenge of Gamification appears dedicated to identifying different forms of assignments, also combined, which invite the student to think about the exercise in order to reach the goal. In the case of MOOC courses, the final objective is clearly the obtaining of a certificate and/or a badge attesting to the skill achieved.

The FEP/IT programme: the methodology of the course

Starting from the inclusion of the FEP/IT programme of the active learning approach in the teaching processes, it is important to evaluate the students' involvement during the follow-up of the course. Students were called on to develop a project work applied in a transnational and bilateral dimension: Italian students designed and improved on a project applied in Tunisia, thanks to the involvement of *in loco* key partners, while vice-versa, Tunisian students developed their project in Italy⁹.

As previously mentioned, the FEP/IT programme was taken from an idea of the University for Foreigners of Perugia and thanks to the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs' and the International Cooperation funds¹⁰. The name of the project itself reveals the effort and the way that students, together with the tutors and the university educators, pursued the final goals of the course: they were required to know different cultures, and were forced to come in contact and relationships with the other students in the projects, examining in depth the current models of cooperation and conflict in the Mediterranean region, together with the processes of troubled change and geopolitical transformation. The programme was designed for a small group of ten students (Italian and Tunisian), who attended a total of 90 hours of the course. The latter was divided into two parts: one part (30 hours in 15 lessons) of e-learning and the remainder (60 hours) of classroom attendance at the University for Foreigners of Perugia. It is important to underline at this stage, that in order to evaluate the already mentioned acquired knowledge by the students (specifically factual, conceptual, procedural and metacognitive), teachers uploaded ten questions on the web platform at the end of each single online module. To gain access to the next lesson, all the students had to pass a questionnaire, structured with conceptual queries regarding the content of the lesson already studied. Moreover, during the face-to-face lessons, teachers conducted some focus groups, in order to evaluate progress during the students' learning process. By consulting the web platform, it is possible to observe how, as regards the factual, conceptual and procedural knowledge, the students reached an average of 82.12% in the fifteen lessons, thus demonstrating the real acquisition of the concepts and rudiments useful for proceeding with the educational plan and the fieldwork of the project plans in Tunisia and Italy. On the other hand, the focus groups conducted face-to-face in class, together with the exercise of simulations, demonstrated that students reached a profound metacognitive knowledge, being able to think, argue and evaluate their ideas, involving the partners with whom they developed their project plan and, finally, building their busi-

ness plan, starting specifically from the requirements of their targets.

At the centre of the educational programme, the project included focus and topics on security, civil society, intercultural mediation, migration, the use and the evolution of mass media, public, European and international law, development cooperation, economy, and cultural heritage. At the end of this course, students carried out one month of project work in a partner institution, Tunisian students in Italy and Italian students in Tunisia, with focus on the political, sociological, environmental situations of the two countries under study, always guided by the spirit of exchange and cooperation. Students had access to this platform with their credentials and were able to consult 15 lessons related to learning the theoretical notions and the practical tools of diplomatic relations and international cooperation, available in Italian and English, with bibliography, web sites and in-depth material, evaluation questionnaire and preliminary access to the next educational resource. Themes of the e-learning modules included history and institutions of Italy and the Arab world, negotiations, cooperation, project management, risk scenario analysis, communication in cooperation, decision making and problem solving techniques, corporate social responsibility, and case studies on sustainable development, migration, culture and development. Thanks to the choice related to the structure of the educational programme (with a step organized in distance learning and performances in the classrooms), the FEP/IT programme dedicated great attention to the active learning strategy. Distance learning, together with simulations and games organized during the classes, required students' participation and decision-making throughout the learning process, enabling them to practice real-life behaviours in a realistic environment (Zapalska, Brozik, Rudd, 2012).

