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Abstract: The paper analyzes some interpretations of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, also known as the Barcelona Process, and the role of the European Union in the Mediterranean. The study of the Process has been increasing since the Barcelona Declaration was approved on 1995. But, little attention has been given to theory and how to interpret the EU's role in the Mediterranean in the frame of international political studies. The paper discusses two main views on the Barcelona Process – the hegemonical and liberal view - and invites for further theory debate on the construction of the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation process.

In EU external relations, the word *partnership* refers to new formal relation established with an individual country and group of countries¹. In the contemporary world politics discourse, instead, the word *partnership* is used to propose a form of wished-for rather than actual relations. The Euro-Atlantic discourse, for example, made use of this term when the Atlantic Alliance was looking for a new start of cooperation across the ocean and out of troubled waters. Generally speaking, the meaning of the term of the ordinary vocabulary - i.e. joint participation of two or more subjects in the same activity - is enriched in the world political discourse with emphasis put on the condition of parity of the countries that engage themselves in a common initiative. Is this the meaning with the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership rather than the meaning of the EU vocabulary, i.e. a mere new agreement? By all means, on November 1995, when twelve North Africa and Middle East governments gathered in Barcelona together with the representatives of the Fifteen EU governments to sign the Barcelona Declaration of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP), the EU countries wanted to reassure the 12 Med-Partners on the respect of the equal condition of all the countries participating in the project. On the other side, the Non-EU Mediterranean governments wanted to make clear that equality was the *sine qua non* condition of their participation in the project. Actually, emphasis on the intentional equality of the participants was the recognition that difference was the real challenge of the Barcelona Process².

The Barcelona Declaration is targeted to the establishment of the Mediterranean Free Trade Area by the year 2010 and invites cooperation on a broad range of political, social and economic affairs. Lack of tangible results from the seven-year effort to partnership building is causing early reservations on the potentialities of the project to change into criticism and invitation to reform the principal aspects of the project. Experts and policy-makers doubt about the power of the Process to meet the Barcelona goals, and assess negatively the EU current actions and attitudes towards the partners. Analysts look at the EU initiative with scepticism and contend the appropriateness of using the conceptual and analytical tools of regionalism to the Mediterranean area. They underline the plural form of this would-be region and deal with it as being less than a region and more of a geographical aggregate characterized by discontinuous dynamics and sub-areas of interactions with great problems and strong identities of their own.

This paper focuses on the views of political scientists on the EMP. The role of the European Union in the Mediterranean after Barcelona is analysed using political science knowledge, assessment and interpretations. First section sets the Barcelona Process in the framework of the studies of the new regionalism that has been promoted by the upsurge of globalisation and global problems. The other sections explore the political science views on the Partnership and EU's role. This exploration allows having an overview of the current Mediterranean dynamics and assesses EMP future prospects.

The political science approach to new regionalism and region-building

Political economists do not hesitate to use the toolbox of the study of international economic regionalism to analyse the process for building the Mediterranean free trade area. Political scientists, instead, are less confident on making use of the study of international political regionalism as toolbox for the analysis and explanation of the Barcelona Process. The reason for this moderation is that theories and studies of international political regionalism emphasize significant commonality of political and economic structures as *the* condition for constructing cooperative relations as important as the one proposed in the Barcelona Declaration. In political

¹ It is the case, for example, of the agreement signed with Mexico on October 2000. and the strategy for new Economic Partnership Agreements with African, Caribbean and Pacific countries published on April 2002.

² On the origins of the EMP see Edwards and Philippart (1997) and Xenakis and Chrysoschoou (2001).

science theories, social homogeneity and consistent commonality of political institutions and practices are essential to create regional institutions for dealing with the problems of political and economic interdependence, not to say for adopting norms of joint conflict management and resolution. To political scientist, no commonality means any cooperation and integration but instability and conflict. Actually, many political analysts find few if any commonality and homogeneity in the group of the countries surrounding the Mediterranean Sea.

