

External democratization beyond EU enlargement: the case of Algeria and Ukraine

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Abstract

The paper deals with effects of the EU on democratization processes in Algeria and Ukraine. Democratizing effects of the EU can be analyzed by following two different points of departure: On the one hand democratic norms can be “communicated” by external policy and strategy. Effects, i.e. compliance, derive from *intention*, i.e. from purposeful action (Democratization ‘by design’). Democratizing effects, however, can also emerge as *unintended* consequences of EU policy conducted in other, internal contexts. This kind of external democratization might be called democratization ‘by default’. Center piece, here, is a non-agent driven process of external norm transfer. Compliance, thus, do not derive from intention. Instead, democratizing effects of the EU evolve as an unintended process of diffusion of norms, practices and values. Change emerges ‘by default’. Whereas strategic and social compliance are inherent in democratization ‘by design’ compliance through modeling is at the center of democratization ‘by default’.

The paper presents the two analytical perspectives and shows limits of democratization ‘by design’ with regard to its capacity to identify scope and depth of democratic change in what is called ‘big’ states. In those cases a merely analytical focus on policy and political strategy on the one hand and patterns of reactions on the other – it is argued - overemphasizes failures of EU policy and strong resistance in the ‘target’ state. Algeria is presented as a case in point: strategic as well as social compliance are difficult to achieve because Algeria does not need to comply due to its alternative policy options. By adding compliance through modeling democratization ‘by default’ draws attention to a more “neutral” process of change in the ‘target’ state which might be more likely than strategic and social compliance, especially (but not exclusively) in ‘big’ states.

1. Introduction

The paper deals with effects of the EU on democratization processes in Algeria and Ukraine. Democratizing effects of the EU can be analyzed by following two different points of departure: intended and unintended processes of norm diffusion. By diffusion, I mean - following Rogers (1995: 10) - a "process by which an innovation (i.e. a new idea) is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system". On the one hand democratic norms can be "communicated" by external policy and strategy. Effects, i.e. compliance, derive from *intention*, i.e. from purposeful action. Following this analytical perspective compliance towards democratic norms emerges from an intended process of norm diffusion. This is called democratization 'by design'. Much of the literature on EU external democratization is based on these logics. At the center of research lies an external agent driven process of norms transfer. Democratizing effects, however, can also emerge as *unintended* consequences of EU policy conducted in other, internal contexts. This kind of external democratization might be called democratization 'by default'. The analytical perspective derives from diffusion research prominent in the comparative democratization and transition literature. Center piece of attention, here, is a non-agent driven process of external norm transfer. Compliance, thus, do not derive from intention, i.e. from purposeful action directed toward the 'target' state. Instead, democratizing effects of the EU evolve as an unintended process of diffusion of norms, practices and values. Change emerges 'by default'. Innovations, for instances, specific practices conducted within the EU are observed by actors of the 'target' state and in some cases considered as better or more useful than their own practices. Whereas strategic and social compliance are inherent in democratization 'by design' compliance through modeling is at the center of democratization 'by default'.

The paper presents in its first the two analytical perspectives by successively describing their different points of departure as well as their supply and demand sides of EU external democratization. In the second part the paper shows limits of the analytical perspective of democratization 'by design' with regard to its capacity to identify scope and depth of democratic change. Limits of analysis are particularly (but not exclusively!) obvious in EU relations towards 'big' countries. These are states in

transition in which the special combination of large land mass, a huge population and significant material or immaterial resources constitute domestic preconditions for change and allows for alternative policy option. A merely analytical focus on policy and political strategy on the one hand and patterns of reactions on the other – it is argued - overemphasizes failures of EU policy and strong resistance in the ‘target’ state. Here, research on Algeria is a case in point. Strategic as well as social compliance are difficult to achieve because Algeria does not need to comply due to its alternative policy options.

In its concluding remarks the value added of democratization ‘by default’ is summarized, especially (but not exclusively) for those cases in which an analytical focus of democratization ‘by design’ would be strong in discerning resistance and policy ineffectiveness but weak in identifying change though and in which strategic and social compliance are difficult to achieve. This is especially the case in ‘big’ states. Here further research should ask in which way and to what extent compliance through model-learning is more likely than strategic and social compliance in cases of ‘big’ states.