Students were also called on to develop a project work at the end of the educational process: they were helped in class by tutors and teachers to transform their own ideas of transnational cooperation into a factual project. One of the most important ways to help and guide students to imagine their project work concerned the so-called design thinking roadmap. Defining the term *design* is hard, due to the fact it is constantly in evolution: in 1992, Richard Buchanan, professor of the management, design and information system at the Weatherhead School of Management, asserted: "design is not history made by an object, but an evolution of opinion around which a design object could be defined" (Buchanan, 1992, p. 13). The first definition of design was provided by Herbert A. Simon in his text *The Science of Artificial*, in which he defines design as the development of artefacts in order to reach a specific goal by changing an existing situation into a preferred one through artefacts. In his paper, he starts from a methodological assumption: "historically and traditionally, it has been the task of the science disciplines to teach about natural things: how they are and how they work. It has been the task of engineering schools to teach about artificial things: how to make artefacts that have desired properties and how to design" (Simon, 1988, p. 67).

The strength of the project was in the connecting of students coming from different backgrounds and approaching the study of Euro-Mediterranean relations through different interpretative and communicative instruments, such as using different languages to communicate (specifically English, French, Italian and Arabic). The name of the project itself reveals the effort and the way that students, together with the tutors and the university educators, pursued the final goals of the course: they were required to know different cultures, and were forced to come in contact and relationships with the other students in the projects, examining in depth the current models of cooperation and conflict in the Mediterranean region, together with the processes of troubled change and geopolitical

transformation.

With this approach, the component of this small group, together with the tutors and leading university educators, were put in a condition to interact among themselves with a spirit of cooperation, blending their ideas and background knowledge, even on the field during the evolution of the project that the students were called on to realize for a period of one month at the end of the educational program.

Moreover, negotiations and simulation (gamification) covered a huge part of the educational process during the course. Considering the importance of gamification, simulations in several contexts (like UN Committees, EU Commissions, NATO, trading chamber and so on) represent an important instrument for studying and testing the soft skills acquired by students together with the aforementioned “Factual Knowledge”, “Conceptual Knowledge”, “Procedural Knowledge” and “Metacognitive Knowledge”.

This type of “student-centred” approach, in which students actively take part (Jonassen and Land 2000) is “constructive, cumulative, self-regulated, goal-oriented, collaborative, and individually different” (De Corte 2000, p. 254). Simulations have been used in a variety of fields such as law, business, economics, sociology, history, engineering, education, climate change negotiations, and elections. Simulations are also considered perfectly suited to the study of international relations (Simpson and Kaussler 2009, p. 214).

The completeness and variety of the issues discussed and the actors that can be present in the simulated places make it possible to offer a unique forum for students to learn about global issues and political processes, while also improving their communication skills and defending their positions, i.e., “practicing their communication and negotiation skills that will serve them well for a lifetime” (Ripley et al. 2009, p. 55). The simulations, moreover, help to respect the cultural and societal variety of the students in the world.

During the FEP/IT programme, the techniques used in class for the simulation were the so-called AltA techniques, also known as Alternative Analysis. They are specifically applied to the simulations and could be described as follows: “AltA is the deliberate application of independent, critical thought and alternative perspectives to improve decision making”. These techniques are very important when applied in a simulation (or gamification) context, when we consider a situation in which students need to represent and personify and embody a specific character (such as, for example, a State in a UN Committee) and to reach a solution to a specific topic (i.e. the decision-making process) by discussing and debating with the other actors in the same Committee. The AltA techniques are basically founded on some key points related to independence, critical thought and alternative perspectives. *Independence* is related to the chance to be free from influence or control by others in matters of belief or thinking. *Critical thought* – that we could also define as critical thinking – is the capability of intellectual minds to conceptualize, apply, analyse, synthesize and evaluate all the available information. This fact is particularly important in the process of decision making and problem solving, in order to find, underline and consider in depth the goals, problems, assumptions, concepts, evidence, implications and consequences of the topics discussed. Lastly, the *alternative perspective* is the result of looking at a situation, problem or fact from a different mindset, cultural frame or value and belief structure.