The EMP and new experiments of regional co-operation are a puzzle to the traditional approach to international political regionalism. Mainstream political science is not familiar with region-building process originated from perception of problem sharing and consequent intensification of dialogue between the governments. Proponents of the new perspective, instead, sustain their approach with the following argument: regional cooperation can be started by governments which assume that negotiations for building good-neighbour relationship, economic ties, knowledge transfer and policy coordination, are the most preferable tool to cope with the problems broadly caused to the countries of the region by some new global trends (see, for example, Coleman and Underhill, 1998). Governments – especially those of small and middle-size countries - recognize that a group of problems have highly dangerous effects on domestic policies in as different fields as environment for the problem of pollution, demography for the problem of migration, and public security for the problem of organized crime and illegal trade. Countries experience that neighbour's action and inaction on a trans-border problem directly affect their own policies. The decision to adopt an action divergent from the neighbour's action can aggravate the problem suffered by two states while inaction can either aggravate or drop into the neighbour's territory the problem of the inactive country. To provide states with political stability, people with personal security, societies with economic growth, and groups with social and cultural protection, cooperation with neighbouring countries is of the greatest importance to national policy-makers. To face the problems of interconnection and globalisation, the more trans-national policy coordination is agreed the better the expected results of domestic public policies. For this reason, problems caused by interconnection are put on the agenda of international regions as object of programs and actions of the institutions of the region. In such a perspective, the analysts of international regions have to focus their interest also on areas, like the Mediterranean, that were not considered as international region for the lack of the homogeneity/commonality attribute. Region analysts ignored these areas as regions of cooperation also because international relations were at a low intensity level, and common values and shared identities within the affected groups of people were of little significance. These facts notwithstanding, new flows of interactions and also cooperation projects have been put in place by the countries of regions with no strong commonality of attributes like the Euro-Mediterranean.

In this perspective, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership is a region level process of building mechanisms and institutions to settle the local aspects of global trends and problems. There is wide consensus on this explanation of the EMP as a case of new regionalism in terms of coordinated intergovernmental reaction to the problems of the current globalisation process. But two different interpretations of the Barcelona Process and the role and goals of the European Union and partner countries can be separated in the analyses of political scientists.

Scientific debate on this subject is still at an early stage. Here and there, authors of factual studies and empirical analyses make short, tentative assessments rather than engage themselves in a thorough theory interpretation of the Process. Few of them make explicit assertions on the nature of the EMP supported with extensive presentation of data and facts. For this reason, the following presentation of the main political science perspectives on the EMP is the first attempt at creating a simple classification of the main views of political scientists on the Barcelona Process.

The hegemony/domination view

According to some analysts, there is a cause-effect relation between the crisis of the world economy in the 1970s that fostered economic change and globalisation and the EU decision to develop a new Mediterranean policy. Counting on the asymmetry existing between the EU and Med countries in economic power, the European policy-makers, with the consent of the domestic economic establishment, decided to pursue the design of setting up European hegemony on the Med-Partners and make, as a result, Europe stronger in the global economic competition. According to this view, the Euro-Mediterranean design develops along two lines of action, the economic and political one. The former originates from the state of the world economy after the change of capitalism in the 1970s. The latter originates from the state of international (in-)security in the Mediterranean and Middle East area in the late 1990s. Some authors (like Joffé, 1999; Nienhaus, 1999; Tovias, 1999) privilege the economic cause. Others the political one (as, for example, Spencer, 2001). Actually, the two causes are connected in a subsequence relation. The failure of the strategy adopted in the first line of action provoked the need for extending the importance of the actions of the second line.

Following the crisis of the world economy of the early 1970s and the rise of globalisation in production, trade and finance, a neo-liberal offensive developed to re-activate world capitalism with increased internationalisation of production and extensive liberalization. Economic regionalism was valued consonant to the neo-liberal offensive for creating new investment opportunities. Great attention was given to the regional initiatives that include the Third World areas that have specific development capabilities like cheap labour and potentials for absorbing increased production of goods and services.

In harmony with the neo-liberal principles of the globalisation economy, the European governments decided to make efforts to integrate the Mediterranean countries' economies with the European in a single economic area open to the investment of the European capital. The explicit condition for this integration was that the Mediterranean elites accepted the new requisites of the globalisation economy, i.e. liberalization, privatisation, restructuring and deregulation. These requisites were included in the EMP and, therefore, the Barcelona Process was basically meant to incorporate the Med countries in a European-led economic region. At the same time, the multidimensional structure of the EMP was intended to establish a steady European hegemony on the region by including Mediterranean Arab countries in a politically, socially and culturally stabilized system to construct with the progressive implementation of the objectives outlined in the Barcelona Declaration 1st and 3rd chapter.

International hegemony is a relationship established on condition that "clients" consent to the leadership of the hegemon on exchange for some benefits. On the whole, Mediterranean elites and governments did not oppose the neo-liberal imperative to open their markets to the European capital. Despite their perception that Europe was capitalizing on the asymmetry of the Euro-Mediterranean relationship, North-African countries recognized the importance of European economic aid and the benefits of trading relations with all European countries to national revenues.

