Power over the Sea: Euro-Mediterranean Relations and the Relevance of Neoclassical Realism

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Introduction

In spite of the scarce attention dedicated by the European states and the European Union itself to the Mediterranean area, in the last six-seven years the academic community has considered it an interesting object of analysis, up to the point of creating a new international journal, totally devoted to Mediterranean Politics. Most of the analyses that have been produced on Euro-Mediterranean relations accurately examine the policies designed and implemented by the EU in the context of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (or Barcelona Process) from a public policy analysis perspective. These research works focus on issues such as the coherence of the means used in the policies with their respective ends, the actors involved in the management of the policies, the results achieved and the adequacy of the resources, but rarely provide an interpretation of the whole picture. On a theoretical level, the main contribution has been provided by scholars working within the social constructivist paradigm, to the point that the Barcelona Process and the new European Neighborhood Policy have often been considered inherently “constructivist policies”. From this point of view, the policies of the EU have been analyzed in detail and their socializing effect has been carefully described, stressing that the main objective of such policies is the development of a new regional identity and a common political culture, which are considered to be indispensable elements for the achievement of security in the area.

The aim of this paper is to evaluate the relevance of realism to understand the Euro-Mediterranean relations. While the constructivist perspective limits the consideration of some peculiar realist variables to the origins of the Barcelona process, I maintain that power and the logics based on it continue to be important also during the implementation of the policies considered and are still important today. In other terms, I believe that the Euro-Mediterranean relations can be interpreted also drawing on the realist school. Going beyond the strictly systemic view of Waltz’s neorealism and the classic hegemonic theory, I propose to evaluate Euro-Med relations through a model rooted in the theoretical vein that authors such as Glenn Snyder and Randall Schweller have defined “modified structural realism” and that nowadays is usually referred to as “Neoclassical Realism”. Neoclassical realism not only considers international organizations to be relevant actors in the international system, but it also introduces elements concerning the structure of opportunity in a specific context that are particularly useful to understand Euro-Mediterranean relations and which allows us to make more precise analyses and predictions about the current dynamics of international politics. At the end, it should result that the realist tradition

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1 See Mediterranean Politics, published by Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group.
doesn’t disregard norms, identity factors and the process of socialization to concentrate only or material power. On the contrary, realism addresses these issues from its perspective and provides relevant interpretations of current international politics.

The first section of the paper is dedicated to a synthetic description of the main features of the constructivist interpretation of Euro-Mediterranean relations. The second section, instead, tries to maintain that adopting a realist perspective doesn’t mean dismissing some ideational variables to embrace a totally materialist conception of the political environment and that an interpretation of politics that attributes a central value to collective identities doesn’t necessarily contrast with the realist understanding of politics. Rather, realism has its own views of such variables, which, although in some cases markedly different from those of constructivism, seem nonetheless relevant to analyze the political dynamics under scrutiny. In this logic, the first part of this central section deals with the relation between identity and politics from a realist point of view, while the second one addresses the issues of compliance and socialization, introducing the role of power in these social processes. The third section of the paper focuses on the concept of power with three basic objectives: giving an idea of what “power” means in the context of this paper; presenting the realist thought on non-material sources and forms of power; illustrating the relevance of political realism for the interpretation of the current state of Euro-Mediterranean relations. The fourth section of the paper briefly presents neoclassical realism and illustrates a model for the analysis of international politics that could prove to be useful in the interpretation of Euro-Mediterranean relations. Finally, the fifth section of the paper advances a preliminary tentative realist interpretation of Euro-Mediterranean relations in the light of the neoclassical realist model that has been presented, to be expanded and strengthened by specific empirical research.

The constructivist interpretation of Euro-Mediterranean relations

After the end of the cold war, the states of the Mediterranean area found themselves freed from the structural ties imposed by the bipolar system through a pervasive architecture of alliances and patronage relations which had included the basin into the logic of the east-west confrontation. This kind of disentangling effect was particularly strong for the countries of the southern and eastern shores, since they had far less institutionalized links with the only remaining superpower and among themselves than had the members of the EU and NATO. During the nineties, the Mediterranean area acquired the characteristics of a dividing space. On the one hand, it worked like a border between a rich north and a poor south, as well as between the Western and the Islamic civilizations, along the lines of a cleavage that has gained growing political salience in the last
fifteen years. On the other hand, this space has been increasingly crossed by some of the typical dynamics of the so called “global” post-cold war system, such as massive migrations, with their heavy political, economic and social consequences. In order to address these types of rising multidimensional tensions, in 1995 the European Union decided to launch the set of policies comprised in the Barcelona Process, aimed at “creating a common area of peace, stability and shared prosperity” and which have been recently included in the new European Neighborhood Policy.

This new initiative on the part of the EU raised considerable interest in the academic community and a number of good works have been published in the last few years. Most of the research has focused on the documents issued by the EU under this rubric and on the concrete actions it implemented to reach the ambitious goals of this latest program. These studies address questions such as the coherence between the policy goals and the means used to achieve them, or the adequateness of the resources dedicated by the European institutions to the Euro-Med process, from the typical perspective of the public policy analysis. Reading the results of these works, it is easy to note a shared consensus among experts on the wide gap existing between the declared objectives and the practical measures enacted in all the three baskets that constitute the Euro-Med process, dealing respectively with political, economic and social-cultural issues. The first basket, which contains the provisions on political and security relations, is clearly the least developed. This situation is due also to the consequences caused by the action of some relevant external variables, such as the September 11 attacks and the collapse of the Middle East peace process, which have created even more problems to the already difficult task of establishing a credible and effective set of confidence-building measures. The economic basket, which still raises divergent opinions on the degree of neo-liberalism it contains, is usually considered the most successful part of the process. Nevertheless, according to reliable international institutions, the economies of the Mediterranean partners are stagnating, foreign investments have decreased and the difference between EU’s and North-African GNP per capita has remarkably increased in the last ten years. For what concerns the social-cultural basket, it had very limited objectives and the projects built under its auspices

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2 See Huntington, 1996. This dividing line that has been marked and exploited but many different actors, first of all by many fundamentalist political entrepreneurs and terrorist groups.
4 The goals range from peaceful settlement of international disputes to the development of democracy; from improvement of living conditions to strengthening civil society. See Barcelona Declaration; Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, COM(2003) 104 final.
5 See Philippart, 2003a; 2003b; Emerson and Noutcheva, 2005.
remained at the elite level,\(^8\) failing to enter into contact with the popular sectors of the partner countries’ peoples. The civil society programs have remained much more limited in scope than was originally intended,\(^9\) they have received scarce financial resources and have been tied by complex procedural rules that have created a difficult environment for the few organizations willing to increase their role in the partner countries.\(^10\) Even if in the last five years the EU seemed to point more on socialization policies and cultural dialogue as means of promoting democracy in the Mediterranean area, experts working in the field are skeptical about the appropriateness of the current Euro-Med scheme to support an effective shift in the policies. Rather, it is often stressed the necessity of expanding the space for civil society actors in the other two baskets and the need for more courage in dealing with the partner countries’ authorities, which usually represent the most ponderous obstacle to the development of a wide dialogue among societies.\(^11\)

Next to this branch of literature which is strongly focused on a tight and punctual analysis of the policies deployed by the EU, the major theoretical effort to include the Barcelona process and the ENP in a wider perspective has been made by some scholars who work with the social-constructivist paradigm. They have interpreted the dynamics going on in the Mediterranean area according to the theories that support the viability of the social construction of reality and the formation of security communities among states, thanks to a learning process that can redefine the identities and the interests of the actors involved. Even though this paper underlines the importance and the usefulness of trying to understand the Euro-Mediterranean relations from a realist point of view, it is seems appropriate to briefly describe the constructivist explanation of the Euro-Mediterranean relations for three reasons. First of all, the constructivist model is the most coherent and significant theoretical interpretation of the current state of the Mediterranean politics; secondly, it raises important questions and it offers interesting insights into the functioning of some policies that are becoming increasingly recurrent in the post-cold war international system; thirdly, a comparison with the constructivist model allows us to better understand the features of the modified structural realist model that will be presented below, since the epistemological premises of the realist approach are profoundly different from those of the constructivist one, to the point of being sometimes regarded as the opposite extremes of a continuum.

The constructivist theoretical perspective puts great emphasis on the role of culture, identity, norms and communication in international politics. It maintains that these factors are fundamental for the development of international cooperation and it strongly insists on the

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\(^8\) See Philippart, 2003a; 2003b.  
\(^9\) See Youngs, 2002; Martin, 2005  
\(^10\) See Martin, 2005.  
possibility of change in international politics. In very broad terms, it is possible to say that while realism is the theory of regularity and of recurrent outcomes in international relations, constructivism is essentially a theory of change.\textsuperscript{12} As a matter of fact, from the constructivist perspective, the EMP-ENP process represents an important case of probable international change going on.\textsuperscript{13} A central premise of this approach is that states’ interests, acknowledged as the main source of conflicts, as well as states’ sense of security are relative and dependent on their identities,\textsuperscript{14} which, in turn, are socially constructed through interactions among actors. For this reason, by means of regional integration policies, it should be possible to develop new common identities capable of exercising a strong positive influence on the efforts undertaken by states and international organizations to solve the problems caused by the conflicting interests that are intrinsically related to the old national identities. Many years after the seminal works of Karl Deutsch on the transatlantic community,\textsuperscript{15} several constructivist authors have studied the CSCE/Osce policies in Europe during the last thirty years and have interpreted them as a recent and important case of identity-change action at work.\textsuperscript{16} According to their theories, confidence-building measures and seminar diplomacy\textsuperscript{17} practiced by the OSCE in Europe and by the ASEAN in Asia,\textsuperscript{18} are strategic interactions designed to create shared meanings, social reality and mutual trust,\textsuperscript{19} up to the point that in such view these policies have been a critical factor in the process of identity- and interest-change that should have allowed for the end of the cold war.\textsuperscript{20} It is fair to note that the constructivist theories are not so ingenuous to ignore the fact that political actors often use normative arguments for instrumental reasons and that identity interacts also with material capabilities.\textsuperscript{21} Nonetheless, these theories are based on the assumption that even instrumental agreements can serve as ways of social communication and that through this process norms and values can be internalized by actors who tend to develop reciprocal peaceful dispositions and to practice the same practices not only because such a behavior corresponds to their interests, but also because they start to experience a sense of commonality.

It is exactly this sense of commonality and of shared destiny that constituted the core of those cognitive regions that Deutsch called “security communities” and that have been recently re-

\textsuperscript{12} Nonetheless realism includes important theories of change. See, classically, Gilpin, 1981.
\textsuperscript{13} See Adler-Crawford, 2004; Adler, 1998; Attinà, 2001; Calleya, 1997.
\textsuperscript{14} See Wendt, 1994; 1999.
\textsuperscript{15} See Deutsch, 1957.
\textsuperscript{16} See Adler, 1998; Thomas, 2001.
\textsuperscript{17} Expression coined by Adler because the meetings resemble academic panels. See Adler, 1998.
\textsuperscript{18} See Acharya, 2001.
\textsuperscript{19} See Attinà, 2001.
\textsuperscript{20} See Adler and Crawford, 2002; Thomas 2001.
\textsuperscript{21} See Schimmelfennig, 2001.
discovered by Adler and Barnett, who refined and expanded his theory.\textsuperscript{22} Deutsch defined \textit{amalgamated security community} a situation where there is the “formal merger of two or more previously independent units into a single larger unit, with some type of common government after amalgamation”;\textsuperscript{23} while a \textit{pluralistic security community} “retains the legal independence of separate governments”, but the member states share in any case a set of core values derived from common institutions and are integrated to a point of maintaining “dependable expectations of peaceful change”. Deutsch indicates the United States as an example of the former situation, while the transatlantic community and the EU could be examples of the latter. Deutsch’s perspective, relying on shared knowledge, ideational forces and a dense normative environment, represented a radical challenge for international relations theory, which used to be mainly focused on material forces and with a scarce consideration for social norms at the international level. His “transactionalist” view, wrapped around the idea that communication is the indispensable foundation of political communities and that the processes leading to national integration can be relevant even for international politics, has been revived by Adler and Barnett, who concentrated their research on pluralistic security communities and identified two ideal types of this concept: \textit{loosely coupled} and \textit{tightly coupled} security communities.\textsuperscript{24} The concept of security community is relevant for Euro-Mediterranean relations because such communities are not spontaneous formations. On the contrary, to be put into place they need to be actively promoted by regional, international and transnational institutions. These institutions, in turn, are supposed to be backed by powerful states which transmit the meanings that would be shared by all other actors and around which new identities would evolve. From the constructivist point of view, the Barcelona Process has been projected and developed around pluralistic security community processes, institutions and practices. So much so that security community building already has consciously or unconsciously become part of the political dynamics that connect the different shores of the Mediterranean.\textsuperscript{25} In other words, it is an experiment of social engineering implying the invention of a region that doesn’t exist yet. Such region should be characterized by shared norms and principles without compromising Western and Islamic cultural norms and beliefs: the “rule of law”, “sustainable development” and “human security” are considered examples of potentially appealing ideas around which all Mediterranean countries could converge,\textsuperscript{26} even if the way to reach the goal is far from being clear.