It is important to underline that these types of techniques could be applied not only in the university and academic approach, but also in the business sectors (profit world, industry, intelligence and so on). This is proof of the efficiency of these techniques, which moreover could be proficient in solving some biases and common problems. As for the

latter, AltA techniques are useful for eliminating the staff's role, which, without specific guidance, would not have a general vision of the topic to be discussed, while AltA techniques are able to provide an initial starting point for a task, exploring the issues and generating motivating ideas to start tackling the problem. In addition, the problem related to the language used is prominent in the debate and in the negotiation: the AltA techniques encourage round-table discussions and contributions, where all the participants can use their language and their physical expressions. On the other hand, AltA techniques try to transform meetings into a practical solution to problems, that would otherwise be boring or badly structured and have poor consistency. Furthermore, the decision-making could be influenced by biases, i.e. an inclination to orient or be oriented towards a particular perspective.

Conclusion

The importance of teaching and learning has undeniably grown in the discipline during the last decade. National, regional and international political science conferences have recognized the value of teaching and learning (in terms of both pedagogy and scholarship), and consequently they have allocated time to looking at what and how political scientists teach. For example, the Teaching and Learning Politics Group of the European Consortium of Political Research (ECPR) had five pedagogy-focused panels at its 2012 conference in Bordeaux; and the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association featured 11 panels covering teaching and learning in Chicago in 2014. At these conferences, best practices and ideas were disseminated and discussed in an effort to improve pedagogy in the political science classroom.

There is another step that is important to consider in learning International Relations (and Political Science) at a university level: this motivation intrinsically meets the exchange programmes among students from different universities, such as and above all, the Erasmus+. The so-called Erasmus Generation (Paoli, 2010) has been shaped and modelled by the European project of sharing knowledge without barriers. Exchange programmes encourage intercultural dialogue and increase tolerance through people-to-people interactions. Moreover, they allow more young people to benefit from intercultural and international experiences, enhancing their critical thinking and media literacy together with the use of Internet and social media. They support the objectives of the 2015 Paris Declaration to promote citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education, fostering soft-skill development in the participants, including the practice of foreign languages and intercultural teamwork, notably to enhance employability. At this stage, study at a distance helped the online and interactive instruments has particular relevance as it represents a 'new' approach to student learning. In short, the contributory factors that influence the successful deployment of these forms of learning include the instructor's enthusiasm and/or motivation, the technology available to the instructors, the involvement/acquiescence of the faculty in the immediate departmental environment, the interests of the institution's higher management in the success of the endeavour, the financial support involved, and finally, the qualities of the student body.

To conclude, simulations and games have a strong impact on students, because role-playing facilitates active learning, enabling the acceptance of new concepts, and generating increased student interest, enthusiasm and motivation. The students' comments show that simulations and games work, as the exercises can be structured and allow them to become

an important element in the learning process. Although the confluence of technology in the pedagogical aspects of teaching can be a positive step, the use of technology needs to be routinely assessed to determine whether the changes in the students' skills and grades are due to the use of technology or whether there are contributors other than technology that improve skills and grades. Therefore, close monitoring and assessment of technology activities must be conducted on an ongoing basis to determine whether technology does contribute to, or the very least, does not detract from the teaching and learning situation (Wepner, Tao, Ziomek, 2006).

It is evident that technology integration is a stable part of the educational system. Research proves this when technology is taught in unison with the 'how to teach' content. The challenge that remains is for teaching educators to become more technology-savvy like their students and to model the use of technology in their teaching more effectively so that all students are able to benefit in a world that depends on technology.

Notes

¹ The TEF has been introduced by the Government in England to recognize and to encourage excellent teaching in universities and colleges. It is intended to help students choose where to study, by providing clear information about teaching provision and students outcomes. TEF is a voluntary scheme, designed for universities and colleges in England, but those in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland also are able to choose to participate.