A growing part of the Med-countries population, however, resented the effects of economic liberalization. Negative attitudes towards the European economic model spread over the Mediterranean area. The Arab elites became the object of popular resentment, blamed for not accompanying the introduction of economic capitalism and liberalism with social and democratic liberalization measures, and opening the countries to further European penetration. Actually, the initial implementation of the EMP policies was accompanied by the undesired effect of jamming the economic growth of the Med-countries and increasing the hostility of the Arabs towards the model of European neo-liberalism together with the upsurge of migration flows towards Europe.

Though the expected result of the Partnership project – i.e. consent to European hegemony – did not materialize, the EU and member governments decided to keep the Barcelona Process alive (as they

conceive it as a long-range and adaptive process, as it is explained later in this chapter) and uphold the Process actions with further actions founded on their usual policies for protecting overseas capital investment, building alternative energy supplies, limiting immigration and also developing military preparedness for action to face potential security threats to the European soil and interests. These policies were considered necessary to answer to renovated warnings for the increased dependency of the European economies on foreign markets, especially external energy supplies, and exposure to societal threats.

Taking into account the initial failure of the project (i.e. no economic and political stabilization in the Med countries as effect of liberalization, free trade and adjustment measures), the initial interpretation of the hegemonic nature of the European initiative, inspired by the neo-liberal imperative of the globalisation economy, was changed with the analytical framework of dominance theory, inspired by the neo-realist imperative to develop all the capabilities needed to react properly to new political and economic threats and social risks. This interpretation underlines the structural asymmetry between the Northern and Southern partners and the consequent will of the Europeans to exercise all the power resources they have to dominate the region and defend their interests. Examples of this European attitude are in the economic and security areas.

Keeping the agricultural sector practically out of the free trade project is good demonstration of the European resolve to play the privileged position in the highly asymmetrical trade system between the two Mediterranean shores. While showing the flag of free trade, the Europeans use the arms of protectionism and do not allow to Mediterranean states to compensate with the export of agricultural products the loss of state revenues they suffer from the gradual elimination of the tariffs on the import of the European industrial products. According to the Barcelona Declaration, free trade in agriculture products is negotiable but in the frame of bilateral association agreements concluded between the EU and each individual Mediterranean country. On the contrary, only the timetable of barriers elimination is negotiable concerning the establishment of free trade in manufactured goods.

In politics and security affairs, the European domination strategy is demonstrated by initiatives taken by the European governments during the 1990s that culminated in the EU decision to develop its own military forces (the 60,000-troops Rapid Reaction Force) in the frame of the European Security and Defence Policy. After security initiatives taken in the early 1990s in the frame of the Western European Union and NATO alliance, on 1995 without prior notification to the Mediterranean partners, the governments of France, Italy and Spain established two multinational rapid deployment forces, known as EUROFOR and EUROMARFOR. Arab governments soon reproached the initiative as focused on the Mediterranean area, directed against the Arabs and planned without consulting the Mediterranean partners. Consequently, this alleged trans-national optimisation of national military structures and de-nationalization of armed forces to use in non-offensive actions resulted as detrimental to the trust of the Arab states on European governments.

Over the last years, Arab countries have been developing similar attitudes of suspicion and preoccupation towards the whole European Union policy for developing concrete plans and institutions for the common defence policy. Within the Council of the European Union three new bodies have been created (a standing political and security committee; a military committee; and a military staff) to command the rapid deployment of the 60,000-troops force. This decision gives credibility to the EU commitment to act on humanitarian action, peacekeeping and peace making (a credibility in great trouble after the EU low performance in the Balkan crises), but has negative impact on the relations with the Mediterranean partners. Indeed, the Mediterranean area, as the most troubled zone of the areas surrounding Europe, is the most probable zone for humanitarian and peacekeeping actions and any other intervention of European military forces the Med-partners are worrying about.

The socialization/inclusion view

The second view focuses on the issue of the change of the domestic structures and foreign relations of the Med-Partners more than on the strategies and measures of Europe. This perspective takes for granted the crucial place of economy in the partnership building process and underlines the importance of other dimensions. In particular, analyses inspired by this perspective are concerned with the politics, society and culture of the Med-countries and the issue of if and how they are ready to change either independently from or depending on the Barcelona Process. According to the authors of this perspective, this change is particularly important to the stabilization of the relations between the countries of the Northern and Southern shores of the Mediterranean (see, for example, Attinà and Stavridis, 2001; Giammusso, 1999; Gillespie, 1997; Stavridis and Hutchence, 2000).