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  \item \textsuperscript{22} See Deutsch, 1957; Adler and Barnett, 1998.
  \item \textsuperscript{23} Quot. in Adler and Barnett, 1998, pp. 6-7.
  \item \textsuperscript{24} See Adler and Barnett, 1998, p. 30.
  \item \textsuperscript{25} See Adler and Crawford, 2002, pag.13.
  \item \textsuperscript{26} See Adler and Crawford, 2004, p. 44.
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Fulvio Attinà has also coined the concept of *regional security partnership* to define the current stage of the tentative construction of a Euro-Mediterranean security community.\(^\text{27}\) Regional security partnerships represent a form of regional security arrangement that stands on an intermediate level of institutionalization between collective security mechanisms and pluralistic security communities.\(^\text{28}\) These partnerships are institution-building processes consciously and actively promoted by the states of a region to face “global” problems that affect all of them and to enhance stability and peace in their region. These kinds of initiatives are undertaken within groups of countries that are crossed by divisions and conflict lines, even though these conflicts are mainly latent and not involving use of force at the moment. The members of a regional security partnership don’t even need to share common values, institutions and large flows of transactions. On the contrary, they set up the partnership exactly to establish common practices and to increase flows of transactions with the aim of augmenting communication, through which partners can develop common orientations towards a considerable series of problems concerning security (defined in a wide and multidimensional sense).\(^\text{29}\) A regional security partnership is based on written fundamental agreements, but it comprises also operative agreements, as well as internal and international measures and mechanisms of conflict management and prevention, to be executed by multilateral bodies and international organizations.\(^\text{30}\) The instruments provided by these agreements are grounded on the concepts of pluralistic integration, inclusion and *cooperative security*.\(^\text{31}\) Practicing the same practices and abiding by the same norms and procedures, the promoters of the partnership should begin to experience the value of cooperative security and to construct a common identity thanks to a process of mutual socialization, up to the point of feeling that sense of “we-ness” which is the defining feature of security communities. As a matter of fact, even if there is no automatic evolution from an institutional form to another, the Euro-Mediterranean security partnership implies a potential movement towards the structure of a security community. The destiny of a security partnership remains in the hands of the partner states, since it will be able to develop in a security community only if the partners decide to implement appropriate policies, that

\(\text{27}\) See Attinà, 2004a; 2004b.

\(\text{28}\) Attinà places regional security systems on a sort of continuum according to the level of institutionalization of security co-operation and social integration of the members from “no formal security arrangement” to “amalgamated security communities”. See Attinà, 2004b.

\(\text{29}\) In addition to a clear awareness of common problems due to global dynamics and absence of current use of violence, such a partnership can be achieved only if no system of opposite military alliances is present in the area and a consensus exists among governments on building security cooperation by improving international and domestic stability, promoting peace and economic growth.

\(\text{30}\) See Attinà, 2004a; 2004b.

\(\text{31}\) This meaning of security is usually defined as “comprehensive” (since it links classic military elements to economic, environmental, cultural and human-rights factors), “indivisible” (because one state’s security is considered inseparable from that of the others) and “cooperative” in strict sense, that is, based on confidence, cooperation, peaceful resolution of disputes and on the work of multilateral institutions.
in the case of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership would mean first of all signing the draft Charter for Peace and Stability.\textsuperscript{32}

One of the main problems existing in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, from the perspective of this cultural approach, is the great difference between the European and the Arab security cultures.\textsuperscript{33} The Arab states never practiced cooperative security mechanisms similar to those employed by the European countries within the framework of the Helsinki Process. Moreover, the multidimensional character of comprehensive security is often considered a threat to national sovereignty, especially when it implies negotiations and conditionality measures in the human and political spheres, but sometimes also on issues concerning the economic and environmental domains. All kinds of obstacles notwithstanding, reaching the condition of a security community is supposed to remain the goal of every regional security partnership, since Deutsch’s concept points to a stable end: a region where war is considered not to be a viable way of solving conflicts among states anymore and an area where peace should be assured, unless changes involving the whole system take place.

The role of the EU in the context of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership consists of inducing the partners to accept liberal values such as democracy, the rule of law, human rights and peaceful change through an intensive flow of transactions, with the expectation that these normative changes will lead to peace and stability. These security community practices have been regarded as an exercise of \textit{normative power}, following the definition of this concept given by Ian Manners, who assigns this label to the capacity of a state “to shape conceptions of normal”, to define what passes for normal in international politics.\textsuperscript{34} This conception of normative power is constructed around the EU and for this reason is strictly related to its history and its policies. As a consequence, it is linked to a supranational and transnational point of view on the international system, as well as to a body that is constituted on a normative basis and acts in the international environment through civilian means and cooperative security practices, short of military capabilities and aiming at the diffusion

\textsuperscript{32} Given the fact that the eventual evolution of a regional security partnership towards a security community is so tightly related to the choices of the actors involved, which should create the conditions for the new regional identity to emerge through intense social interaction, it is likely that the partnership stall for a while, due to many possible problems and disagreements among the states. The draft Charter for Peace and Stability in the Mediterranean is a project that started in Barcelona and it should have lead all Mediterranean states to sign a treaty committing them to settle their respective disputes through peaceful means and to cooperate for the stability of the region, but it soon appeared that governments had divergent perceptions of threats and challenges to political stability, so that the negotiation stall since the end of the nineties.

\textsuperscript{33} See Attinà, 2004a; 2004b.

\textsuperscript{34} See Manners, 2002. Though the content of the EU’s norms may be positive and charming, it remains the fact that, if the EU has any effective instrument to spread them, it tries to shape the system increasing the homogeneity according to its own norms, a practice already used in its essence by many empires and great powers, even if Manners liquidates positions like mine as “relativistic”. See also below, pp. 28-29.
of the rule of law, democracy, human rights by means of learning processes. The success of this strategy depends on the ability to attract states to become members or partners of a political community the access to which is conditional on the adoption of a set of norms, practices and institutions that are not promoted through coercive means, but rather through trade, foreign aid, peacemaking and a sort of “example effect” that stimulates the will of surrounding states to achieve the peace and stability that characterize the European Union. For what concerns its concrete expressions, normative power is similar to civilian power, another concept created nearly thirty years ago to address the action of the European Community towards the rest of the international system and that acquired remarkable success. In a certain sense, the concepts of normative and civilian power are two sides of the same coin. Manners’ definition is principally focused on the goals and on the social dynamics that are supposed to be generated by the European policies; on learning processes, socialization, diffusion of norms, identity change; on the construction of “reality” and of the notion of “normality”. Civilian power, instead, mainly deals with the means of such policies, underlying their peaceful character, the use of economic instruments, the importance attached to multilateralism, collective security, international institutions and international law in general. As a matter of fact, these two notions are deeply intertwined, since they are linked to precise normative concepts and to a vision of Europe as an exceptional actor, inherently different from all other actors of the international system. From a substantial point of view, both conceptions of power are rooted in values such as human rights, fundamental freedoms, democracy, the rule of law, good governance and the principles comprised in the ECHR and the UN Charter, while from a procedural point of view, both normative and civilian power refer to similar instruments and processes, ranging from formal cooperation agreements to informal contagion, from economic conditionality to cultural diffusion. These relevant commonalities between the two concepts suggest that it is probably more appropriate to think about two different aspects of the same power instead of two different types of power. To go further, it seems even possible to say that these notions describe a particular way of exercising “power” in the international system and that this “way”, in its essential goals and logics, is not as different and innovative as it seems. For

35 See Manners, 2002 citing TEU, art.6, art.11 and TEC, art.177, that dictate these foreign policy objectives for the EU.
36 See Moravcsik, 2002.
37 See Bonanate, 2002.
39 A common feature of the narratives about these concepts is the tendency to concentrate on the adjective and to put aside the role of power in the direct description of the notions, but when one considers what such concepts mean for the relations between the holder of these forms of power and other actors, it is pretty easy to find the traces of policies aimed at securing the order of the system through an increase in its homogeneity.
40 See Manners, 2002. The TUE expressly acknowledges these documents.
41 See Manners, 2002, pp. 244-5; Telò, 2004. For what concerns cultural diffusion, it can be achieved through various ways, such as joint management of cooperation programs, the physical presence of EU delegations in third states and the implementation of real courses and cultural programs.
this reason, since the notion of power, the ways it can be exercised and its role in the Euro-
Mediterranean relations, as well as in the external policies of the EU in general, constitute one of
the main points of difference between the constructivist view and my tentative realist interpretation,
it will be useful to dedicate the next section of this paper to a presentation of an alternative realist
view of some concepts that play a central role in the constructivist interpretation, while the
following parts will introduce a modified structural realist approach to international politics.

A realist critic to the constructivist model

Before presenting neoclassical realism as a recent realist approach, developed to study the
complexity of today’s international politics, and evaluating its usefulness in the comprehension of
Euro-Mediterranean relations, it seems correct to state the reasons why an alternative (realist)
interpretation of the Euro-Med Process could give valuable insights and provide interesting
explanations of the politics of the region. To this end, I will try to put into evidence the weak points
that a realist reasoning finds in the social-constructivist view, in the process of trying to understand
the true nature of the complex dynamics of the area. It will be evident that much of the
disagreement between the two views has to do with the conception of power, its role, its persistence
and the ways it can be exercised as well as with the concept of identity. For what concerns this latter
notion, I want to clarify at the beginning of this section that in this paper the importance of identity
will not be dismissed in order to consider only material capabilities and the power structures they
generate. On this subject, even though I believe that the structures of power have a fundamental
function in international politics and one of the main reasons to propose a tentative realist view of
the Euro-Mediterranean relations is represented by the necessity to deepen the study of the role of
power, its persistence and the ways it is employed in such relations, I won’t draw on a one-
dimensional conception of power. Military capabilities are certainly important in the anarchic
environment of international politics, but they are not the only source of power. As it will be clearer
below, I assume that there are several forms of power that can be used simultaneously or
alternatively by political actors: some of them have a material nature, while others are immaterial.
This view is typical of many classical realist authors, most famously E. H. Carr.42 In addition, I
support the idea that power has an essential relational aspect, which is even more significant than its
latent facet, more directly linked to the idea of power as a capacity and to the exclusive focus on the

capabilities of actors. Notwithstanding the consideration attached to ideational factors in the present version of realism, the role of identity, the mechanisms that lead to its formation and its eventual transformation are considerably different from those hypothesized by constructivism. To give some points of reference and recall two masters of contemporary realist theory of international relations, I can briefly say that the views expressed in this paper on the issue of identity in international politics are much more akin to the heterodox realism of Raymond Aron than to the orthodox one represented by the works of Hans Morgenthau.

Culture, identity and political realism

Constructivism properly suggests that cultural and normative factors are critical to the development of international cooperation. However, this circumstance neither means that similar cultures among states and acknowledgement of the same norms guarantee successful cooperation, nor it means that cultural differences hinder cooperation at all, since on the way to cooperation among states there are problems such as asymmetrical information and relative gains that are independent of the culture of the actors involved and that need to be solved through appropriate institutional devices. Rather, cultural and normative factors, in a word identity factors, can be understood as important facilitators in the issue of solving the classical problems of cooperation, as it was expressed by Hedley Bull in his idea of “international society” and recognized also by classical realist authors that studied the forms of war and peace from the beginning of the international system. The European powers fought lots of wars between the XVI and the XIX centuries even if they shared many common cultural traces and if their royal dynasties were bound by multiple family ties. However, it is widely acknowledged that the fundamental element that allowed the European “balance-of-power system” of limited wars to establish a durable order over the continent and the Concert of Europe to work effectively was represented by the commonality of ideas, culture and norms concerning international behavior shared by the ruling elites of their member states and synthetically crystallized by Carl Schmitt in the concept of jus publicum.

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43 The most famous and widely accepted definition of power as a relation has been coined by Robert Dahl: “A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do”. See Dahl, 1957, pp. 202-203.
44 See Campi, 2005; Aron, 1962, pp. 578-587, where he criticizes Morgenthau’s realism for reducing all international politics to sheer power politics, characterized by excessive and unreal mechanicism, which loses the complexity of international relations.
46 According to Bull, norms are essential in every society to define the ordered behaviors, since order can’t be maintained simply recognizing a common interest in its realization. See Bull, 1977. Aron, explains that the Persian Empire and the Greek cities were parts of the same international system, but they were not members of the same “international society”; since they lacked those basic commonalities that produce the common interest in the maintenance of order. See Aron, 1962, p.104.
Besides, it is difficult not to confer to culture the role of crucial intervening variable when we study the ways in which world powers have dealt with actors that were not considered part of the international system, professed different religions or founded their political identities on incompatible ideologies all along human history. If the European powers decided to enshrine the principle *cuius regio, eius religio* in the Treaty of Westphalia – that represented the symbolic legal foundation of the modern international system – to put an end to the uncontrollable practice of religious wars; if colonial powers have never attached much importance to the limitations of war they were used to observing in intra-European conflicts when they had to fight colonial wars; and if the creation of great revolutionary armies represented the dissolution of the distinction between the internal and the external environment, also through the adoption of methods and objectives of the war of annihilation, it is due to the fact that the boundaries of classical international society were not only geographical, but also social and cultural in nature.