2. EU external democratization: two perspectives

2.1. Democratization ‘by design’

Point of departure: intended diffusion of norms and its consequences

External democratization, in general, grew out of academic discussions on democracy building when globalization, i.e., the increasing and deepening interconnectedness between societies, citizens, and organizations across state boundaries, encouraged much broader thinking on democratic change and the respective structures enabling it at both the international and the domestic level. Most of the literature uses the term in a narrow sense as democracy promotion policy conducted by international actors (states as well as non-state actors). ‘Democracy promotion policy’ is defined as the strategy of international (western) actors to induce states to achieve democratic transition or consolidation. It is a utilitarian concept initiated by external actors in order to explicitly provoke change. It is a concrete foreign policy goal (Olsen 2000). Studies on democracy promotion policy focus

implicitly or explicitly on the independent variable of democratization, i.e., the mechanisms of (western) actors' policies and strategies (supply side), and the dependent variable, i.e. its effects on change and resistance within the target state (demand side).

Studies on external democratization implicitly or explicitly starts from the idea of norm transfer as an agent driven process. Change, in other words, is the consequence of intention, i.e. of a purposive action. A purposive social action is, according to Merton (1936: 895), an "action which involves motives and consequently a choice between various alternatives". The consequences of purposive action, in this sense, "are limited to those elements (...)", Merton underlines, "which are exclusively the outcome of the action, i.e. those elements which would not have occurred had the action not taken place" (ibid.). In this sense, effects of EU promotion policy can be intended and unintended. Among the former are instrumentation adaptation and lesson drawing, i.e. strategic compliance, whereas social learning or social compliance might be seen as a more unintended consequence. Both types of consequences, however, are the result of policy, i.e. of concrete conduct.

Supply side: Policy mechanisms

By and large, literature on democracy promotion policy of the EU quotes five mechanisms triggering democratic change in the 'target' state: membership (conditionality), conditionality, control, incentives and socialization. Membership (conditionality) refers to a direct link between admission and behavior. The main underlying logic is "reinforcement by reward". According to it, an international organization reacts to the fulfillment or non-fulfillment of its conditions by granting or withholding rewards without however, use coercion to reach goals (Schimmelfennig/Engert/Knobel 2003: 496). As compared to other forms of conditionality the ultimate reward is membership. Membership conditionality, however, is not the only mechanism for an IO to trigger change at the domestic level of the target state. Along with membership (conditionality) scholars of external democracy promotion policy quote control, conditionality and incentives as mechanisms (Ethier 2003). Control means the imposition of democracy on a country by foreign actors following conquest and/or military and political occupation of its territory (Whitehead 1996). Conditionality implies the installation or consolidation of

democracy before benefiting from advantages promised (but not guaranteed!) by foreign actors. Finally, incentives, according to Ethier, refer to financial aid, equipment, counseling, etc. granted a state in order to convince or encourage domestic actors. Conditionality and incentives differ in the mix of 'sticks and carrots' that is put into effect: conditionality implies that reward is uncertain while sanctions are very likely and readily applied. Incentive, by contrast, implies that reward is guaranteed whereas sanctions remain highly uncertain (ibid: 100). Finally, democracy promotion policy also implies mechanisms of socialization. As a supply side condition socialization is often – implicitly or explicitly - understood as a rationalist mechanism as it is conditionality and incentives. For example, according to Kelley (2004: 428) socialization refers to the fact that “the external actor does not link any concrete incentives to behavior but rely solely on the *use* of norms, either to *persuade, shame or praise* actors into changing their policies” (emphasis added).

Demand side: Strategic and social compliance

Compliance to external democratization, i.e. scope and depth of democratic change, is determined by the relationship between emissary and recipient of policy promotion. Two types of compliance seem to be likely: strategic and social compliance. All policy mechanisms, be it (membership) conditionality, conditionality, incentives or socialization correspond to the *intention* to diffuse of practices, values, norms and rules in order to provoke compliance in the 'target' state. Both types of compliance are external agent driven processes. The former one follows logics of “social sanctioning” (Checkel, 2001: 558) while the latter corresponds to “learning”. For instance, the sanctioning norm of the IO combined with shaming mechanisms touched off by (International) Non-Governmental Organizations ((I)NGOs) might lead to strategic compliance. The overall logic, here, is rationalist: domestic agents of the 'target' state may comply with international norms, but consequentialism, i.e., a means and ends calculation, underlies their choices. The target government might comply with incentives and conditionality but it is strategic compliance that prevails. The other type of compliance is social compliance, i.e., learning through persuasion and argumentation. According to Checkel, social compliance might occur in cases in which the 'target' agent is in a novel or uncertain situation, e.g., in crisis or when