² This aspect is particularly remarkable and valuable if we consider the structure of the FEP/IT programme, as this chapter will explain in the following pages and that will be one of the main topics of the appendix of this book. The FEP/IT programme, in fact, has provided in its education plan, after the course conducted in e-learning and in presence, a period of internship for one month for all the selected students, respectively in Italy and Tunisia, as fieldwork and realization of project works discussed in class.

³ As for the examination and the evaluation of mechanisms and abilities learnt by the students during and after the courses, questionnaire and focus group have been conducted.

⁴ In this exam, two historians, Mario Toscano and Anton Maria Bettarini, and one jurist, Santo/Santi Nava, obtained the teaching post.

⁵ According to the data produced by Foreign Policy, in collaboration with Teaching, Researching and International Policy project at the College of William & Mary, at the top of U.S. undergraduate institutions of study International Relations, we can find Harvard University (51.10%), Princeton University (49.14%), Stanford University (41.67%). More details available at: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/02/20/top-fifty-schools-international-relations-foreign-policy/#undergrad>

⁶ See Onuf (1998) for a discussion of the indispensability of levels in social inquiry. Onuf also provides an alternative historical overview of levels of analysis in IR to what is presented in this article and expresses concerns similar to mine about conflating ontology and methodology when conceptualizing levels.

⁷ It is also related to the ethics assignment and connections between teaching and learning, the role of the teachers and their own ethical commitment (Hartley, Bendixen, 2001; Windschitl, Sahl, 2002).

⁸ Gamification is based on the concession of interactivity granted by all the modern instruments, related to the amusement to learn and teach. It is, according to the definition by Deterding & all. (2011), the use of game design elements in non-game contexts, and it is a fairly and rapidly growing field (Dicheva, Dichev, Agre, Angelova, 2015). See below in the text the specific explanation about this involvement approach.

⁹ The illustration and the explanation of the design related to the project works will be better narrated in the last part of this book and through the appendix.

¹⁰ More information could be found at this link: https://www.unistrapg.it/sites/default/files/docs/concorsi-selezioni/181009-bando-fep_it-italiano.pdf

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Conclusion: Rethinking the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation: from theory to practice

Alessia Chiriatti and Ester Sigillò

The student-centered learning, the intercultural dialogue: laying the groundwork for a bottom-up approach.

Under the framework of the FEP/IT programme, students have been trained to build their own project works related to the main socio-economic and political aspects involving the two shores of the Mediterranean, with a specific focus on the case study of cooperative relationships between Italy and Tunisia. The idea of the programme was in this sense developed under a student-centered approach. E-learning and in class courses have been preparatory for students in order to frame their ideas to be further developed during their one-month internship in March 2019. Therefore, the development, execution and implementation of students' projects, have to be considered not only as the last step of a learning process, but also as the application of the lesson learnt by the students and as their successful completion of a general comprehension of the dynamics concerning transnational and international cooperation.

In class course at the University for Foreigners of Perugia have been specifically oriented to stimulate students' interest on the social, economic and political dynamics affecting the Mediterranean region and to sensitize them to the main critical aspects concerning cooperative relationships. Indeed, students have been encouraged to develop a critical thinking concerning the impact of development cooperation programmes active in the MENA region after the outbreak of Arab uprisings. Thus, in class course has been partially dedicated at building discussions and debates, aiming at stimulating the collective problematization of development programs' agenda-setting and goals formulation, framing processes, and possible implementation bias. Eventually, a critical analysis of current development projects mostly packaged by European member states, the EU as such and the United States, gave students the sound analytical instruments to formulate their own project works during the second part of the FEP/IT Programme. Beyond the work on critical analysis, a module of the course in class was dedicated to the application and the use of the so-called "business model canvas",¹ in order to facilitate students to think with pragmatic lenses".