Some constructivist theories maintain that states’ interests and their sense of security are relative and dependent on their identity, or equivalently that common identity can ease negotiations and compromises among conflicting interests and provide a basis for shared interests. The first problem with this position is that the two sentences above are not equivalent, since the latter implies that states interests do not derive by their identities, but are in a certain sense given, exogenously determined by other variables that have a different, even material character, and for this reason it could be shared also by some realist authors who don’t use a strictly systemic-structural Waltzian approach. On the contrary, the former is more purely constructivist and it raises the well-known point of disagreement between realism and constructivism regarding the formation of states’ interests and the achievement of their security. Anyway, much part of theoretical works on the Euro-Mediterranean relations essentially descend from the former approach and support the necessity as well as the possibility to socially construct new regions and new identities to reach peace and political stability. In other words, while realism puts considerable emphasis on the

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47 Rousseau (1761) maintained that “The nations of Europe form among themselves an invisible nation...The actual system of Europe has exactly that degree of solidity which maintains it in a state of perpetual agitation without overturning it”. Morgenthau, taking up the same position, wrote that it was this moral consensus of the modern state system “— both child and father, as it were, of common moral standards and a moral civilization as well as of common interests — that kept in check the limitless desire for power...When such a consensus no longer exists or has become weak and is no longer sure of itself, as in the period starting with the partitions of Poland end ending with the Napoleonic Wars, the balance of power is incapable of fulfilling it functions for international stability and national independence”. In Morgenthau 1973, p. 220. In the same vein, see also two non realist scholars in a more recent article: Kupchan and Kupchan 1991, p.124.


49 See Colombo, 2006 and Aron (1976), who defines the Second World War as the encounter of the two revolutions, that transformed regular troops into partisans dressed like soldiers, compelling them to use the methods and pursue the objectives that are typical features of the war of annihilation. See Aron, 1976, pp. 57-95.


51 See Adler and Crawford, 2002, where the two positions are considered equivalent.
conflicting nature of the relations that generate political identities (see below), constructivism is based on the possibility that social relations between a “we” and a “them” can peaceably bring to the construction of a new inclusive “we”, that inevitably has to be connected to a new “them”. As a result, when this theory goes further and acquires a normative feature, it leads to prescribe the creation of a new Mediterranean region with a correspondent identity to solve the present risks of conflict, but it is difficult to see why the same risks should not occur again in front of the new “them” that will get into contact with the expanded “we”, or why this novel risks should be preferred to the old ones. Regarding the means that could bring to the formation of social identities, constructivism refers to the usability of confidence-building measures such as those implemented by the OSCE and NATO’s Partnership for Peace, relying on social communication to make people practice the same practices and, through this mechanism, promote trust, change identities and modify interests towards mutual peace and security.\(^{52}\) According to this reading, “once cognitive regions are socially constructed, people can then imagine that they share their destiny with people of other nations, who happen to share their values and expectations of proper action in domestic and international affairs”.\(^{53}\) From a realist point of view, instead, it is not at all necessary that two actors have the same identity to share the same destiny: in Waltz’s orthodox structural realism it is sufficient that they are exposed to the same structural constraints, but also in other versions of realism, being relative power the essential determining factor, much depends on whether the two actors find themselves in comparable positions within the current structure of power relations.\(^{54}\)

For what concerns the creation of political identity, realism has rarely dealt with this theme, but an interpretation of politics which attributes a central value to collective identities and identity conflicts, that always imply clashes among different visions of the “right” political order, is not necessarily in contrast with the realist interpretation of politics.\(^{55}\) As a matter of fact, some realist authors have worked on the role of identity in international politics, even if within studies that were mainly focused on other themes, and it is possible to find explanations of the development of collective identities that are compatible with realist theory. It has been rightly noted that the concept of identity is used with different meanings and it needs to be defined in clearer terms,\(^{56}\) but independently from the most appropriate meaning, the creation of such symbolic constellations has often been associated with the constant insecurity of the political environment – which is a typical

\(^{52}\) See Adler and Crawford, 2002. A degree of vagueness and obscurity remains on the conditions under which such a process could take place, making one think the context of interactions is irrelevant, that is highly improbable.

\(^{53}\) See idem.

\(^{54}\) See Waltz, 1979, pp. 156-161 ital. transl. in Waltz’s view, structure exerts its pressure on states through the processes of socialization and competition. See below, p. 20.

\(^{55}\) See Panebianco, 2004, p. 32.

\(^{56}\) See Fearon, 1999.
characteristic both of the Hobbesian and of the Lockean interpretations of the political sphere — with the consequent need for protection that people feel and with the naissance of the nation-state, that in the realist view is the essential political actor of modern international system. Political identities are often based on pre-existing cultural identities that acquire political relevance due to a contact with other cultural identities, but sometimes they are expressly created by political actors who spread ideologies aimed at giving particular definitions of the interests of a group to its members. Fearon and Laitin have focused on ethnic groups as the relevant units of analysis in ethnic conflicts and they have noticed that ethnic identities result to be socially constructed, but also that specific actors with precise political objectives often have a determining role in their creation. Those actors aspire to use such strong ethnic identities as tools to pursue their aims of power in a clausewitzian perspective. As a result, they favor a bridging position between rationalist and culturalist-constructivist theories of ethnic violence. Rokkan explained how national identity is strictly related to confrontation with others (other languages, other religions, other political entities) and to the necessity of drawing distinctions and boundaries. The definition of a national identity represents an essential step in the formation of the centre and every kind of symbolic resource is involved in this process. In Europe this process was marked by contrasts such as: vulgar languages vs. Latin, protestant churches vs. the Catholic Church, national or regional customary laws vs. transnational Roman law. In addition, harsher disputes increase both the need of the political elites to count on spontaneous support and the need of the people to be protected during the frequent armed conflicts, so that it is possible to claim that the formation of collective national identities was largely a collateral effect of interstate wars. In a certain sense, national permanent armies, national identities and national governments and bureaucracies reciprocally generated each other. To compete in the ever more costly and large armed conflicts, states set up complex tax systems, started to recruit citizens in place of mercenaries and implemented massive policies to increase the homogeneity of the population. This fundamental process, which includes all the negotiations and the struggles between the people and the state authorities that lead to the modern idea of citizenship,

57 Bull asserts the inappropriateness of the Hobbesian state of nature to interpret the international environment, and supports the Lockean interpretation, that recognizes the existence of a rudimental society with a set of basic norms in contrast with the total absence of any social form. See Bull, 1977, pp. 59-65, ital transl.
58 See Panebianco, 2004, p. 32; Rokkan, 1970. It is probably appropriate to recall that contrary to the widespread view according to which one of the principal characteristics of political realism is its state-centrism, such a feature is not an immutable philosophical assumption, but just the result of an evaluation of the current international system. Rather, realism is based on the idea that the fundamental political unit is the group, or what Ralf Dahrendorf has called the “conflict group”. See Gilpin, 1996 and Schweller in Feaver et al., 2000. Indeed, realist concepts such as the security dilemma have been applied with great success to ethnic conflicts where the fighting rival groups didn’t possess the features of statehood. See Posen, 1993.
60 See Rokkan, 1999, p. 214-222.
61 See Bloom, 1990.
62 See Tilly, 1990, p. 120.
reached its apex with the French Revolution, the Napoleonic wars and the creation of mass armies. Clausewitz underlined that the French Revolution and its consequences represented a real turning point in the history of warfare, as it marked the entrance of a whole nation in arms into the battlefield, but also the concepts of “nation” and “national identity” underwent a deep change, since the ideas of the Revolution and the practices of the Empire raised the importance of such concepts like never before and forged their strength into the blood of many mythical battles.  

So, on the one hand, history tells us that insecurity and the need to face imminent harsh conflicts generate strong collective identities, but also that political entrepreneurs can deliberately mobilize resources to create collective identities that will be essential tools to achieve future political objectives. On the other hand, psychological studies have evidenced that in many cases groups spontaneously tend to construct positive identities progressively differentiating themselves from others and engaging in forms of competition that, together with other factors, can lead to conflict and therefore to a sort of vicious circle that supports classical realist views of international politics. For these reasons, integrating identity in the analyses of international relations and admitting that it is socially constructed and not given and immutable does not necessarily contradict realist theory, but it can well complement it. Raymond Aron masterfully integrated this element in classical realist theory thanks to his homogeneity/heterogeneity theory, according to which “la conduite extérieure des Etats n’est pas commandée par le seul rapport des forces: idées et sentiments influent sur les décisions des acteurs”. As a consequence, he maintained that homogeneous systems are more stable than heterogeneous ones because actors share the same values and the same conception of politics: the enemies of the state are not political adversaries and inter-state hostilities don’t imply hate. On the contrary, in heterogeneous systems conflicts have ideological connotations, civil and interstate wars mix and overthrowing the other government becomes the central aim of the war.

See idem, p. 97; Rokkan, 1999.  
See Mercer, 1995. The same escalating dynamic has been noticed by Fearon and Laitin in their essay on the relations between ethnic identity and ethnic violence. There is considerable evidence that ethnic identities are often constructed through violent means in order to achieve specific political ends, and once constructed, they tend to favour a larger use of violence. See Fearon and Laitin, 2000.  
See Aron, 1962, pp. 108-113. Morgenthau leaves far less space than Aron for ideas, ideologies and different ways to conceive the world, and the order in the international system in his general theory of international relations, so that his theory is less complex than that of the French scholar. Nonetheless, he strongly perceives the detachment from the sense of commonality that characterised Europe in the XVII and XIX centuries as well as the negative consequences that this situation has on warfare. In his writings we find that he recognised that after the First World War “nations within a framework of shared beliefs and common values, which imposes effective limitations upon the ends and the means of their struggle for power. They oppose each other now as the standard-bearers of ethical systems. The moral code of one nation flings the challenge of its universal claim with messianic fervor into the face of another, which reciprocates in kind. Compromise, the virtue of old diplomacy, becomes the treason of the new; for the mutual accommodation of conflicting claims, possible or legitimate within a common framework of moral standards, amounts to surrender when the moral standards themselves are the stakes of the conflict.” See Morgenthau, 1973, pp. 252-253.
Collective identities are not immutable, and in theory it is also possible to construct new common identities integrating past conflicting identities, as it seems to be happening in the EU.\textsuperscript{66} Nonetheless, historically the formation of collective identities has usually been linked to the necessity of creating distinctions,\textsuperscript{67} and in order to have different actors that autonomously and peacefully decide to integrate their identities in a new inclusive one, it is necessary to break the vicious circle mentioned above, eliminating reciprocal insecurity and supplying an external noteworthy actor with a very different identity to deal with, as it happened in Europe after the second world war. The current situation of the Mediterranean area doesn’t seem to have these requirements which, by the way, need a significant exercise of power to be established, and in any case we have already noted that the construction of a new regional identity doesn’t change the system: it can only drive the risks of conflict towards another “them” situated at the borders of the new region.

\textit{Compliance, socialization and power}

In the first part of this section I have explained why it is possible to claim that introducing the matter of identity in the analysis of the Euro-Mediterranean relations and of international politics in general does not necessarily disagree with the realist interpretation of politics and it neither excludes the potential utility of a realist reading of the situation under scrutiny. In the present and in the next sections, instead, I will recall that compliance, socialization and the role of norms are not inherently constructivist themes, so that taking them into consideration doesn’t imply that the realist paradigm is not able to produce a useful and plausible analysis of the political dynamics that involve the EU and the states situated on the eastern and southern shores of the Mediterranean. As it will result from the text, the different approaches that realism and constructivism have to these issues often have to do with the different importance the two schools attach to power, its role and the ways it can be exercised. I will try to put into evidence that there are good reasons to carefully evaluate the realist understanding of this topic.

Even though the constructivist model draws our attention on interesting questions and dynamics, sometimes it seems to lack a little clarity and to suffer from indeterminacy, especially in

\textsuperscript{66} See Mercer, 1995.