policy seriously fails. Also social compliance is likely in cases in which the 'target' agent is a novice in the field. Besides, social compliance is more likely to occur when the agent seeking to persuade is part of the regime to which the 'target' agent is closely linked through respective state-society relations, institutional settings, or political constellations (authoritarian domestic structures). Also, social compliance is more likely to occur when attempts at persuasion (concerning democratic goods) do not demand change, but aim to elaborate common rules and norms in conjunction with the 'target' agent. Finally, social compliance is the more likely the less relevant interaction is politicized and the more it is based on insulated, functional issues (ibid: 562-563). Social compliance is an external agent driven process in the sense that persuasion is the underlying logic, i.e. an "activity or process in which a communicator attempts to *induce* a change in the belief, attitude or behavior of another person" (Checkel 2002: 2, emphasis added).

Democratic change triggered by policy and political strategy, thus, are either the consequence of "social influence", i.e. the application of external pressure or incentives (pro norm behavior) due to the distribution of social rewards and punishments (Flockhart 2005: 48) or of persuasion, i.e. "a social process of interaction that involves changing attitudes (...) in the absence of coercion" (Checkel 2002: 2). Mechanisms of social influence, apparently, are easier to achieve but might only lead to mimetic or limited, superficial change while mechanisms of persuasion are difficult to achieve but might lead in a longer term perspective to change (Grugel 2007: 46). Compliance induced by policy and political strategy, be it strategic or social compliance, might in the end lead only to superficial compliance. Authoritarian regimes, for instance, might sign to international agreements on human rights but this action does not necessarily imply that international human rights norms are deeply internalized in domestic practices and that a logic of appropriateness prevails over consequential behavioral patterns.

2.2. Democratization 'by default'

This section aims at presenting democratization 'by default' as a complementary approach to analysis EU external democratization. As for the supply side it focuses on the degree of interconnectedness between the governance system EU and the countries surrounding the system and the way this structural factor can serve as stimuli for change. As far as the demand side is concerned it specifies effects of this interconnectedness by discussing compliance through model learning as distinctive feature of compliance. While compliance through social influence and persuasion are the result of purposive action, compliance through conviction is based on observation and modeling.

Point of departure: Unintended diffusion of norms and its consequences

Democratization 'by default' considers IOs not as utility-maximizing collective *actors* with specific political strategies and purposes, but as governance *systems* whose norms, rules, customs and law spill over to third countries as unintended consequences stemming from the very existence, attractiveness and internal functioning of the system. In addition to purposive social action, i.e. policy and political strategy, unintended consequences might also evolve due to non-purposive social action. Merton (1936) in fact, distinguishes between "conduct" and "behavior". While the unintended consequences of purposive action correspond to a specific conduct they might also emerge due to "behavior". Merton does not assume that social action always involves clear-cut, explicit purpose. Instead, unintended consequences can also emerge as a result of habitual action which is characteristically performed without the awareness of purpose. Following the latter line of differentiation the term 'unintended consequence' shall refer to those democratizing effects which emerge from habitual action within the EU and which spill over to the outside by provoking side-effects, in this case democratic change. In short, democratization 'by default' is interested in externally triggered stimuli for democratic changes beyond politics.

This focus comes close to the diffusion literature in comparative democracy and transition scholarship. It follows what Whitehead calls democratization by "consent"