Authors of this perspective do not reject the hypothesis of a kind of hegemonic conduct of the European Union to cause social change and obtain compliance to external standards from the Southern Mediterranean countries, but do not give to the initiative of the European governments the goal of establishing hegemony on the Mediterranean region. They assume that the goal is just the *zone of prosperity, stability and peace* spoken out in the Barcelona Declaration. In their analyses, dominance is excluded from the goal of the European governments whereas hegemony – taken as leadership reinforced with the use of some power resources – is allowed as instrumental to lead Med-partners to the respect of norms and practices needed to achieve the goal of economic growth, political stability and peaceful conflict resolution.

In this perspective, the Barcelona Process is primarily a gap-reducing process in the following meaning of the term: the structural gap between the partners (i.e. the numerous differences existing between them) does not matter *per se*. What matters is the distance of each partner and the two groups of partners from the standards and values included in the Barcelona Declaration like respect of human rights, fundamental freedoms, diversity and pluralism in society, settlement of disputes by peaceful means, the market economy, promotion of the private sector, dialogue and respect between cultures and religions.

No doubt, European and Mediterranean countries are in very different positions in relation to the Barcelona standards. Furthermore, the Europeans value themselves as true practitioners of these standards and the part of the relationships better entitled to evaluate the conformity of the behaviours, institutions and practices of the others to the shared standards. Briefly, they ascribe to themselves somewhat like the legitimiser role of the behaviour of the partners. Therefore, the partnership process, meant as a cooperative endeavour to gap reduction, imposes a great effort to change on one group of partners (the Med-countries) while the other group (the European countries) holds the task of creating the conditions for the successful socialization of the recruits in the neo-liberal global system. This change is needed to transform the region in a stabilized area in which problems are solved by common governance institutions.

The socialization perspective emphasizes the intrinsic interconnectedness of the three Barcelona baskets more than the hegemony perspective does. Accordingly, proponents of this perspective expect governments to go ahead with balanced initiatives rather than uneven commitment to act in the economic area at the expense of actions in the political and socio-cultural areas. Balanced initiatives are the condition to avoid widening the gap between the partners. For this reason, this perspective signals out the mistake of concentrating on economic and finance cooperation on the belief that positive effects will spontaneously spring out from economic restructuring, liberalization and free trade. The countries of advanced economies, and especially the European countries, know very well the importance of supplementary measures to compensate for the social costs of economic restructuring and liberalization. But, the economies of the Med-countries cannot pay for social compensation measures unless the EU provides supplementary assistance and funds. In addition, Med-countries did not use to produce social policies and have no tradition of welfarism. In other words, their governments are not used to be responsive to demands for social programmes just

when compensation for the social costs of economic liberalization is effective on condition that responsive and participatory political processes either are in place in the receiving countries or are gradually and steadily introduced. Here it comes to attention the difficult issue of what can be done to develop participatory democracy, respect of human rights and adhesion to the rule of law in the Med-countries.

It must be said that problems of socialization of the Med-Partners to the standards of the Barcelona Declaration are found in all the three chapters. However, it is widely admitted that the problems of the economic basket can be solved to a large extent with financial aid and knowledge transfer. Accordingly, the researchers of the socialization/inclusion perspective focus their attention on first chapter affairs (politics and security) and, for related reasons, third chapter affairs (culture and society) as they regard these affairs as crucial issues to achieve the goal of reducing the gap between the two parts within a reasonable range of time.

With regard to socialization to economic standards and practices, it is worth to remind that the European Union accepted to support Med-Partners to cope with the problems of internal economic restructuring. In the preparation of the Barcelona conference, EU governments made the promise to increase financial assistance to a consistent amount of money to mitigate the effects of the adjustment programs, economic liberalization, deregulation and privatisation that the Med-Partners had to implement contingent on the development of the free trade area. To channel the EU financial assistance to Med-Partners, the MEDA programme was set up in 1995 and MEDA II was approved in 2000 for the period 2000-2006.

Eric Philippart (2001) highlights the importance of MEDA in a detailed study of the programme. He acknowledges that MEDA clearly demonstrates the existence of a strong asymmetry in favour of the European side. But, MEDA management demonstrates that EU did not abuse the asymmetry of the EMP structure to gain momentary advantages in particular distributional struggles and invested in institutions that will persist into the future.