\textsuperscript{67} Carl Schmitt considered the capability of creating distinctions the essence of the political phenomenon. In his view, a people exists in political terms only if it is able to determine autonomously the groups friend/enemy, and such a couple of opposing concepts, which is not a stable one, always implies the possibility (the shadow) of war, even though it is not the essence of politics, but rather its \textit{extrema ratio}. The people that refuses the existential risk of the political phenomenon is bound to extinction, or to be dominated by another people who accepts the “political”. See Galli, 2004, pp. 178-208; Schmitt, 1972.
the description of the cause-effect relations and of the functioning of the social mechanisms it takes into consideration. When the construction of a new inclusive identity is at stake, key concepts and norms have to circulate in order to be accepted by the actors as parts of their new identity. Such ideas and values are said to be communicated even by instrumental agreements, which could represent the useful means through which deeper processes of social communication and the internalization of concepts and norms develop. Nonetheless, the question remains as to how these deep processes exactly work, as well as why the internalization of norms should take place. Even if at times the constructivist narratives make one think about a real dialogue aimed at shared understandings and explicitly acknowledge the role of persuasion, there are occasions in which they are framed in much more pragmatic ways and consequently exclude the effectiveness of forms of persuasion based either on the truth of statements or on moral grounds. As a result, in this view it is the social communication effect of practice that allows for changes in the interests and identities of the states. Practicing the same practices, such as the rule of law, conflicting actors should develop reciprocal peaceful dispositions, but the reasons why the actors choose to practice those specific practices, why they accept them as constitutive parts of their new identities, when it happens and how can one distinguish the new situation from the previous instrumental reasoning appear questions in need of further research and clarification. The model supposes that new social identities are constructed around commonly agreed principles of legitimate behavior and that these shared identities in turn enable states to become secure in relation to one another, but it is less apparent why and through which mechanisms such principles get commonly agreed, if there is a learning process and eventually how it has to be intended. Social learning, that has a critical role in the model, is described as more than the simple internalization of ideas and beliefs leading to choose more effective means of achieving ends. Rather, it is a collective redefinition and interpretation of reality, which becomes institutionalized and has practical effects, but that remains underspecified for what concerns the reasons why such process takes place and the mechanisms through which it works. This kind of opacity has been noticed even by some constructivist scholars, who, for this reason, have adopted alternative definitions of the concepts of socialization and social learning, either relying on more rationalist meanings or trying to specify these notions from a purely constructivist approach.

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68 See Adler and Crawford, 2002.
69 See idem; 2004.
71 On this latest meaning, see Levy, 1994.
72 Criticizing the indeterminacy of many constructivist studies, Checkel has tried to refine the concept of social learning from a strictly constructivist point of view, setting apart methodological individualism and drawing from social and cognitive psychology, while other constructivist scholars, such as Schimmelfennig, have elaborated the concepts of socialization and compliance through more rationalist approaches, to the point of taking into consideration cost-benefit
The security community model revives the seminal study in which Karl Deutsch introduced an innovative theory based on transactions to explain peaceful relations among states with a logic completely different from those of the balance of power or of the collective security mechanisms. However, the situation of the transatlantic relations analyzed by Deutsch was characterized by states which had just got out of a major war that had completely reshaped the system and which already shared many cultural traits, institutional features and norms of legitimate behavior. In addition, most of them were deeply connected to the hegemonic actor embodied by the US through several policies, especially in the field of security, and had to face the common threat of the heterogeneous actor embodied by the USSR. The current condition of the Mediterranean area is quite different, and since it seems even more difficult to construct a collective identity in such a landscape, it would be particularly important to have clear and precise ideas about the working and the efficacy of the process. According to the conception of social learning used in the analysis of Euro-Med relations, a central role in the process is played by international institutions, that facilitate transactions among actors, but if certainly there is no NATO in the Mediterranean region, Bicchi rightly underlines that there is neither any OSCE, so that while the latter organization was the institutional framework promoting community building in Europe, in the case of the EMP it is still the EU which maintains the agency, seemingly perpetuating the effects of an “us/them” logic. This understanding of the Euro-Mediterranean relations is deeply aware of the asymmetric relationship between the EU and the Mediterranean non-member states, as well as of the EU-centric character of the political and economic dynamics at work in the area. It seems to recognize implicitly the relevance of the logic of power and points in the direction of a realist interpretation of the current situation of the Euro-Mediterranean relations.

As a matter of fact, even if realism is usually associated to sheer power and to a definition of power based exclusively on material capabilities, the realist tradition has often dealt with different forms and sources of power, as well as with the role of norms and ideas in international politics. According to classical realist scholars, empires and dominant states have always spread a religion or an ideology that justifies their domain over the other states of the system. Machiavelli, the father of political realism, recalls that the great founders of the ancient peoples, such as Moses, Cyrus, Theseus and Romulus were friends of God, inspired, or sent by God. Such religious base constituted an important reason of the long duration of the political communities they had founded.

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73 See Deutsch, 1957.
74 See Bicchi, 2004. Carl Schmitt would have probably maintained that it is just a softer expression to address the old amity/enmity dynamic.
75 See also Nicolaidis, 2004.
since a political body that aspires to stability and strength needs order, which can also be kept by force, but that is far better kept through norms and ordered customs, shaped by the faith in a common ordered religion. The prestige and the authority of a hegemon have both a functional and a moral basis, so that small states partly accept the leadership of powerful states because they approve the legitimacy and the usefulness of the existent system. Norms and rules have practical effects in international politics, since they influence interactions among states in various fields, but although such norms are based on a certain degree of consent and mutual interest, their inner foundation reside in the power and in the interests of the groups and states that dominate the social system. Hedley Bull considered norms important tools for the maintenance of international order, but even if living in an ordered system is a common interest of all states, the concrete provisions of all bodies of social norms are filled with particular interests, that reflect the unequal influence of the members of a society in the creation and diffusion of such rules.

Thinking about norms and rules in realist terms implies different ways of thinking about socialization, compliance and learning processes, so that the “realist meanings” of these notions are influenced by the fundamental features of the paradigm. In fact, the connotations of these concepts that are compatible with realism and the ways in which they have been used by realist scholars strongly depend on the great importance realism attaches to power (remaining the configuration of power the principal explaining factor of international politics), the thinness of the social environment represented by the international system according to realist theories and the consequent essentially rationalist approach employed by realism to analyze international politics. Nonetheless, it is useful to have a quick glance at the realist versions of concepts and processes that have been extensively used by constructivist authors to elaborate their interpretation of Euro-Mediterranean relations and that are important also in the realist view of the same situation. As regards the role of learning, if realism doesn’t seem to exclude the eventuality of taking into consideration what Levy has called “simple learning”, that is the possibility of changing means but not ends as a consequence of new available information, it appears to reject the idea of “complex learning”, that entails the modification of goals as well as means following a recognition of

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77 See Carr, 2001; Gilpin, 1981, p. 72-79 ital transl. See also R. Niebuhr’s sharp analysis of the role of “priests” (to be intended in a symbolic sense, including also the oligarchs of communists states) as partners of the “soldiers” in the organization of the ideological frame which gives the community its final cohesion and its analysis of the role of prestige and universalism in the expansion of empires. See Niebuhr, 1959.
78 See Gilpin, 1981.
79 See Bull, 1977. I regard Hedley Bull, Herbert Butterfield and Martin Wight, the founders of the English School, as representatives of a moderate or liberal branch of realism. See also Gilpin, 1981; Carr, 2001.
80 In this context, I use the concept of rationalism in a broad sense: see Fearon and Wendt, 2002. This is not the place to enter either into the question regarding the appropriateness of realism as a theory implying states as rational actors in the economic sense (an interpretation that doesn’t reflect the inner logics of realist theories), or in the dispute on relative and absolute gains. see Keohane, 1984; Grieco, 1988.
conflicts among values.\textsuperscript{81} Even though different versions of realism don’t agree on the essential goals of states, being usually divided into supporters of power and supporters of security as the primary end of countries, all of them believe that such aim is independent of interactions among actors, in the sense that it is usually considered exogenous to the model and that current relations can only influence the choice of the most convenient, concrete action to achieve the interest of the state.\textsuperscript{82} Realist theories do not allow conceptions of social learning such as those used by constructivist models, since realism is far from observing the necessary social density in the international system, but also Waltz’s systemic structural theory contains a particular meaning of learning. According to Waltz, international structure limits and moulds the behaviors of states, so, through socialization, they come to conform to the norms and the imperatives of the international system. In addition, through competition states find out that certain conducts allow those who employ them to succeed in their efforts, while other conducts generally lead to failure. If they want to succeed, states have to follow certain conducts, thus further reducing the variety of behaviors in the system.\textsuperscript{83}

Compliance with the norms embedded in regimes and international institutions or simply diffused directly by hegemonic actors can result from various processes. From a realist perspective, it is typically the result of coercion, of threats to use force or of material incentives. However, it can also be the result of persuasion, a completely peaceful type of social interaction whose possible existence is acknowledged even by realist scholars.\textsuperscript{84} Both realism and constructivism admit that in pure persuasion an actor determines the conduct of another actor modifying its knowledge or its beliefs through the transmission of messages totally devoid of promises of rewards and threats of punishments. The heart of persuasion is reasoning, but realism would notice that only a thin border line divides persuasion from remuneration and constraint.\textsuperscript{85} Actor A deliberately intends to make actor B behave in a certain way, so that in general terms, the stronger is A’s intention, the stronger can be its propensity to use other means to obtain the desired result. In absence of restrictions, there will be a tendency to use threats and promises in parallel with open reasoning, but a background of

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{81} See Levy, 1994, p. 286.
  \item \textsuperscript{82} For a moderate view of the contrast between rationalism and constructivism on the formation of preferences, see Fearon and Wendt, 2002.
  \item \textsuperscript{83} See Waltz, 1979, pp. 156-161 ital. transl.
  \item \textsuperscript{84} A representative of political realism such as Mario Stoppino defines persuasion as “a relation where an actor determines the conduct of another actor modifying the knowledge based on facts and the beliefs in values that determine such conduct, through open arguments, which don’t contain either promises of rewards or threats of punishments (neither explicitly nor implicitly). See Stoppino, 2001, p. 154. An important constructivist scholar such Jeffrey Checkel gives a definition of persuasion that is essentially the same: “an activity or process in which a communicator attempts to induce a change in the belief, attitude, or behavior of another person through the transmission of a message in a context in which the persuadee has some degree of free choice.” See Checkel, 2001, p. 562.
  \item \textsuperscript{85} On remuneration and constraint as forms and strategies to exercise power, see Stoppino, 2001, pp. 150-2. On the same issues, as well as on threats and promises, see Schelling, 1960.
\end{itemize}
remuneration and constraint could be present also because A and B share a longstanding relation of social exchange. In this case, the process of persuasion becomes a part of the larger picture and the choices of the actors regarding persuasion result to be influenced by the context of remuneration and constraint. Finally, realist thought underlines that persuasion can also merge into manipulation, since it could be easy for the persuader to distort or delete part of the information it communicates, depending on the degree of control it exercises on such information.86

Classical realists such as Reinhold Niebuhr had already explained in their works that compliance can be achieved also through another form of socialization, which is different both from the meaning proposed by constructivism and from the one used by Waltz, but still compatible with the logic of realism. In this view, socialization is an explicit instrument of hegemony and, even if it is distinct from manifestations of power entailing the use of material resources, it does not occur independently of such logic of material inducements.87 This meaning of socialization points to the process through which a state that is hegemonic in the sense that it possesses an overwhelming amount of power relative to the other states of the system reaches the equivalent in international relations terms of that more complete stage of hegemony that was theorized by Gramsci in his analysis of the relations among social classes.88 This kind of socialization allows the hegemon to exercise power by altering the substantive beliefs of the leaders of other nations, making them accept its vision of international order and its normative claims about the nature of the international system.89 In other words, completing the process of socialization, the power of the dominant state acquires legitimacy and its idea of the system attains a “quality of oughtness”. According to Ikenberry and Kupchan, socialization can occur through three mechanisms: normative persuasion, external inducements and internal reconstruction. Within these mechanisms, the elites of the secondary states, which accept to internalize the norms articulated by the dominant state either to retain their power or to form new ruling coalitions during periods of political flux, play a central role, but also material incentives represent a fundamental component, since they are deemed indispensable for the process to succeed. Thus, the model is based on three hypotheses: first of all, effective socialization takes place in periods in which international change coincides with domestic crisis in secondary states; secondly, even though public opinion can influence elite restructuring, socialization works through elite politics and coalition building; finally, material components of power are indispensable factors of the process because normative persuasion alone is insufficient.90

88 See Gramsci, 1977; Cox, 1983. For a distinction among various forms of hegemony at the international level, see Snidal, 1985.
89 See an article written by two liberal scholars such as Ikenberry and Kupchan, 1990.
However, even if the conditions above are met, the degree to which socialization takes place depends on the intrinsic qualities of the norms articulated by the hegemon and especially on their distance from those existing in the elite community of the secondary state. How far the elites are asked to move and whether the new ideas put them in a condition to form coalitions or push them to the periphery of the political community has a relevant influence on the viability of socialization.  

Thanks to historical evidence, Ikenberry and Kupchan conclude that socialization matters, in the sense that it leads to outcomes that are not explicable simply in terms of the exercise of coercive power, but also that effective socialization can’t be separated from a degree of coercion and provision of material incentives. Nevertheless, the most remarkable fact is that also according to two non realist scholars, socialization, with its specific characteristics and consequences, is a form of the exercise of power, so that in the end power turns out to be a central and fundamentally not eliminable element of international politics. Since power, its forms and its role result to be at the heart of the differences among the interpretations of Euro-Mediterranean relations, it seems appropriate to dedicate the next section of the paper to a brief overview of the realist thought on power, even because from a realist perspective power is at the very heart of all politics and the realist tradition has spent time and efforts in dealing with this theme. However, given the broadness of the issue, it is impossible to try to give an exhaustive view of realist theory of power in this place, and for this reason the next section will be dedicated essentially to the non-material sources and forms of power, so as to allow an evaluation of the authority realism has on this matter.