or “democracy by convergence”. Also the idea of democratization by contagion, i.e. by a process of “*neutral* transmission” of democratic ideas from one country to another, is part of democratization ‘by default’ (Whitehead 1996: 5-8; 15-22 emphasis added). Diffusion indicates the “spread of a practice within a social system where the spread denotes flow or movement from a source to an adopter” (Wejnert 2005: 55). Among factors enabling successful “neutral” diffusion of democratic practices into non-democratic environments authors underline spatial factors, the density of networks and media communication. As for the former the diffusion literature holds that the probability of the transmission of an idea (a concrete practice) from one country to another is enhanced by proximity (this corresponds to Whitehead’s “contagion through proximity” thesis (Whitehead 1996: 5)). The closer countries are to each other, the greater the number of possible linkages through which democratic ideas can be spread and the higher the capacity of countries to observe and model democratic states (Brinks/Coppedge 2006). Another enabling structure is the density of network. A country’s membership in an international economic or political organization can facilitate the spreading of ideas as it can be colonial networks. Prior to de-colonialization, Britain, for instance, reacted to colonial discontent by the gradual introduction of rules of representation which then enabled the newly independent state to pursue paths of democratic transitions. By contrast France left its colonies ill prepared for democratic transition. In the end, former colonies of Britain performed better in democratizing than those of France. Finally, media communication has been identified as an enabling factor for successful diffusion. Gained societal knowledge about the standard of living in democracies might provide additional incentives to create sustainable democracy (ibid: 55-57). In sum, at the center of the democracy diffusion literature is the idea that multiple forms of structural interconnectedness and their degree of density between sender and adopter – be they political-institutional (membership in international institutions), economic (trade) or cultural (languages, history, religion) - do impact on the successful diffusion of democratic norms and practices into the domestic realm of non-democratic countries (Brinks/Coppedge 2006: 484).¹ There might be seen as enabling structures or as ‘stimuli’. Proximity, in this sense, facilitates the issue.

Supply side: 'stimuli' of the EU governance system

Smith (1996) proposes different types of EU governance system's boundaries from which the production and reproduction of functional spaces including members *and* third states evolve.² They all describe forms of interrelation between the system and its environment. As it is indicated by the diffusion literature relevant for the context of democratizing are above all 'institutional', 'transactional', and 'cultural' boundaries. The 'institutional/legal' boundary refers to the complex set of institutions, procedures, and norms which underpin the system's governance structure. It comprises 'hard' and 'soft' law. Boundary, in this context, has two implications: first, it evolves in as much as powerful sets of institutional and legal incentives are constantly being established. Legitimacy and social security, for example, are common goods of the EU international governance system. Their achievement must be guaranteed by each system member. The more dense and persistent a set of institutions and practices of a system are, the more they become a significant 'boundary marker' (Smith) between 'ins' and 'outs'. 'Outsiders' are closely linked to the institutional settings of the system due to continual access in practice by way of regular exchanges due to migration, international law, or trade to mention but a few activities of significance in this respect. Thus, public or intellectual goods inherent of the EU governance system such as civic statehood and the rule of law, spill over towards outside circles 'by default', i.e., as unintended consequences of the density of institution-building processes within the system.

'Transactional' boundary refers to the degree of exchange of economic goods, whether material or immaterial, and the respective institutional regulation accompanying them. The more the system moves towards common regulations and abolition of barriers to trade, the clearer the "boundary marker" (Smith) against outside circles becomes. For the 'outs' the difficulty consists in preserving access to the system despite intensified regulations and other obstructive framework conditions. The more a system defines rules and norms of transaction among its members the more outside circles will be 'forced' to adapt to preserve functional ties. Thus, internal processes of deepening economic relations, as an unintended consequence, trigger change in outside circles. They are a source of change 'by default'.

'Cultural' boundary, finally, refers to the fact that culture and political values, too, can lead to boundaries between 'ins' and 'outs'. The political foundation of the EU, for instance, comprises democracy, respect for the rule of law, protection of human rights, and also some reference to common culture and history of its members. The boundary, however, is of rather porous nature. The sheer attractiveness of the EU's constituent norms might stimulate change 'by default' in 'outsiders' to the circle.

Current research focuses on four functional boundaries, the degree of permeability of which allowing speaking of functional spaces that include both the system and its environment. Lavenex proposes environment, internal security (justice and home affairs), energy, and migration (Lavenex, 2004). Christiansen/Petito/Tonra, for instance, underline the fact that the fortress metaphor of the EU has shifted to the issue of migration and the free movement of people. As there is a global trend toward greater mobility, the EU has witnessed a massive influx of people mainly from the Balkans, Eastern Europe, and the Maghrib, most of them seeking permanent residence in the EU (Christiansen/Petito/Tonra, 2000: 390-391). Also parts of the Internal Market regulations, originally destined to ensure member states compliance, have spilled over to third parties. The EU has gradually extended its program to regions beyond its membership. The relationship between the EU and the EEA is a case in point. Rather than having only one territory with clearly discernible borders, the EU has shifted towards an entity with multiple territories and different types of boundaries. What is crucial for understanding the impact of de-boundaring is that within each domain, internal policies of the EU have deep implications for the 'outs' and that the deeper the internal governance system of the EU develop the more the 'outside' circle feels obliged to adapt. In this sense, the density of relationship in functional domains serves as 'stimuli' enabling democratic change 'by default'.