Analyses of the issues of democracy and human rights support the EU socialization approach to the Barcelona Process. In a thorough study of the human rights policy of the European Union in the frame of the Barcelona Process, Laura Feliu (2001) comes to the conclusion that EU governments always shared with the governments of liberal and democratic countries a preference for the policy based on sanctions consistent with the 'conditionality principle'. From the 1980s, observance of political conditions like the respect for human rights, democratic principles and good governance became important although the principle was put into practice in very different ways. Furthermore, as the decade of the 1990s went on, the EU, without formally abandoning the conditionality policy, has been emphasizing pro-active measures for promoting democracy, the rule of law, civil society and specific human rights initiatives. Actually, this preference for a more positive approach is one of the formal foundations of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

Programmes of decentralized co-operation are one of the main instruments of positive conditionality which reward the policies that are in harmony with the criteria laid down in the assistance agreement and provide incentives for the respect for human rights. Programs of co-operation between civil society from the southern and northern shores of the Mediterranean have been encouraged on belief that those sectors of society have an important role in the development of democracy and protection of human rights. As Feliu remarks (2001: 86), "*the aim of such programmes was to move away from traditional intergovernmental, principally bilateral, aid policies that had proved to be so problematic, above all due to the fact that many of the regimes of the southern shore of the Mediterranean were authoritarian*". However, it is reminded that criteria and means of implementation, in addition to the legal basis of these programmes, which were set up before the Barcelona process was established, have been the subject of fierce controversy for problems of financial management and the low level of participation by social agents of the Mediterranean Partners.

Positive conditionality and support to civil society inspired also MEDA financing of projects in the field of education and housing to improve economic and social rights and encourage social integration. A special MEDA programme aimed at the promotion of democracy and human rights, the "MEDA Democracy Programme", was initiated in 1996 following a European Parliament initiative to support local, national and regional institutions and promote a plural civil society by strengthening non-profit-making associations involved in the furthering of democracy, rule of law and freedom of expression. Two important aspects of this programme consist in the fact that almost all the projects are based on the initiatives of and managed by NGOs, and that the Commission deals directly with the applicants (mostly NGOs), and not with the governments of the countries involved. Finally, in addition to the official initiatives for positive conditionality, the Barcelona Process has been the catalyst for many initiatives that provide incentives for the respect of human rights. However, it is recognized that this constructive approach based on the concepts of exchange, sharing and encouragement can *serve to hide a lack of political will and a passive stance on events* (Feliu, 2001: 90). On this regard, some remarks are in order here to deal with the problems of using negative conditionality mechanisms (i.e., punishment for the country violating human rights) with the Med-partner countries.

In all Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreements signed since the Barcelona Declaration, democracy and human rights clauses have been included. It is a positive fact that these clauses make no reference to regional but international instruments because of the different cultural and legal traditions of the region. But the difficulties involved by the application of the human rights clauses to this region with so different cultural and religious characteristics, and in which the question of cultural relativism is relevant, persist to be strong. Similarly, in the application of the democracy clause, one cannot forget that consensus neither exists on what democracy might mean nor what the appropriate instruments to achieve it might be.

In addition to cultural and political difficulties, the possible application of the democracy and human rights clauses is intrinsically problematic. Firstly, it is to mention the lack of precision of the mechanisms provided for in the agreements. The agreement documents do not define in detail when the mechanisms are to be activated, how serious the infringement should be before they are activated, nor what is to be considered as a severe, a persistent or a continuing violation of human rights. Secondly, the process of activation is ambiguous since the agreement provisions do not identify who decides when to do it and what institutional procedure should be involved.

The situation is also far from being an encouraging one with regard to democratic reforms. The promises of substantial reforms in virtually all cases have been blocked by the governing elite due to the fear of losing control of the situation and the privileged position within the system. The Islamist threat, repression of pro-Islamic groups and fight against 'fundamentalist terrorism' are the principal justification given for this block. The EU and member states, on their side, have demonstrated a clear lack of political will to apply sanctions. In general, some member countries (usually former colonial powers) paralyse the application of sanctions for the special relations existing with the potential target state and the desire to preserve their own 'reserved domain' from interference from other EU countries.

Another important issue underlined by the socialization perspective in the field of politics and culture deals with the problem of socializing the Med-partners to international political behavior, namely to develop new attitudes towards international security in order to create security partnership in the Mediterranean area. Actually, the gap between the security practices and culture of the European and Mediterranean countries is persistently wide in this area in spite of the negotiations at the level of the Senior Officials, charged with the task of formulating the Mediterranean Charter on Peace and Stability, and the long series of important seminars and studies of the experts of the EuroMeSCO network (Aliboni, Ammor, de Vasconcelos, 2002).

The European countries are the first group of countries to opt for a regional security partnership founded on the culture of comprehensive and co-operative security to avoid the destructiveness of contemporary international and internal wars. Such a model of regional security arrangement has been developed in Europe over the past thirty years on the experience of the arms control negotiations between the two military blocs and the Helsinki Process with the participation of all the European countries. Though in recent time, European governments recognize the seriousness of new threats and dangers represented by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and international terrorism and make plans for reinforcing their strategic position and collective military capabilities (as, for example, the ESDP and strengthened NATO policy), they do not exclude the possibility of constructing a Euro-Mediterranean security system resembling the European one.