**Forms, role and persistence of power**

This section will be devoted to three basic objectives: giving an idea of what “power” means in the context of this paper; presenting the realist thought on non-material sources and forms of power; illustrating the relevance of political realism for the interpretation of the current state of Euro-Mediterranean relations.

As I have briefly mentioned above, in order to perceive the significance of realism in the analysis of the current state of Euro-Mediterranean relations, it is important to go beyond the simplified view that equates political realism to a mono-dimensional idea of power based on material capabilities. To this end, the notion of power referred to in this paper stresses the importance of the works of those realist authors that on the one hand elaborated complex and

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91 See *idem*.
multidimensional conceptions of power and on the other have worked on the relation between power and norms as well as on the legitimacy of power.

Given the classical distinction between power as a capacity and power as a relation, in the context of this paper the concept of power is mainly conceived as a relation, even though the two meanings aforementioned are not mutually exclusive. Defining power as a property of actors tends to equate this central concept to its sources in a way that is reductive and unsuitable for the aim of analyzing complex social interactions. For this reason, the relational power approach is by far the most widely used in contemporary literature and the definition proposed by Dahl in 1957 is still considered an indispensable reference point. However, the definition elaborated by Wrong (“power is the capacity of some persons to produce intended and foreseen effects over others”) allows to include in the notion of power both the idea of capacity and the element of a relation among social actors, attaching a central role to intentionality and to the coherence between the will of actor A and the behavior of actor B. Trying to set a middle way between Weber’s and Wrong’s emphasis on intentions on the one hand and Dahl’s indeterminacy on the other, I follow the path of Baldwin and Stoppino in the evaluation of unintended effects of power. As it has been rightly noted also by Panebianco, every social action produces unintended and unforeseen effects, so that labeling all such effects as manifestations of power risks to confuse it with a sort of all-embracing causal factor of all social actions. Nonetheless, it seems possible to consider expressions of power those unintended behaviors and effects that reflect the interests of actor A, being beneficial or detrimental to the interests of those affected.

From a substantial point of view, it is important to keep in mind the traditional classification of power according to the resources used in power relations, because in concrete international politics different forms of power are often used at the same time and in the same situation. The three basic resources represented by violence, economic means and normative symbols, however,

93 The first conception has its roots in the thought of Thomas Hobbes, who maintained that “the power of a man (considered in a universal sense) consists in the means he has at his disposal at present to obtain an apparent future good and it is original and instrumental in nature”. The latter conception, instead, was elaborated by John Locke, who sustained that “the powers are relations, and not agents”. Quot. in Panebianco, 2004, p. 39.
94 See above, note 41. For an extensive presentation of the relational conception of power, see Baldwin, 2002.
95 See Wrong, 1979, p. 2.
96 Weber defined power as “the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which the probability rests”. See Weber, 1947, p. 152.
97 See Baldwin, 2002; Stoppino, 2001, p. 6.
98 Some scholars who have called for more attention to the unintended effects of power seem to imply that those effects are detrimental (Strange, 1988; Guzzini, 2000), but there is no reason for such a deterministic view. For instance, Snidal (1985) distinguishes between two different forms of hegemonic stability: under benevolent hegemony secondary states gain power relative to the hegemon, while under coercive hegemony it is the dominant state that increases its relative power. In both cases, however, weaker states are better off than in absence of the hegemonic power. The detrimental or beneficial unintended effects of the actions or inactions of powerful states have to be evaluated case by case through empirical research.
generate four different forms of social power, since violence is the typical resource not only of military (or coercive) power, but also of political power, following the classical conception of Max Weber. Trying to provide an alternative to the constructivist interpretation of Euro-Mediterranean relations, it is important to remember that even though a significant branch of realist authors have focused almost only on material resources of power, that branch does not coincide with political realism as a whole. On the contrary, that type of approach has been used mainly by those scholars who interpret power as a capacity, or a property of the actors. The relational approach to power has always included both material and non-material bases of power, so that norms, values and ideas have been considered significant factors in power relations, deserving careful analysis also for what concerns the mechanisms through which those forms of power are exercised. The integrative approach applied in this paper, which inserts the capacities of actors in a social relationship and distinguishes between potential and manifest power, allows reserving normative and ideological factors the same important role.

E.H. Carr in *The Twenty Years’ Crisis* demonstrated a clear awareness of the importance of what he called “power over opinions”, of its inevitable close relationship with military and economic power, as well as of its nature of necessary tool for a political actor that wants to stabilize its power. On the other hand, this issue was already well-known to Machiavelli, who took it into consideration in various part of his great *fresco* of Italy in the Renaissance, so disconfirming those views that depict political realism as concerned only with material power. For the subject of this paper, the greatest merit of the realist Carr has undoubtedly been its insistence of the impossibility to eliminate power from international politics. Hans Morgenthau labeled Carr’s theory “the surrender to the immanence of power”, but if Carr can be criticized for his surrender, he surely can’t be criticized for his insights in the immanent role of power in international politics: not in the sense that international politics is exclusively about power, but in the sense that power relations, with

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99 It seems important to distinguish between political and military power, given the importance the use of force has in international politics. Military power should not be viewed as a real distinct form of social power, standing on the same conceptual level of political power; rather, it is a dimension or part of it. See Poggi, 2001. For a slight different view of the relations between coercive, economic and symbolic power (defined as “politically relevant powers”) on the one hand and political power on the other, see Stoppino, 2001. Political power is institutionalized, legitimate power and it is not based merely of brute force, since it needs consent to last. In the synthetic but brilliant terms of Mario Stoppino, “political power is the power that produces power for a society”. See Stoppino, 2001, p. 292.

100 See Baldwin, 2002.

101 See Carr, 2001, pp. 120-130.

102 In Machiavelli, the power over opinions was embodied by the role of religion, that represented a fundamental element for the maintenance of order in the reign and even more in the republic. Order has to be guarded by the laws, but more importantly it is founded on ordered customs and civic habits, that have to be shaped by religion. Religion transcends the life and the authority of the prince, so that it’s better to rely on religion than on the fear of a prince. Religion has an important role also in the construction of strong armies, since it confers sacredness to the oath of the soldiers and gives strength in front the danger, but Machiavelli claimed that not all religions are equally positive for the life of a political body, and that the faith has to be sincere to be effective, not just empty appearance. See Machiavelli, 2001, vol. I; Viroli, 2005. See also Niebuhr, 1959.
their peculiar logics, are everywhere in international politics.\textsuperscript{103} If one can agree with the criticism that Morgenthau and later Bull raised against the marked “relativism” of Carr’s thought, it is also necessary to take into account that Morgenthau conceived power as a property of individual states based on strictly material capabilities that was too different from the conception used by Carr to share its pervasiveness. Carr set the terms of the realist view of international law claiming that its ultimate authority derives from politics and that its principles institutionalize the interests of powerful states in stability, so as international organizations do with their structures and their procedures, that are tools of conservation reflecting the configuration of power that existed at the time of their creation.\textsuperscript{104} His works remind us that power exists at the surface, but also well below and it is for this reason that Carr anticipated many recent studies and definitions of particular features of the power phenomenon. Being a realist influenced by Marx, Carr has been rightly placed by Robert Cox close to Antonio Gramsci, a communist thinker who had been in turn influenced by Machiavelli, the father of political realism.\textsuperscript{105} Even without sharing their holistic approach, it is possible to appreciate the distinctively realist character of Carr’s view of the role of norms, ideas and ideologies, which is very similar to the kind of analysis that lead Gramsci to formulate its key concept of hegemony.\textsuperscript{106}

Many recent conceptualizations of power in the field of international relations, whose proposers put within or without the boundaries of realism, can be traced back to Carr’s heterodox realism and to the transposition at the international level of this comparably realist part of Gramsci’s thought. In the context of regime theory, Krasner coined the concept of “meta-power” to describe the ability to change the rules of the game and the institutions that represent the stage of the action, because regimes would be, in the last resort, a function of the distribution of power and the relations among states.\textsuperscript{107} Barnett and Duvall have recently defined “institutional power” as the control exercised by an actor on others in indirect ways, especially through the rules and procedures of formal and informal institutions.\textsuperscript{108} Strange, stressing the role of unintentional effects, delineated “structural power” as the ability to shape security, financial, productive and knowledge structures in a way that is consistent with the interests of the actors that set such norms.\textsuperscript{109} Of course, these and other scholars can’t be considered all realists, even of a heterodox kind, especially because such

\begin{footnotes}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{104} See Carr, 2001, pp. 159-177.
\item \textsuperscript{105} See Cox, 2001.
\item \textsuperscript{106} See Cox, 1983. A recent brilliant and synthetic definition of the realist view on the role of ideas in international politics affirms that “it is not the power of the idea, as liberals and constructivists suggest, but the power behind the idea that explains its acceptance and apparent causal significance”. See Schweller and Wohlforth, 2000, p. 76.
\item \textsuperscript{107} See Krasner, 1985.
\item \textsuperscript{108} See Barnett and Duvall, 2005.
\item \textsuperscript{109} See Strange, 1987; 1988; 1989.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotes}
concepts are often inserted in theories that detach from realism, for instance because they entail a significant reduction of the role the state in the current international system. Nonetheless, if one considers only the definitions of these new forms of power, it is pretty easy to notice that they often explain in more detail how power can work and express in an explicit form what in Carr’s thinking was sometimes implicit, but their roots can still be found in the illuminating pages that Carr devoted to the phenomenon of power. Among these recent notions and views, the most important link between Carr’s “immanent” view of power, that is exercised also through culture and norms, and the transposition of Gramsci’s theory of hegemony at the international level is certainly Nye’s concept of “soft power” (or “co-optive power”), that was created to present the capacity of a state to achieve the outcomes it prefers in world politics thanks to the will of other countries to follow it or because they have agreed to a system that produces such effects.\footnote{See Nye, 1990.} Soft power is exercised through pacific means, thanks to the attractiveness of culture and ideology, to make other states willingly follow the hegemon and to establish its power as legitimate. If the dominant state is able to get others to want what it wants, it will encounter little resistance in the introduction of international norms that are consistent with its interests and society, as well as in the creation of institutions that encourage other states to channel or limit their activities in the ways the hegemon prefers.\footnote{In \textit{The Paradox of American Power} Nye has slightly changed the notion of “soft power” reducing the role of the state and leaving more space to private actors, that would be often capable of controlling the sources of soft power with a degree of independence from the state and sometimes even contrasting it.}

Gramsci applied a realist logic within a broader Marxist analysis of the conflict among social classes and drew on Machiavelli’s image of power as a centaur to explain that, even if it doesn’t involve the use of coercive power (the animal part), hegemony is nonetheless an expression of power that shapes consent, sets the norms of social interaction and embodies the legitimacy of the power of the dominant class. Gramsci was concerned with finding a way to enable the revolutionary communist party take the power in those countries where the bourgeoisie had consolidated a developed civil society that had strengthened the state and for this reason it was impossible to take the power by means of a revolution as it happened in Russia. In the words of Gramsci, in Western countries it was necessary to begin a war of position instead of a war of movement, meaning that it was necessary to build a counter-hegemony with its own base of support within the established one, so that the existing order would have been deprived of any meaning.

If Gramsci’s theory of hegemony is isolated from the analyses of the relations among social classes in conflict and from the criticism to the role of capitalism in society, it re-acquires its Machiavellian flavor and it reveals its inner realist logic, being a theory on the ways power can be
exercised among groups with contrasting interests to acquire and consolidate consent. Cox applied Gramsci’s thinking at the international system and derived from it a view of formal and informal institutions that is consistent, even if perhaps not particularly accurate, with the realist tradition and that provides some important hints on how norms and ideas can be diffused through pacific means in order to shape the social environment in a way consistent with the interests and the objectives of the dominant state.