Demand side: Compliance through model-learning

Is a process of external democratization imaginable in which no external actors (whether governmental or others) or their intentions are to be considered, in which, in other words, external agents are not the driving forces for diffusion? What, then, should motivate domestic agents in the 'target' country to comply though?

Whitehead, in his discussion about external dimensions of democratization puts

forward two arguments: the first one is contagion through proximity. What kind of “neutral transmission mechanisms might induce countries bordering on democracies to replicate the political institutions of their neighbors” (p.6)?³ Brinks/Coppedge assume that non-democratic regimes imitate or adapt to democracy models in the neighborhood because they believe that reward exist. The reward could be of many different kinds: peace, mutual security, trade, investment, ease of communication. The nature of the reward for having similar regimes is less important than that there will be a reward of some kind, i.e. that the actor believes that such reward exist (Brinks/Coppedge 2006: 466). What is crucial in this respect is that these rewards are not promised, enhanced or offered by the outside. In a similar way Whitehead discusses effects of international demonstration as possibilities to trigger democratic change. Here the focus is on the almost universal wish to imitate a way of life associated with the liberal capitalist democracies of the core region (Whitehead 1996: 21). Both unintended processes of norm diffusion can have positive as well as negative aspects: democratization by contagion and by consent might destroy an existent regime but might also help to create a new one. What both diffusion processes have in common is their neutral character in the sense that there are free of external agents sponsoring the diffusion of international norms into state practices. Instead of compliance through social influence or persuasion, compliance, here, takes place because the agent is convinced that the imitation or adaptation of EU innovations (new idea) is better suited than their own to achieve goals. This comes close to social cognitive theories of learning from models on the one hand (Bandura 1986), and to theories of institutional learning in organization theory (institutional isomorphism) on the other (DiMaggio/Powell 1991). Together this kind of compliance shall be called compliance through model learning. Strategic and social compliance, prominent in the literature on international institutions and the socialization of states (Checkel 2005)⁴ needs external agents in order to enforce learning processes and finally to succeed. By contrast, compliance through model learning sheds light on the fact that people do not only learn from their own experience or from reward and punishment but also by simply observing the actions of others and the result of those actions. This “vicarious learning” (Bandura) permits individuals to learn a novel behavior without undergoing trial and error processes of performing it. In many situations it keeps them from risking costly and potentially fatal mistakes. Such processes of model learning have certain scope conditions according to Bandura

(1986): Whether a model like a specific EU norm or practice attracts attention of domestic agents in the 'target' countries depends on specific features of the model such as its capacity to reward and punish, credibility and reputation. Another scope condition focuses on the adopter situation. Whether a model is perceived as attractive depends, for instance, on the way observed successes of the model contribute to the observer's belief about its own capabilities. The interconnectedness between the model and the observer is according to Bandura a strong enabling structure to learn from model. The more model and observer are linked to each other in a positively perceived emotional relation and the higher the degree of mutual dependence between model and observer, the more this structural factors facilitate the willingness of the observer to comply, i.e. the more it is likely that the observer will respond towards stimuli because he is convinced that the model is doing a better job than its own. The degree of interconnectedness in different functional domains between the governance system of the EU and its outside circles does, in this respect, play a crucial role in the sense that it makes learning through modeling more likely.

This cognitive process of attraction and attention is followed by a process of performance. Learning takes place selectively and results in partial, provisional and highly idiosyncratic knowledge of what is relevant for evaluating alternatives of action in a given situation. Choices can be made between the observed alternatives (model) and its own experienced model. The crucial question, then, is in which way and to what extent actors will choose innovation, i.e. behaving like the observed model. Here, social cognitive learning emphasizes three scope conditions: strength and frequency of information about the model (innovation), recognition of similarities or an identity with already known elements/patterns and 'validity' of recognized similarities/identities in the sense of an association with earlier rewarding, neutral experience (Anderson 1990 chap. 3). This selective cognitive development which is at a first glance entirely internal to the individual is molded in social processes of communication with other agents (Bandura 1986, chap. 2). These communication circles help to develop similarities in interpretation among the same group of people and reinforce the likelihood that attraction and attention lead to the choice of the alternative model (adoption of new ideas).