On the other side of the Mediterranean, regional security cooperation is unfamiliar to Arab elites and the strategic communities of the Arab world. Governments fond of to national military power and the traditional view of state secrecy in military matters have strong reservations about building regional security through co-operative means. Almost all security analysts, the nationalists and the Islamists focus on the centrality of territorial conflicts, such as the Arab-Israeli conflict, and on strategic disequilibria in the south Mediterranean as the main explanation of the lack of security cooperation in the region. They believe that the establishment of a regional security regime cannot be achieved without dealing with the problems of international relations and systemic conditions. Internal sources of no cooperation in security and defence are viewed as minimal.

Since the Arab countries never practiced security cooperation as the European countries did in the Helsinki Process, also comprehensive security is suspicious concept to Arab political elites and policy-makers. The existence of the environmental and economic dimension of security is in principle an acceptable concept but in practice it is taken as a form of external interference in national sovereignty. Finally, the human and political dimension of the comprehensive security strategy is like smoke in the eyes of the Arab policy-makers. They consider the human and political measures to enhance state and region security as true violation of the Arab political order.

In the past years, responsibility for the failure to reach agreement on the content of the Mediterranean Charter on Peace and Stability as the corner stone for building the Euro-Mediterranean security partnership has been attributed to the Middle East conflict. No doubt on the relevance of this conflict to any discourse on security cooperation in the Mediterranean. However, in view of the security culture of the Arab states and the wide gap between the security cultures of the countries on the two shores of the Mediterranean, one comes to the conclusion that time and efforts are still needed to make substantive steps towards the Euro-Mediterranean security partnership.

Finally, it must be said that the socialization perspective is very much concerned with the cultural gap in general. There is great appreciation for the inclusion of the cultural dialogue in the Barcelona Declaration and great expectations are put in the initiatives and exchanges promoted in the framework of the third chapter (Peresso, 1998). However, analysts recognize that apart from some concrete steps made in the fields of common heritage, audiovisual and youth exchange, the cultural dialogue developed so far has not increased very much mutual understanding. Arab and European views differ sharply on as fundamental issues as the relations between state and religion, religious pluralism and the dialogue between religions, the contrast between individualism and collectivism, the role of civil society, and equal opportunities for women.

The two views compared

The two views are not without similarities and coincident views. Actually, the two perspectives share the same view on some important aspects (as summarized in the table here below). Analysts, however, use to value the same aspects differently according to different theories. In the present

case, the two views can be distinguished as linked to, respectively, the realist and liberal theory of world politics.

The two views of the political science approach to the Barcelona Process

	Hegemony/domination view	Socialization/inclusion view
Theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Realism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liberalism
Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European strategies and measures to deal with the problems of the relations with the Southern Mediterranean countries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in the domestic structures and foreign relations of the Southern Mediterranean countries
Origins of the Barcelona Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure of the EU's past initiatives towards the Southern Mediterranean countries • European choice for economic regionalism to face the post-1970s crisis of world capitalism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure of the EU's past initiatives towards the Southern Mediterranean countries • European choice both for economic regionalism to face the post-1970s crisis of world capitalism and cooperative management of the local effects of global trends
Structural conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asymmetry in economic power and knowledge between the countries on the two Mediterranean shores • Asymmetry in status and position in the institutions of the world political system • Culture divide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asymmetry in economic power and knowledge between the countries on the two Mediterranean shores • Asymmetry in status and position in the institutions of the world political system • Culture divide
Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free trade of industrial products vs. protectionism of agriculture products • Unusual military threats and social risks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human rights and democracy • Cooperative and comprehensive security vs. national defense
End product	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southern Mediterranean market dependence in a stabilized Mediterranean region under European hegemony 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced distance between the partners, common governance of the stabilized Mediterranean region, inclusion of Southern Mediterranean countries in the neo-liberal global system
Pitfalls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political unrest and violence for the social costs of economic restructuring and liberalization • Hegemony/domination costs and uncertainty as consequence of the political instability of the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political unrest and violence for the social costs of economic restructuring and liberalization • Persistence of contrasting cultural values

	Mediterranean authoritarian regimes	
European goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better position in the world economic system • Stronger position in the world political system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better control on local effects of global issues • Greater influence in international institutions
Arab goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Containment of European unilateralism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faster economic development • Increase of economic aid

The two perspectives widely agree on the origins of the Process as placed in the change of the world economy towards liberalization and the choice for economic regionalism made by the European policy-makers with both the support of European domestic societies and consent of the Arabs elites. The socialization perspective adds to these factors the pressure of global problems for international cooperation and the preference of national governments for international arrangements and coordination to make policies more effective in the management of the global problems. The divide between the cultures and the asymmetry of the countries of the two Mediterranean shores in economic power and knowledge as well as in status and position in the institutions of the world political system are acknowledged by both perspectives as the structural conditions of the Euro-Mediterranean system.