Constructivist models of Euro-Mediterranean relations use the concepts of civilian and normative power, which for the present analysis can be assimilated, though somewhat different in their exact meaning. Such concepts stress the absence of the use of military force in the relations between the EU and the other actors of the international system: civilian and normative power are exercised through economic, legal and cultural means, point at the promotion of democracy and the rule of law, foster development through free trade. The EU has been defined a normative actor in the sense that looking at its history it is possible to say that it really is constituted by norms and procedures, but, nonetheless, its normative power has inevitably its proper content and it is a “EU-content”, so that when normative power is defined as the “ability to shape conceptions of “normal” in international relations”, it seems possible to interpret it also as an example, or maybe a particular form, of Gramscian hegemony. The EU has a long and admired tradition of peace, which represents an attractive goal for many states that get in touch with it and the greatest reward it is able to promise, to the point that the enlargement policy has been defined “the single most powerful policy instrument for peace and security in the world today”. However, in prospecting such a goal to its counterparts, the EU shapes their expectations, provides them norms, poses conditions and offers economic incentives. To aspire to membership, and thus to peace and prosperity, the external actors have to comply with the norms and ideas embodied by the acquis communautaire, which comprises the rule of law, democracy, human rights, free-market economy and for this reason can be very attractive, especially to new ruling elites that get out of authoritarian regimes and are in search of legitimacy and bases of support. Taken for granted the beneficial effects of such

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112 From this perspective, it is possible to see the importance in Gramsci of the strict relation between thought and action that descends from Machiavelli and that becomes a real union in the communist thinker and in the concept of “organic intellectual”, to the point of defining the party as a “collective intellectual”. Gramsci gets to a sort of equation between educational relation, hegemonic relation and political relation, but the roots of this thought are in the parts of Machiavelli’s writings that seek a profound reform of society, politics and warfare in Italy, those parts that are more emphasized by Gramsci and that allow Machiavelli to transcend the Florentine and Italian environment to posit him in a European perspective. From that position (of isolation), Machiavelli, like Gramsci, thinks and teaches, since he knows that such reforms need to be built on a new conception of politics and society. See Gramsci, 1975.

113 See Cox, 1983.

114 For the slight difference between these two concepts, see above, pp. 9-10.

115 See Moravcsik, 2002.

116 See Manners, 2002, p. 239.

processes for the partner countries, the fact remains that the EU attempts to shape the system through norms and institutions that are consistent with its interests, represented primarily by the maintenance of political stability and economic prosperity. Civilian and normative power are related to the use of pacific means, but behind them still remains the exercise of Carr’s immanent power, guided by the will to shape the system in a way that is useful for the dominant actor.

As it results from these considerations, the persistence of power in international politics determines the relevance of realism, and especially of its reflection on power, even in the interpretation of the Euro-Mediterranean relations. Still, a further important justification to recur to classic realist conceptions of the role of norms in international politics and to the hegemonic theory comes directly from the works of some scholars that contributed to the elaboration of the constructivist model of Euro-Mediterranean relations. It is worth noting that the indeterminacy we pointed out in the descriptions of social learning and of the mechanisms of collective identity construction somewhat disappears if we consider the role of power in the ways it is sometimes referred to in the works of the same scholars, even if in this case their model loses part of its originality at least to the eyes of a realist. In fact, the process of internalization of norms leading to identity change is explicitly said to entail power projection and even hegemony, frequently occurring in the context of power asymmetries.\textsuperscript{118} The search for stability of the dominant power embodied by the EU is explicitly taken into account only for the initial phase of the Barcelona process, but when one considers the point of view of many partner states, that don’t have the future expectation of a membership, he can’t fail to register a kind of fear of neocolonialism and that power is reintroduced in these kinds of analyses through other ways.\textsuperscript{119} In the constructivist interpretation the global power structure is considered to be formed not only by the distribution of material capabilities, but also by the “balance of practices”, which is defined as “what and whose practice has been widely institutionalized as part of a system of governance”.\textsuperscript{120} In this framework, normative power is needed to be effective in influencing the minds and practices of people beyond the EU, to diffuse its practices and the norms on which they are based in time and space, thus conquering other states and cultures, since competition in world politics takes place also among the practices.\textsuperscript{121} Even if the simple hegemonic logic of this line of thought should be already evident, it is additionally explained on the one hand that without material resources agents may not even be capable of applying normative power, and on the other that without normative concepts of proper

\textsuperscript{118} See Adler and Barnett, 1998, p. 45.
\textsuperscript{120} In other words, the balance of practices indicates both the efforts of states to induce others to use their preferred political, economic and security practices, and the resulting relative weight of those different and concurrent practices. See Adler and Crawford, 2004, p.8.
\textsuperscript{121} See idem.
and legitimate behavior they may not be able to legitimize the project of seeking the adoption of a regional transnational identity.\textsuperscript{122} Finally, this sort of legitimization of the realist reasoning from a constructivist perspective arrives to the point of openly declaring that security communities are actively promoted by regional, international and transnational institutions that are backed by powerful states, which infuse them with the meanings around which new identities should evolve and that, without power, the task of constructing an area of peace and stability in the Mediterranean is a chimera.\textsuperscript{123}

At this point, we have seen that assuming a realist perspective on international politics doesn’t mean neglecting identity issues, norms and ideas to consider only the impact of material capabilities. On the contrary, realism has its own view of the creation of political identities and admitting that identities are socially constructed doesn’t necessarily contradict the basic assumptions of realism, but can instead complement the classic realist conception of politics. In addition, classical realism has also an important tradition of thought on the role of norms and ideas in international politics as strictly related to the exercise of power and to its institutionalization through legitimacy that appears to be relevant also by means of a comparison with the concepts and logics included in the recent constructivist models of Euro-Mediterranean relations. For these reasons, next section will be dedicated to the presentation of a modified structural (or neoclassical) realist model of international politics that could result to be useful also in the interpretation of the current state of Euro-Mediterranean relations.

**A neoclassical realist model of international politics**

After having illustrated the reasons why I believe it interesting to take into consideration the realist perspective in the evaluation of Euro-Mediterranean relations, in this section I’m going to present a realist model that could prove to be useful in undertaking empirical research on such issue. Even if it acknowledges the important role of the structure of power relations at the system level, the model I propose can’t be defined as an example of neorealist theory of international relations. Rather, it follows the path of those scholars that in the last years have been defined *modified structural* or *neoclassical* realists.\textsuperscript{124}

\textsuperscript{122} See *idem*, p. 16.
\textsuperscript{124} In the mid ‘90s Schweller used the label “modified structural realism” to indicate his own and other scholars’ versions of realism, following the seminal works of Buzan, Jones, Little (1993) and of Glenn Snyder (1996), who refined Waltz’s neorealism. At the end of the ‘90s, however, Rose coined the label “neoclassical realism”, stressing the points in common with the views of the generation of realist authors that had preceded Waltz and this label was accepted also by Schweller. Even if it is a little less clear from a methodological point of view, I conform to the latter name of this branch of contemporary realism for clarity of exposition and simplicity. Rose in *World Politics* refers to T.
While neorealism is a strictly systemic theory of international politics whose only relevant variable is the configuration of power relations at work in an anarchic environment, neoclassical realism mainly focuses on the foreign policies of states and its adherents believe that structural pressures do not act directly an uniformly on the behavior of states, since they are influenced by many intervening variables at various levels. As a result, one of the main features of neoclassical realism is that it takes into account the role of first, second and third image variables, to which are added also “process variables”, that have a semi-systemic character. Interaction is included in the definition of a system next to units and structure, so that process variables such as institutions, norms and rules concur to define the nature of world politics, enriching and giving more accuracy to the hyper-parsimonious representation of reality offered by Waltzian neorealism.  

Even if power relations and the reciprocal positions of the actors indicated by polarity remain the main concerns of the theory, neoclassical realists follow Carr and Gilpin in considering institutions as intervening variables that can influence the outcomes and the behaviors of the actors. Since formal and informal institutions are supposed to reflect the power relationships that existed at the time of their creation, they tend to increase their effect and to introduce a sort of lag between causes and expected outcomes as the configuration of power in the system changes. In a certain sense, institutions can be thought of as a sort of web, with a degree of flexibility, which sustain the system’s structure and increase its stability, limiting the impact of destabilizing forces, up to a certain point. This view of the role of institutions has its roots at a more fundamental level, where classical and neoclassical realists believe that even the most rudimentary interactions among states require agreement on, and some shared understanding of, the basic rules of the game. For this reason, order of almost any kind is preferable to chaos and the dominant powers are so interested in gaining legitimacy to their status that the institutions they promote can also allow for some degree of limited change, provided that the situation in the system remains fundamentally intact and their hegemony is perpetuated. Correspondently, even if neoclassical realism re-uses the categories of status quo and revisionist states, it avoids any mechanicism due to the distribution of capabilities and to power positions within the system, since it acknowledges the influence of unit-level variables, of political elites’ perceptions and of process variables such as formal and informal institutions or shared conceptions of legitimate power.


See Snyder, 1996.  


The model I propose draws heavily on the one advanced by Schweller and Priess, that tries to integrate neorealist theory with traditional realism’s concern for units’ attributes and Glenn Snyder’s idea of adding a “relationship” level consisting of semi-systemic situational elements that establish the context of interaction. These sub-systemic causal levels of analysis reciprocally affect each other and are conditioned by the structure of the system, which constrains and enables state behaviors and interstate relationships, but doesn’t determine outcomes. At the unit level, the model takes into consideration the traditional realist distinction between revisionist and status quo actors, with the specification that different degrees of motivation depend on the state’s perception and evaluation of the established order. Other relevant attributes of the actor may be related to its internal structure: whether it is a democracy or an authoritarian regime; if it is characterized by a liberal or a non-liberal culture; if it presents a homogeneous or a fragmented ethnic composition; if it has a centralized or a decentralized form of government, depending on the issue to be analyzed.

At the interaction level, the model deals with a series of patterns of interstate relationships and situations that can be either cooperative or conflictual and, although neglected by neorealism, are important to define the context of the international interactions and behaviors under scrutiny. Relationships are not models of interactions, but rather the background against which interactions take place. These elements of international reality not only transmit pressures deriving from unit attributes and structure, but also exert independent effects on the behavior of actors. At this level, a variety of factors can be considered, such as common and conflicting interests, alignments and alliances, protectionism/free trade, degree of polarization, arms racing/arms control, various degrees of economic interdependence/dependence, capabilities of actors. In this context, the capabilities of actors do not have to be intended as tools, but rather as consequences. Following Snyder, the capability of a state is what a state can accomplish with its forces against particular other states, so that it becomes a relationship that can differ vis-à-vis each other state.

The model hypothesizes a reciprocal causal connection between the level of units and the level of relationships: the typical example is that of a liberal hegemon that fosters interdependence and free trade because it has an overriding interest in an open international trading structure. This system will tend to promote the creation of more liberal internal institutions in the trading partners, at least in the economic field, to enable them to deal with such a system with a degree of efficiency and thus reinforcing the liberal policies promoted by the hegemon and already adopted. Finally, at the structural level, the model includes the concept of polarity as elaborated by neorealism, but also a dimension concerning the

129 Snyder ’96. This notion of capability/ies clearly affects also the concept of power, providing a link between the resources of an actor and its effective power. In addition, even if it is primarily conceptualized to be applied to the military realm, Snyder explicitly adheres to an idea of power as “policy contingent” and doesn’t deny the multidimensional nature of power.
relative capability growth rates that can be found in the system and that can be either static or dynamic. This dimension addresses the concerns that various realist scholars have expressed on the relative power trajectories of the great powers, as a consequence of what has been called the “law of uneven growth of power”. This political dynamics is the primary cause of change in the realist theories of international relations and it has decisive repercussions on how the system is structured.\(^\text{130}\)

As claimed by Schweller and Priess with regard to their model, this kind of framework should be able to explain international politics in the sense that it should illustrate how power is exercised in the international system, what type of order is produced and what degree of institutionalization prevails.\(^\text{131}\) For what concerns the first aspect, power can be exercised as dominance, as influence or as management. While the central feature of dominance is the use of coercion, influence is characterized by legitimacy and socialization, whereas management is based on skill and directorship.\(^\text{132}\) Strongly depending on the way power is exercised, we can expect the formation of an imposed, a negotiated or a spontaneous order. These different forms of order of course foster the interests of different actors and imply different degrees of consent on the part of the actors that compose the system. The third dimension, instead, could be characterized by many different grades of development and consolidation of formal and informal institutions, but for simplicity it is possible to conceptualize it on three levels: low, medium and high. In different concrete historical and geographical contexts, these dimensions have combined in different ways, so that the Concert of Europe can be interpreted as an example of management order based on bargaining processes among a small number of powerful actors that explicitly express their agreement on a developed set of formal and informal institutions through which they advance their interests, while the establishment of an empire is clearly more akin to an imposed order where power is exercised mainly through coercion.\(^\text{133}\)

\(^{130}\) The classical point of reference on this issue is Gilpin, 1981, but see also Schweller and Wohlfirth, 2000 for a recent overview on the importance of such a causal mechanism.


\(^{132}\) See Lasswell and Kaplan, 1950, chapter 5.