Specifically, project works' formulation process was characterized by a two-level bottom-up approach. On the one hand a bottom-up approach was also reflected in-class discussions and debates, notably in the interactive dynamics between students and professors. Indeed, project ideas were not imposed to students, but they were the result of a continuous consultation with them and Italian and Tunisian partners hosting them, in order to add value to the learning practices and to meet needs expressed by all the stakeholders involved. On the other hand, this educational tool eventually reflected the methodology of student's project works, all based on a renewed perspective of North-South relationships. Indeed, the presence in class of both Tunisian and Italian students, allowed the class to rethink the Mediterranean relationships in a dialectical perspective, beyond the asymmetrical dynamic which continues to affect development programmes currently funded by "developed countries" according to a very top-down approach. Therefore,

students' projects also embodied the effort to empower both Italian and Tunisian stakeholders according to a logic of complementarity, beyond a mainstream logic based on an explicit or implicit relationship of economic, social and political "domination of the North over the South".

The student-centered learning can be referred to the epistemological shifts in the 1990s, that have engendered a variety of innovative and provocative learning environments. Student-centered and learner-centered environments provide interactive, complementary activities that enable individuals to address unique learning interests and needs, study multiple level of complexity and deepen understanding (Hannafin, Land, 1997). Many learning environments, such as simulations and context of project management, rely heavily on technology and on support to student with experimentations. Learners are put in front of problems externally generated, having the chance to manipulate variables to solve these problems and the operational conditions. Other learning environments, such as anchored instruction and problem-based learning, define broad organizing contexts wherein knowledge and skills are applied across content areas, and diverse problems are pursued. In other approaches, the social interactions and negotiation are at the base of problem-solving and self-regulatory procedures. "Hence, although diverse approaches may differ in function, they nonetheless share common assumptions and values about the importance of student-centered learning" (Hannafin, Land, 1997, p. 2).

As mentioned in this book, a learning model structured on the learning-by-doing helps learners to be motivated by internal goals to solve problems, to think creatively and to make logical arguments. "And learning by doing is a social process in which meaning is negotiated, goals emerge from social processes, and success is taken within context" (Young, Barab, Garrett, 1997, p.147). From this perspective, the unit of analysis is the agent-environment interaction: problem solving, project management, negotiations and all the interactions among students do not represent a product of learners' internal cognitions (information processing), and learners are not simply victims of environmental factors. Rather, they emerge as a result of an intentionally-driven agent interacting with an information-rich environment. Learning, in fact, is a change of beliefs, even considering the policy change, structural adjustment, evolutionary selection and turnover (Levy, 1994). Learning models alone do not provide complete explanations for foreign policy. They might directly affect individual policy preferences, thus explaining how individual preferences are transformed into governmental policy decisions.

Technology, enabling psychological assumptions and pedagogical approaches, represented an important instrument for the construction of the learning environments: it is in fact frequently employed as a tool to support experimentation, manipulation and idea generation (Jonassen 2000). In today's world, technology is revolutionising our capacity to communicate with one another. Moreover, technology provides a means for students to organize their designs in ways that reinforce the complexity of problem-solving approach; it enables learners to visualize the consequences of their reasoning and to provide a means for reflection. Nevertheless, technology, even if it could promote individual sense making, could provoke misalignment because of its access, availability and of the student's attitude. The FEP/IT programme, based on the cultural and educational meeting of students from different countries, used technology to eradicate differences, distances, to help communication among students from different countries and diverse societies, to enhance critical thinking, to foster soft skills development of the participants (including the practice of foreign languages) and to build intercultural understanding. The e-learning

module, built on 30 hours lessons distributed at the beginning of the program through a web platform (Moodle), offered an accessible, ground-breaking tool for students to engage in intercultural learning, thanks also to online people-to-people interactions moderated by facilitators. Specifically, the instrument of an online forum, present on the platform and constantly enriched with news and arguments of debate given by all the users of the Moodle (both teachers and students), guaranteed the conversation and the exchange of opinions among students, with meaningful cross-cultural experiences that had profound impact on the way in which learners engage one another across lines of perceived or actual differences.