The greatest differences between the two views concern the main issues and end product of the partnership project. In the hegemony perspective, imposition of new terms of trade and new forms of security cooperation between the partners is the salient issue of the European project. The proponents of the socialization perspective, instead, are aware of the importance of the political issues in the internal and international domains, i.e. the issue of the change of the domestic regime and security culture of North African countries, as the factor conditioning the future of the EMP. The contrast of the two views on the end product of the Barcelona Process is, of course, inherent to the different theory of politics of the two views. They forecast, respectively, hegemony and common governance as two different arrangements to bring order to both the international system and Mediterranean region.

Both views face some pitfalls in their explanation of the Process. These pitfalls are highlighted by the current circumstances of the Mediterranean world, which the two perspectives apparently underestimate. Underestimation of the effects of political unrest and violence caused by the social costs of restructuring and liberalization that are currently blocking the progress of the Barcelona Process, is pitfall shared by both views. In addition, an important pitfall of the hegemony perspective is over-estimation of the power of the EU to sustain the costs of contested hegemony. This over-estimation is aggravated by the unpredictability of the consensus of the Arab regimes to EU as the leading actor of the Euro-Mediterranean project. The socialization perspective, instead, underestimates the importance of cultural differences as obstacle to the success of the European expectation of including Southern Mediterranean countries in the liberal world.

Finally, both views recognize that the partners have different goals concerning engagement in the Barcelona Process. Actually, Europeans and Arabs pursue different goals and, accordingly, give different meanings to the term "partnership". It is worth to remind that, besides the two groups of countries we have been talking about so far (the European and Arab), a third different actor is Israel. Furthermore, North and South European countries differentiate from one another on some Mediterranean issues, but these differences are valued as minor issue. This can be said also of the differences existing between Maghreb and Mashrek countries. Also Turkey, Cyprus, Malta and Israel have their own views on specific issues. Finally, each EMP country has specific preferences

on the EMP. However, intra-group differences are far less important than the differences between the two major groups, i.e. the European and Arab groups. For this reason, the simplification option of the two major groups of partners has been adopted in the present analysis. Concerning Israel, participating in the EMP is a tool for both counter-balancing the Arabs and negotiating better terms of trade relations and better understanding of political issues with the EU. The conduct of Cyprus and Malta in the EMP is definitely influenced by the approaching accession to the EU. Turkey's goal in the Barcelona Process is oriented to defend and ameliorate trade relations with the EU and also get close to the accession status.

Europeans are preoccupied with preserving international economic conditions allowing the continuation of economic growth and internal stability in the frame of the European Union development. Indeed, the integration process is an important factor underpinning the European perspective on international cooperation in general and the specific approach to EMP as a region construction process. Actually, the European resolve to go ahead with partnership-building in the Mediterranean is understandable bearing in mind the way in which the Europeans have been striving for union-building in Europe for the past forty years despite enduring and fresh obstacles. In the history of European integration, union has never been considered an easy and fast reachable goal but a long-term objective to achieve by various integration programs and their flexible implementation. In harmony with this view of the European integration process, the Europeans view partnership building in the Mediterranean as a long-time process of change aimed at linking North Africa to the liberal-capitalist world *via* tighter Euro-Mediterranean ties. This process must be adapted to overcome known obstacles and unforeseen problems making stock of the experiences matured during the process and taking into consideration the changing conditions and perspectives of the partners.

The chosen objectives of the Euro-Mediterranean process are economic growth, peace and stability, encounter of different societies and cultures. The means to achieve these objectives are free trade, financial assistance to the Mediterranean Partners, transfer of knowledge from Europe to North African countries in the economic chapter, dialogue in the cultural and social chapter, exchange of views and reciprocal pledges of self-restraint in security issues. In the European view, the process to achieve the partnership-building objectives with these means can be realized only if the process is progressive, flexible and variable as the European integration process has been from the beginning. The progressive strategy of the EMP takes the form of the priority given to the economic sector. The other sectors, though not entirely left apart, will benefit from the spill-over effect of the achievements of the first sector. The flexible strategy of the EMP mainly consists in the association of the bilateral form of the Association Agreements with the multilateral form of the Barcelona Process. This strategy is comparable to the European Agreements signed by the EU and applicant countries of Eastern and Central Europe in the frame of the enlargement process. As the philosophy of differentiation of the enlargement process has been reviewed and abandoned, a critical review of the bilateral strategy of the Mediterranean Association Agreements cannot be discarded as an option for the future of the EMP. In the meantime, EU documents affirm the possibility of making agreements with small groups of North-African countries as soon as sub-regional cooperation projects take off. This possibility is in harmony with the third attribute of the EMP strategy. In fact, a variable partnership process allows small groups of countries to go forward with specific cooperation programs. Actually, EU has recurrently invited sub-group accords because projects with variable groups of partners can be a way to forward the ultimate goal of regional partnership as a safety valve against the tensions that exist among countries with different preferences.