\(^{133}\) See Schweller and Priess, 1997.
### Fig. 1: The Levels of Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNIT LEVEL</th>
<th>Status quo vs. Revisionist attitude; Perceptions; Political culture…</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RELATIONSHIPS’ LEVEL</td>
<td>Capability; Alignments and Alliances; Degrees of Economic Dependence – Interdependence; Degrees of Polarization; Protectionism – Free Trade…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STRUCTURAL LEVEL</td>
<td>Polarity; Relative power growth rates.</td>
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Having described the design of the model, a presentation of a few hypotheses about the reciprocal influences of some of the variables it includes is worth, in order to give an idea of its functioning. Power relations among actors still represent a central variable in the model, so that system polarity and, from a dynamic point of view, relative capability growth rates exercise a great influence from the structural level on the type of order that prevails in the system and on the ways actors make use of their power. Even though structural pressures don’t have to do with a sub-systemic social vacuum, it is possible to indicate the directions towards which different structural configurations tend to drive the system. When the system under consideration is characterized by unipolarity, power will be probably exercised by the hegemon in the forms of dominance or influence, or through a mix of these two ways, since they are not mutually exclusive. As a consequence, the type of order that will be produced will have an imposed or a negotiated nature. Which order arises and how it is maintained will depend on the relationships that compose the situational context and on the attributes of the actors involved in the interactions, but whether the hegemon imposes or negotiates the institutional arrangements governing the international system, it will tend to establish its control over several issue-areas and to set up an order based on rules coherent with its interests. Imposed orders are likely to have a low degree of institutionalization, since they involve only submission and adaptation to the conditions of the hegemon. Negotiated orders, instead, will be probably marked by a more developed set of institutions, given that they imply cooperation on the part of the lesser states. The differential in the growth rates of power is the force that can lead to changes in the polarity of the system producing a system change or the rise of a different hegemon. In any case, the formal and informal institutions set up by the hegemon will have a crystallizing effect and will tend to limit the action of such a driving force. In the end, it is
evident that unipolarity is very likely to introduce a degree of hierarchy in the anarchic international system.\textsuperscript{134}

When two superpowers are present in the international system, it will be marked by the coexistence of hegemonic rivalry with the balancing of military potentials.\textsuperscript{135} The type of rivalry and the stability of the bipolar order will be influenced by the nature of the main actors, whether they are status quo or revisionist powers, and by the perceptions they have of the relative power in the moment under scrutiny and in future perspective. Unbalanced bipolar systems where one or both superpowers are revisionist and perceive the system to move in the direction of increased unbalance tend to be unstable, but if the international system is approximately balanced, the two main powers are prone to status quo policies and perceive the situation as stable, it is probable that they will manage their reciprocal relations through informal cooperative practices and that a sort of spontaneous order in the form of a bipolar condominium will be produced, so that at the relationships’ level the arms racing will probably give way to mechanisms of arms control.\textsuperscript{136} In the relations with the lesser states, each superpower will have the tendency to reproduce the behaviors and the dynamics of a unipolar system, with the aim of creating its own sub-system of allies and clients that concurs to produce a structure of two opposing blocks. The degree of hierarchy in the blocks will be influenced by factors such as the capability of the superpower towards each minor power, the degree of economic dependence or interdependence that marks the background of the interactions, the degree of economic liberalism that is present in the culture of the superpower’s elites and whether the superpower is a democracy or an authoritarianism.

In multipolar systems, instead, power is usually exercised through management or influence and the types of order that result can often be defined as negotiated or spontaneous, being characterized by various degrees of institutionalization. Balanced systems, where the main actors have similar power growth rates and the offense-defense balance is perceived to be in favor of defense are usually more stable and less prone to polarization.\textsuperscript{137} In a system of this kind, power will be probably exercised through management and institutions will reach a remarkable level of development, especially if the units share the same ideology, the same conception of politics and the same cultural roots, that are the attributes of R. Aron’s homogenous system. When these conditions are not met, on the contrary, the model expects the multipolar system to be less

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{134} Lake (1996) has analyzed the elements of hierarchy that are present in the anarchic international system for what concerns security relations. In his view, the degrees of anarchy and hierarchy are functions of the costs of opportunism and governance that actors have to face in their reciprocal relations.
\item \textsuperscript{135} See Wohlforth, 1993, pp. 304-305.
\item \textsuperscript{136} See Waltz, 1979; Schweller and Priess, 1997.
\item \textsuperscript{137} See Christensen and Snyder, 1990, who consider the offense-defense balance and its perception by the great powers to be fundamental variables to explain the different functioning of the European multipolar system before World War I and before World War II.
\end{itemize}
institutionalized and in presence of factors such as different growth rates among the great powers and the existence of a revisionist powerful state, polarization will be very probable and the system will be less stable.

Relationships are those variables that define the situational contexts within which the interactions among states take place. Since these contexts are not neutral but have independent effects on the behaviors of the actors and influence also the other levels of the international system, and in particular the unit level, it is appropriate to explain the action of at least some of these relationships. Among the variables that are included in the semi-systemic level of relationships, capability is one of the most interesting and it is also very important in security issues. It represents the potential outcome of a military interaction between two actors, what a state can accomplish with its forces against particular other states, thus being neither a unit nor a structural characteristic. Capability influences the way a hegemon exerts its power, its choice among dominance and influence, whether to rely more on force or on socialization, the degree of hierarchy in the system or in the blocks of a bipolar system, as well as rivalry among the great powers in a multipolar one. Capability is modified by geographic factors and takes into account the asset specificity of armed forces, in the sense that different types of forces will have different degrees of utility against different counterparts. Distance increases the costs of coercion, while the costs of socialization are roughly stable with respect to distance. Creating and maintaining a hierarchic structure of control through coercion entails heavy governance costs that increase with the degree of hierarchy and with geographical distance. Given certain benefits, the great powers tend to minimize costs, which depend to a great extent on their capability towards other actors. A great power that wants to achieve control over another state will be more willing to exert its power in the form of dominance the nearer the subordinate partner and the greater the coercive resources the hegemon can dedicate to exert its control, especially in the form of armed forces occupying and guarding the territory for a long time, even though this policy will probably engender a degree of resistance on the part of the subordinate state that could be reduced with socializing policies and their specific advantages. Socialization, on its part, doesn’t imply rapidly increasing costs associated with increasing distance, but it rather involves remarkable “fixed initial costs”, due to the frequent necessity to reform important state structures such as the educational and the judicial systems. In broad terms, more capability can be associated with more proneness to exert power in the form of dominance and to use coercive means, while less capability should be associated with a higher probability of influence and management, and eventually with socializing policies, even if it has to be taken into account

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138 See Snyder, 1996.
139 See Lake, 1996.
that socialization gets increasingly difficult when cultural difference increases and that the choice among different power practices is influenced also by other relationships and unit attributes such as the will to implement coercive measures, the type of economic relations or the expected costs deriving from facing the risks included in alternative arrangements, such as those of abandonment and entrapment linked to alliances.\(^{140}\)

Alignments and alliances are two slightly different components of another important relationship. Alignments are essentially expectations about future support and opposition arising from actors’ interests, differences in capability and observation of past behaviors – so that they are also a function of states’ perception – while alliances, instead, can be defined as alignments deriving from formal commitments. Alignments are the typical social formations of multipolar systems and the result of power exercised in the form of management, but they can also be found in bipolar systems and be associated with power exercised through influence. Alliances exert a remarkable weight on the interactions among states, since they draw a decisive line between allies and adversaries, or, possibly, enemies. Alliances are usually formed to increase indirectly the power resources of the members against common enemies, but they can also have an asymmetric character and in these cases the aim of the main power to control the lesser allies often is not less important than the aim of aggregating capabilities.\(^{141}\) If one takes this circumstance into consideration, together with the risks of entrapment and abandonment elucidated by G. Snyder\(^ {142}\) and the fact that alliances not only reflect existing interests, but also create new interests for the members, it is easy to understand how relevant can be the consequences of these relationships also for the interactions among allies and not only for the ones between allies and adversaries.

Economic variables can have a significant influence on the dynamics of international politics and the model acknowledges this fact explicitly taking into consideration economic variables both at the unit and at the relationships’ level. I have already mentioned the reciprocal causal connection between these two levels via economic issues in the example of the liberal hegemon that fosters an international economic system of free trade, thus stimulating the creation of

\(^{140}\) Alliances represent another type of relationship that is considered below. The risk of abandonment is due to the fact that the ally can re-align with an opponent, so as he can fail to provide support in situations where support was expected. The risk of entrapment, instead, is represented by the possibility for a state of being involved in undesired wars and conflicts, so that he has to act in more risky ways that he would have done otherwise. The risks of abandonment and entrapment tend to vary inversely: reducing one tends to increase the other. See Snyder, 1998. For what concerns the importance of the capability variable in the relations between great powers and weaker states, it is useful to think about the different ways power has been exercised and the different types of order that have been established by the two superpowers in their respective spheres of influence during the Cold War and by France and Britain in their respective empires. It is easy to find out that the dimensions of capability that we have just mentioned (distance, military resources and usability of such resources) played an important role in those arrangements.

\(^{141}\) See Morrow, 1991.

\(^{142}\) A recent example of how the fears of entrapment and abandonment have concrete repercussions on international politics was represented by the split of NATO in front of the decision of the US to attack Iraq in 2003.
coherent institutions in the partner states that, on their turn, strengthen the whole system. Nonetheless, it is possible to formulate synthetically some additional and general hypotheses on the action of economic relationships. The “protectionist/open system” variable exerts its influence on the interactions among states modifying the incentives and the costs of increasing security tension or waging war. Even though this paper supports the realist perspective according to which political-military considerations prevail over economic ones in the most important decisions of international politics, it is undeniable that a situation where protectionism is the rule leaves the resolution to engage in military operations only to political considerations, whereas if the context is dominated by an open economic system, the judgment is made more complex by the necessity to sustain additional economic costs due to the rupture of such a system and by reasons related to sensitivity and vulnerability.\textsuperscript{143} Interacting in a generalized protectionist system is not the same as interacting in an international open economy and in history economic variables have exerted a significant influence on international politics and on the type of order, especially in periods of low tension or when the political incentives were not clear with respect to the alignments.\textsuperscript{144} In addition, it has been pointed out that different kinds of openness have different consequences for state-to-state interactions. F. Andreatta has delineated three different forms of economic openness (neutral, polarized and diffused) depending on the degree of political tension that is present in the system and on the clearness of political incentives: these different contexts, reinforcing or crossing the alignments and the political divisions among states, entail different costs and incentives for different actors in their reciprocal relations.

Finally, another general hypothesis can be sketched on the influence of the “dependence/interdependence” variable. In broad terms, and other things being equal, a higher degree of economic interdependence between two states increases the probability that power is exercised through management, even if there is a great difference of power between the states under scrutiny. Conversely, a situation where the lesser state is economically dependent on the great power makes it easier for the latter to act in the form of dominance and impose the desired shape to the system. High interdependence favors the development of a negotiated order with a significant degree of institutionalization and a low or moderate degree of hierarchy in the system, because even if a hegemon is present on the scene, on the one hand it will be interested in the development and growth of its partners, and on the other it will have to grant them at least some voice opportunities. An example of this situation is the transatlantic order after World War II, that J. Ruggie has termed “embedded liberalism”: an order that was designed by the hegemon, which set its basic rules, but

\textsuperscript{143} On the concepts of sensitivity and vulnerability, see Keohane and Nye, 1977. 
\textsuperscript{144} See Andreatta, 2001, pp.121-131.
that allowed for a certain degree of negotiation with the European powers and for some voice opportunities, especially in future perspective. The result was that the Europeans moved to accept liberal multilateralism and that the US acknowledged a greater role to welfare state and state intervention in domestic economy than was previously thought.

In other parts of this paper I have already mentioned the relevance of several unit attributes and variables. The focus of the debate on the so called “theory of democratic peace” is situated at this level, but it is a topic too wide to be considered here, even if it is certainly one the most important research projects in contemporary theory of international relations. In the end of this section dedicated to a presentation of the functioning of the model and to some hypotheses that descend from it, I’ll rather give a brief description of the implications of taking into consideration some of the unit attributes already mentioned, without studying deeply a particular variable. One of the principal features that the model takes into consideration at this level is certainly political culture. As I have already pointed out, political culture determines if a system is homogeneous or heterogeneous, thus influencing its stability for example acting on the kind of rivalry that exists between two superpowers and on the possibility of reaching a spontaneous order in their reciprocal relations. In a multipolar system, a common political culture among the main powers is a critical requisite for the development of a high degree of institutionalization, while in a hegemonic relation it diminishes the probabilities of the use of coercion, even since socialization is more effective in cases of limited cultural distance. In general, looking at the unit level is important because of the tendency of states to project on the outside their norms, rules and procedures, as we have already noted in the economic realm and as recent studies on processes of international integration have confirmed. Finally, in the security realm, an important feature that distinguishes neoclassical realism from neorealism is the recovery of the classical realist division between status-quo and revisionist powers, implying that not all states are satisfied defensive positionalists looking only for their security, because some of them are unsatisfied actors in search of more power and expansion. The identity of a state with respect to this variable and the perception other states have

145 For a realist study on the role of voice opportunities for weaker states in international organizations and in the establishment of the norms ruling the system in general, see Grieco, 1996.
146 See Ruggie, 1982.
147 Koenig-Archipugi (2004) has found that European states that have more decentralized forms of government and advanced regional governance included in their constitutions tend to support higher degrees of supranational power in the field of foreign policy. On the contrary, states that show a monocentric conception of political authority have more difficulties to accept a supranational transfer of powers in the same field.
148 Grieco has coined the definition “defensive positionalists” to explain that in his version of realism, that is closely linked to the Waltzian one, states are expected to be more concerned in their security than in acquiring more power (this is why there are defensive and that they evaluate their gains and losses in terms of the performances of others (this is why they are positionalists). See Grieco, 1988.
of it makes a great difference in the behaviors of states about patterns of alliances,¹⁴⁹ but it can exert a significant influence also in the way power is exercised in a multipolar system, with serious consequences on its stability. Of course, this variable shows its greatest effect when it is coupled with a period of different power growth rates at the structural level, supporting the tendency of the revisionist power, and with a situational context characterized by conflicting interests at the relationships’ level.