Projects and fieldworks

Project works have been developed thanks to the constant connection between University for Foreigners of Perugia, Italian and Tunisian students and Italian and Tunisian different kind partners involved in the FEP/IT programme. Notably the University collected – during the lessons in class – students’ ideas and expectations about their internships, and contextually managed relationships with all the Italian and Tunisian stakeholders involved in the programme. Specifically, partners have been selected and included in the framing and development processes of students’ project works. In order to highlight the transnational and international approach of the FEP/IT programme and to start and strengthen new relationships between the two countries. For all these reasons, the choice was oriented to develop internships with different kind of partners: NGOs, institutions, think tanks, universities.

The ambition to fulfill the student’s needs for the development of their projects (according to their attitudes and interests) has been constantly evaluated in order to match the ideas emerged during the course by the students.

Internship has to be considered as an instrument aimed at offering a training and professional orientation experience as well. For this reason, the practical activities provided by period of internships were intended to help and to provide students with the necessary skills to deeply understand the concrete application project cycle management’s tools applied to transnational cooperation and negotiation in the Mediterranean area. Thus, internship experience allowed students to develop specific skills to work both with public and private sector organizations in transnational contexts, as well as analytical skills to understand the functioning of the community institution and to manage the relationships with international partners

As for the Italian projects developed by Tunisian students, University for Foreigners of Perugia, project leaders and students collected the interests of an NGOs (i.e. Tamat, based in Perugia), of a think tank (i.e. IAI, Istituto Affari Internazionali, based in Rome), an association (i.e. Unimed, based in Rome). The University for Foreigners of Perugia’s role was fundamental during the internships period, in order to provide logistic and educational support to students involved in the programme.

Specifically, during the internship at Tamat (a company operating in the field of internationalization and Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, with projects also active in Tunisia) students followed and developed a project related to the world of agriculture, livestock and to the development of these sectors in the Tunisian communities. The focus is on the Berberine project in Tunisia and on the development of sheep farming as a resilience action by the younger generations of Sidi Bouzid to combat poverty and migration. The students conducted analyses related to the Berberine project in Tunisia: the possibility of

subsidizing incentives by Tunisian public bodies (*Agence de Promotion des Investissements Agricoles – APIA*) in the primary sector in favor of the beneficiaries of the project; analysis of the transport and trade system applied to the supply chain; legislation and methods for setting up agricultural group dements for development; support for future planning in Tunisia in the primary sector. Following an analysis of the Tunisian youth employment in agriculture and breeding, to be obtained through a SWOT analysis, the final result of the project was the organization of a shared Forum for the evaluation of projects related to the sector that help and encourage sustainable development and employment in agriculture.

The situation of women migrants was at the center with the internship with IAI, developed thanks to a partnership with University for Foreigners. The project work was focused to produce a vademecum for Tunisian migrant women in Italy, as a first reception tool. The vademecum had the aim to contain useful information for migrant women, in particular on: planned documents, housing, job placement. Other stakeholders were involved in the drafting process of the guide, and mainly: embassies and consulates, ministries of foreign affairs of both countries involved, non-governmental organizations facilitators in the migration area. Student had the following tasks: to carry out a research on the current state of the art of Italy/Tunisia migration, with a specific reference to the condition of women; the analysis of stakeholder involved within the process, conducted with some interviews.

Internship at UNIMED was focused on two different projects already activated by the Italian association: DIRE-MED (*Dialogue Interculturel, REseaux et Mobilité en MEDiterranée*) and SAGESSE (*Amélioration de la Gouvernance dans le système de l'Enseignement Supérieur en Tunisie*). As for this latter, the trainee took care of two very specific research activities: the collection and analysis of good practices on the issue of governance and quality assurance of the Tunisian university system; the assistance to the coordinator project in the collection of good practices and analyses for the creation of a catalog in French; the data analysis and research for the creation of a quality manual, aimed to provide guidelines to Tunisian universities, with a specific attention to models, examples and documents from European partner universities. Considering the DIRE-MED project, student promoted and enhanced the student mobility; entered into relationship with students, teachers and staff who have made their mobility within the project to receive a testimony on their experience to be put on the UNIMED website; assisted the project work coordinator in the collection of the good practice sheets, then published on the project online platform.