Arab governments acknowledged the need to respond positively to the European proposal of reshaping Euro-Mediterranean cooperation by establishing the sophisticated mechanism of the Barcelona Process mainly in view of solving domestic economic problems and enhancing their position within the world economy. In fact, EMP promised to ensure better utilization of national resources and achieve fast economic development.

Arab economic linkages to the EU were huge in 1995, and continue to be so. EU is the major trading partner for all Arab Mediterranean countries. It is also a major donor of economic aid and technology. Therefore, joining the EMP was a matter of opportunity. Furthermore, accepting the EU proposal is valued by the Arabs to counterbalance American economic interests in the area, especially in the Middle East. However, Arab elites and economic experts did not hide reservations and criticism. They were aware of important risks and problems. Among these, they pointed to trade liberalization as not necessarily resulting in economic development; to industrial products free trade as a menace of erosion of the Arab industries; to restructuring as resulting in social instability; and to the vertical integration with the European economies as an injury to horizontal Arab cooperation and the prospects of establishing an Arab free trade area. Further, they protested for the lack of new concessions and insufficiency of European aid.

Arab criticism has been mounting as expectations of economic growth have been increasingly evaporating, and turned into resentment especially for the inconsistency of the association agreements, which exclude to balance the liberalization of industrial trade with the liberalization of agricultural trade which violates the free trade principle that each party is entitled to benefit from the sectors in which it enjoys a relative advantage. While some believe that *"as long as the EU insists on its unidirectional approach, the Arabs will be ambivalent partners in the Barcelona Process"* (Selim, 1999: 156), it is also true that Arab governments strive for persuading the EU to give them more concessions than have been already offered. On this regard, analysts explain that Med-partners have at their disposal also a number of indirect means to affect the EU decision-making process, for instance resorting to 'minilateral decision-making and negotiation' and mobilizing 'special' relationships at bilateral level (Philippart, 2001). With regard to political goals, the Arabs expect to influence European unilateralism in general as well as specific European attitudes on issues important to them like the development of the Middle East conflict. Arab policy-makers can use Euro-Med negotiations also to contain European resolves on domestic policies like that on visa and immigration, and on foreign policies like that on assistance conditional on human rights respect. Finally, the Barcelona Process is an instrument of the Arab leaders, as all the partners, to enhance the international status of their countries.

Concluding remarks

When the Barcelona Process started to run, developing a fruitful dialogue in all the chapters of the EMP project was considered a true possibility. The present situation of the Arab countries cannot but raise doubts about the soundness of that image. Fears for diffusion of radical Islam are high. No elite is more stable today than it was seven years ago nor inclined to comply with the human rights and democracy standards of the Barcelona Declaration. No country is benefiting from the economic liberalization measures enough to plan national economic growth and contain migration to Europe.

The Arab countries have strong and heavily imbalanced economic relations with Europe. The cooperation agreements did not change the colonial flows of exchange. EU protectionist attitudes in the agriculture sector result in further economic problems to the Med-Partners partly moderated by gas and oil exports to Europe in the case of Algeria. Special relations at the bilateral level – as, for example, between France and Algeria and Tunisia, and between Italy and Tunisia – continue to condition the development of multilateral relations. Some conflict relations – as, for example, between Spain and Morocco – have suddenly taken a worrying turn.

In conclusion, the Mediterranean region does not present any strong aspect encouraging expectation of rapid change in the direction of making either the hegemony or socialization objective close to be achieved. Actually, both perspective can be supported by the content of the EMP documents and the analysis of the EMP programmes but, according to this author, the consistency of these programmes with the socialization perspective is larger than that with the other one and there is no change of goals between the initial period and the most recent years in which the European governments became

aware of the harshness of economic conditions, unforeseen social risks and new security threats. However, there is the sensation that the EMP documents and programmes still do not cope well with tackling the problems of the current change of the Mediterranean world.

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