Schweller and Priess elaborated their model to apply it to the international system, where the fundamental units of analysis are the states, but I propose to take the hazardous step of using such a framework, in my modified version, to interpret the current state of Euro-Mediterranean relations, that are limited to a sub-systemic area where the most important actor is represented by the EU. The eventuality of using the model I have just illustrated to analyze a sub-system instead of the whole system doesn’t seem to cause great difficulties, since the dynamics that have to be considered appear to be sufficiently isolated from the rest of the environment, even if there are a small number of variables that originate out of the area and that have to be taken in due consideration, such as the role of the US. On the contrary, applying a realist model to the behavior of a political synthesis of an uncertain nature, that certainly is not a state and that is considered by many realists only an international organization like others, could even look like a contradiction in terms, especially if such an actor is considered to be the main character on the scene. Nonetheless, in order to circumscribe the object of investigation, I propose not to enter in the question concerning the real nature of the EU within the context of this paper. It is certainly interesting and relevant to understand the respective role of the member states and of the European institutions in the life of the EU, also because it could expand and increase the depth of the present analysis, but I suggest that for the moment it is both possible and useful to take up the challenge of liberal and constructivist theories and do as if the European Union was a unitary actor as regards the Euro-Mediterranean relations.¹⁵⁰ Instead of contradicting the basic premises of realism, I consider the viability of my “as if-approach” to the current situation of the Mediterranean region a further proof of the relevance of realist theories for the understanding of contemporary international politics.

Before sketching a preliminary, brief realist reading of Euro-Mediterranean relations and concluding this paper, that remains an essentially theoretical contribution to be complemented by

¹⁴⁹ Schweller (1994) outlines four different types of state, depending on the basis of their relative interest in the revision of the status quo: lions, lambs, jackals and wolves. Since they have different attitudes towards the current condition of the international system, these different types of states are also expected to follow different patterns of alliances.

¹⁵⁰ This position is not necessarily in contrast with the classic realist view of the EU. It could well result that there are precise states’ interests at the origins of certain policies implemented through the EU and that analyzing the respective positions of the member states towards the EMP/ENP allows a more precise understanding of the situation. On the other hand, this paper acknowledges that the EU still lacks some instruments, such as a real common foreign policy and a common army, that are indispensable to be full and effective actors of international politics.
serious empirical research, it is necessary to outline the expectations that follow from the application of the model to a situation that is defined by the presence of a hegemon and a number of lesser actors, since it is useful for the study of the Mediterranean context.

Undoubtedly, the hegemonic actor can exercise its power through coercive means and establish an order that has the form of an imposed dominance, but realism perfectly recognizes that the main purpose of a hegemon that has to face the consequences of the uneven growth of power in the system is to use its power to achieve its ends without stimulating the formation of a counterbalancing coalition. Coherently with these insights and with the suggestions of many classical realists that engaged in normative theories of foreign policy, the model allows for the possibility of a benevolent form of hegemony, that consists in the ability of the dominant actor to establish its control over several issue-areas and to set up formal and informal institutions conducive to its interests, so relying more on legitimacy and emulation than on naked force. It is easier for the hegemon to create the formal institutions and the organizations that foster the legitimacy of the status quo, and thus the permanence of its role, if they are designed in such a way as to provide some benefits also for the lesser states. In the economic field, this could mean that a liberal hegemon could agree to assume the initial costs of providing the collective goods that are required for an open system of free trade and that it could grant access to its large and developed internal market, while in the political or security field it could mean providing institutional voice opportunities for the lesser actors that adhere to the hegemonic architecture.151

However, legitimacy is acquired also thanks to the circulation of specific norms and ideas that are diffused not only indirectly through institutions and policies mainly focused on other issues, but also by means of dedicated actions. On this aspect, the model matches with the research of Ikenberry and Kupchan on socialization, raising expectations of policies aimed at changing the beliefs of the ruling élites of other nations concerning the nature of the internal and international order, socializing them to the normative claims of the hegemon.152 Perfectly in line with the realist idea that socialization and the diffusion of norms are ways of exercising power and that they are more successful if backed by power, both Ikenberry-Kupchan and the model I propose hypothesize that effective socialization can’t be separated from material inducements, being them of a political, economic or military nature.

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151 See Gilpin, 1981; Grieco, 1996.
This paper intends to be a theoretical contribution to the analysis of the Euro-Mediterranean relations, trying to advance the viability of a realist alternative to the constructivist interpretation. For this reason, I have tried to insert realism in this field without dismissing central concepts and processes addressed by the constructivist model but, rather, exposing the realist views of such issues and evaluating if they can be of any interest in the interpretation of the Euro-Mediterranean relations, ending with the proposal of a realist model that could prove to be useful in studying such theme. Although this is not the place for a full empirical assessment, it is nonetheless appropriate to check if the proposed realist model matches the actual situation of the Euro-Mediterranean relations at a first verification and if it can be considered a perspective worth of further development.

In synthetic terms, it is possible to maintain that the framework abovementioned seems to fit quite well the current state of Euro-Mediterranean relations and it is also able to locate some specific reasons of its scarce efficacy. The neoclassical realist model suggests that a good hegemonic strategy should involve all the fields comprised in the three baskets of the EMP, dealing with political-security, economic and social-cultural issues. For what concerns the shape of the processes and political dynamics that characterize these policies, they appear to be manifestly centered on the EU and marked by a one-way approach that allows to represent Europe as a benevolent hegemon willing to increase the stability of its neighborhood thanks to the establishment of a substantially negotiated order, that has to be achieved exercising power mainly through influence and developing formal and informal institutions based on norms consistent with the interests and the normative claims of the hegemon. In this perspective, the new institutional design elaborated for the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP), which has recently incorporated the Barcelona Process, strengthens this judgment abandoning the prevalence of the principle of regionality and replacing it with differentiated bilateralism.\textsuperscript{153} If on the one hand this new approach could help in tailoring specific arrangements for different situations, thus meeting more effectively the exigencies of the partner states, on the other it favors the prominent position of the EU vis-à-vis the single partner, allowing the hegemon to concentrate its efforts on the states that happen to be more willing in undertaking the proposed reforms and thus to build the desired order on a step-by-step basis. As regards normative power, the EU has used it as an attempt to mobilize instruments to affect the convergence of norms, determining domestic conditions that ought in turn to be more propitious to stability in the region.\textsuperscript{154} But the logic is first and foremost that it is the EU the one

\textsuperscript{153} See Del Sarto and Schumacher, 2005.
\textsuperscript{154} See Nicolaidis and Nicolaïdis, 2004.
that defines normative appropriateness, so that it looks more correct to speak about tentative socialization as an instrument of hegemony than real emergence of a sense of we-ness. Although with some apparent difficulties, the EU has tried to diffuse human rights and democracy as central concepts of its normative approach, but the repeated decisions not to enforce the conditionality clauses provided by the economic agreements in front of blatant violations, together with an analysis of the financial fluxes assigned to democracy and human rights policies seem to show that Europe has kept an instrumental rather than a content-driven attitude towards norms, and that its main objective is the stability of the region rather than the diffusion of democracy per se.\textsuperscript{155} Also a preliminary analysis of the economic dimension of the Euro-Med relations appears to match the expectations raised by the model, both for what concerns the degree of development and for the content of the policies. As a matter of fact, the economic basket of the EMP is broadly recognized as the most developed and advanced one among the three and this situation reflects the fact that the EU is much more powerful in the economic field than in the others. In the economic realm, the EU is a real superpower, characterized by an enormous latent power represented by the advanced economies of its member states and its huge internal market, as well as by the capacity to decide and implement effective policies, especially concerning trade, thanks to a full range of policy instruments and a high degree of autonomy. As regards the content of the economic policies, moreover, it fits the expectations of the model because even if there are provisions aiming at the development of the internal economies of the partner states, the most distinctive feature of the basket is its focus on economic liberalization and free trade, in a way that is strictly consistent with the economic interests of the supposed hegemon.\textsuperscript{156} The security and political relations, instead, are far less developed, as the failure to conclude the negotiations on the draft Charter for Peace and Stability in the Mediterranean clearly shows. This current state of affairs is hardly surprising if one uses the neoclassical realist framework to interpret the situation, taking into consideration the great power and authority in all issue-areas, and especially in the security field, that are necessary to provide valuable and reliable material inducements, a fundamental component in the establishment of real hegemony and in the attempt to induce the lesser states to bandwagon with the hegemon.

Here we get to the reasons why, from a neoclassical realist perspective, the Euro-Mediterranean relations appear to be marked by a half-way hegemon that is trying to apply a half-way hegemonic strategy. In other words, according to a realist preliminary interpretation, the EU, considered as if it was a unitary actor, after the end of the cold war and the collapse of the bipolar system decided to engage in the stabilization of its neighborhood through the creation of the

\textsuperscript{155} See Youngs, 2002; Youngs, 2004.
\textsuperscript{156} See Tovias 2004; Schumacher 2004; Emerson and Noutcheva 2005.
enlargement policy towards its eastern partners and of the EMP towards the Mediterranean area. However, even if the EU is far more powerful than any other Mediterranean actor and the EMP/ENP can be understood as a hegemonic strategy in broad terms, neither the EU could become a real hegemon, at least in the medium term, nor the EMP could be a real and successful hegemonic action, due to several reasons which, as realism usually repeats, have to do with power. First of all, some preconditions were not favorable to the establishment of hegemony in the Mediterranean, beginning from the fact that the EU in the security field has not the same remarkable power, authority and autonomy it has in the economic field, with the consequence that it is neither able to threaten punishments, nor to promise rewards, nor to decide clear and reliable policies with a long time horizon. Moreover, the attempt to socialize the ruling élites of the partner states was a very difficult mission, given the internal situation of those countries. Elite receptivity to external norms was scarce, because even if some of the lesser states had problems of stability, certainly they neither had just come out of a war, nor they had been subdued to a change comparable to the one that was still undergoing at the international level. The élites that the EU still has to face are not new ruling coalitions in search of international help and legitimacy: they are old élites that want to keep their power based on criteria that are at odds with the norms provided by the hegemon. On the other hand, the same élites know that embracing the new norms doesn’t grant them greater support through coalitional realignment, since the leaders of the opposition mainly sustain norms and ideas that are even more in contrast with those of the hegemon. At the same time, the hegemon has scarce chances to be able to socialize the opposition élites and then supporting a favorable coalitional realignment, since the eventual new élite already has an alternative set of norms, and the distance is too big to be easily covered. In brief, the pre-conditions we set for and effective socialization to take place were not present and when the half-way hegemon realized the situation, it reduced the efforts aimed to spreading its norms, continuing to some extent only those modest projects that could lead to the development of a new leadership more compatible with its views in a remote future. Besides these pre-conditional difficulties, according to our model the policies implemented by the EU towards the Mediterranean area have at least one clear and relevant shortcoming, which can be added to more specific problems often revealed by detailed policy analyses. I refer to the fact that not only in the political field, but also in the economic one, where the EU is much more powerful, the advantages for the lesser states that should adhere to the hegemonic system are not very clear. A benevolent hegemon that wants to establish a stable order faces far less opposition if it designs the necessary institutions in a way to provide relevant advantages for the lesser states, at least in the field in which it has more power resources. The EU, instead, has been rather mean in the economic field, failing to allow free access to the agricultural and textile products of the Mediterranean states,
that represent two major sectors of their economies, with a great capacity to create new jobs due to the labor-intensive technologies employed. The resulting situation can be synthetically defined as a half-way hegemon trying to apply a half-way hegemonic strategy: the present situation of stalemate in the Euro-Med relations is the logical consequence of the will to preserve the current imperfect stability in the area. It will be difficult to change it in a real and stable order favorable to the EU unless the “missing halves” are added to the present situation.

It is usually said that the constructivist interpretation needs time, since constructing a security community through confidence-building measures and identity change is a long process. Nonetheless, the constructivist model doesn’t introduce or describe a compelling logic that should lead the states to behave in that way, so that its relevance for a remote future is not certain at all. In addition, we still need a theory that allows us to interpret the present, not to speak about the recent past. I have tried to sustain on a theoretical level that the realist tradition can prove to be useful also in this case and a preliminary application of the model seems to confirm that this one could be a viable way to an alternative interpretation of Euro-Mediterranean relations.

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