As for the Italian students who had the chance to develop their projects in Tunisia, the partners involved were *Observatoire Tunisien de la transition démocratique* (based in Tunisi); CIES (*Centro Informazione ed Educazione allo Sviluppo Onlus*), based in La Marsa and Manouba; COSPE (Cooperation for the Development of Emerging Countries), based in Tunisi; Tunis El Manar University.

The project work with COSPE was focused on the sanitary prevention of HPV (*Papilloma Virus*) for women. The tasks were related to the creation of a campaign of sensibilization about HPV and to the woman empowerment, with a specific attention to the Governorates of Jendouba, Beja and Kef.

CIES' project was developed on the involvement of civil society for sustainable development and for the sensibilization on the separate trash collection and recycling.

The *Observatoire Tunisien de la transition démocratique* welcomed an internship on the Tunisian democratic transition and on transitional justice. The student was called to study and collect data on the last election in the country, analysing the differences among the

parties, specifically in order to try to understand the 2019 electoral vote.

Lastly, one project with Tunis El Manar University was based on the research on youth post-graduate unemployment in Tunisia and on the creation of a report and a guide with results obtained; the other project with the same partner was focused on the analysis of the situation of unmarried women in Tunisia, in order to evaluate the rights' conditions and the needs of Tunisian people in this specific state.

The output of all the project works were presented during an international seminar, on 25th March 2019, at the Tunis El Manar University, at the presence of all the partners involved in the project. Students had in this way the chance to present their results and to receive comments and suggestions, under a logic of mutual exchange of all the stakeholders involved.

Notes

¹ A standard international and innovative instrument, useful on that stage to address the project works starting from the consideration and the analysis of the targets' needs.

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Rethinking
cooperation
for

“**I**n today’s world, the processes of cooperation meet, from one side, the need of a multifaceted approach to the development issues, thus including the different instances from institutions, transnational actors and civil society; from the other, the demand of sustainability and of the application of new instruments and mechanisms in the relationships between people from different cultures and backgrounds.

Starting from this point, rethinking Euro-Mediterranean cooperation means to reshape profoundly the dialogue with the Arab world, investing on the interdependence and the pursuit of common interests, especially after the intervention of the so-called Arab Springs. Moreover, it means the change of patterns in the educational programmes, considering schools and universities as the hotbed of new ideas and tendencies for the international society in the future. This process needs to involve also the level of research and dissemination and to provide the use of the newest instruments of distance and active learning.

This book represents the spin-off of the FEP/IT Program (Education for Experts in Transnationals Euro-Mediterranean Processes for the Internationalization and the Cooperation between Italy and Tunisia), conducted by the University for Foreigners of Perugia and funded by the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs. The project, dedicated to a small group of ten students from Italy and Tunisia, represents one of the first concrete attempts at rethinking the paradigm of cooperation starting from young people from two shore of the Mediterranean. The book, thus demonstrating the innovative process of cooperation and cultural exchange, and moreover including a multidisciplinary vision, has the final aim to illustrate the challenges at the cooperation and educational level. In this view, the chapters included in this book focus, first of all, on a critical analysis of post-Arab springs geopolitical relations in the light of a paradigm shift. Consequently, the authors have focused their contributions on the EU’s response to Mediterranean socio-political changes after 2011 and to the role of international law in international cooperation specifically related to the Mediterranean dimension. The book dedicated a chapter to the new learning mechanism in IR, that finally encounters the fieldworks conducted by the students during the FEP/IT Program, illustrated in the last chapter.

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