3. EU external democratization in Algeria and Ukraine: analysis of failure

The second part of the paper shows limits of the analytical perspective of democratization 'by design' with regard to its capacity to identify scope and depth of democratic change. Limits of analysis are particularly (but not exclusively!) obvious in EU relations towards 'big' countries. These are states in transition in which the special combination of large land mass, a huge population and significant material or immaterial resources constitute domestic preconditions for change and allows for alternative policy option. A merely analytical focus on policy and political strategy on the one hand and patterns of reactions on the other overemphasizes failures of EU policy and strong resistance in the 'target' state. Research on Algeria is a case in point: even strategic compliance – what might be considered as the most attractive way for the 'target' state to demonstrate some superficial kind of change – seems to be lacking in the case of Algeria (and probably also for the case of Ukraine under the Kruchma regime). Two reasons for failures seem to be at work: weak policy on the EU side, i.e. absence of the most powerful mechanism for change, (membership conditionality) and strong alternative policy options on the side of Algeria and Ukraine due to their character as 'big' state.

3.1. Supply side: Absence of membership (conditionality)

When it comes to comparing the effectiveness of the mechanism of membership (conditionality), conditionality, incentives, control or socialization membership prevails over all others (Whitehead 1996: 19). As empirical studies show, IOs' democracy promotion policies are highly effective in cases in which the target state is a member of that organization ((Pevehouse 2002, Kelley 2004, Ethier 2003), or in which the target state is recognized as an applicant for membership to that organization. As far as the latter is concerned, studies on EU enlargement give useful insights (Vachudova 2001, Schimmelfennig/Engert/Knobel 2003).

Algeria and Ukraine do not have a EU membership perspective similar to, for instance, the countries of the Western Balkans or Turkey. While the EU relationship with Algeria is formally established through an association agreement within the framework of the Barcelona strategy, Ukraine, since 1994, is formally linked to the

EU by means of a so called Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA). More recently, both countries have been included as strategic partners in the EU New Neighborhood Policy (NNP).

The PCA, which came into force in 1998, establishes an institutional framework for bilateral relations, including annual Ukraine-EU summits, ministerial level meetings, and exchange among the parliamentarians as well as among experts in functional fields. The PCA also includes a provision allowing erecting a free trade area in the future. The PCA has been designed to help open the door to EU assistance through TACIS. In practice, the PCA focuses on efforts to facilitate trade by helping to bring Ukraine up to WTO standards (Kubicek 2005: 275). The PCA, however, does not address the issue of future membership, carries no formal obligations, and is largely advisory in nature (Molchanov 2004:456). Neither does the “Common Strategy toward Ukraine” within the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) framework, elaborated in 1999, nor the NNP (Guicherd 2002), nor the newly envisaged “Enhanced Agreement” which shall replace the PCA by 2008 and includes negotiations of a free trade area once Ukraine has joined the WTO.

The record for Algeria is similar. EC-Algerian cooperation goes back to July 1969 when an agreement was signed linking Algeria to the EEC commercially. The negotiations for establishing an association agreement within the framework of Barcelona were concluded in December 2001. The agreement was officially signed in 2002 but has yet to be ratified. Centerpiece of the agreement is the creation of a free trade area for industrial goods by 2010. Although both agreements are similar with regard to free trade and principles of financial assistance, the association agreement with Algeria goes further. There are certain common aspects concerning political dialogue, respect for human rights and democracy, provisions relating to intellectual property, services etc. which are not (yet) part of the PCA. However, membership is not part of the EU policy towards Algeria as it is in the case of Ukraine. Partial membership, e.g., in the EU internal market, might be offered within the framework of the NNP so that once Algeria, for instance, has ratified the agreement, the country could participate in the freedom of movement for goods, services, capital, and persons and also could become a member of the Schengen agreement in the future.

3.2. Demand side: the 'bigness' of Algeria and Ukraine

I add the 'bigness' of a country to an already crowded agenda on the domestic conditions of external democracy promotion policy. According to Ottaway/Herbst/Mills (2004), domestic factors hampering democratization efforts from the outside are particularly relevant in what they call "big" states. They define big states as states in transition in which the special combination of a large land mass, a huge (and often young) population, as well as significant material or immaterial resources constitute factors leading to dysfunctions at the political, economic, and societal level. Often these countries are led by semi-authoritarian regimes which are very proficient in retaining control and power by employing democratization as a façade. These states are "especially frustrating for Western donors' policy" (Ottaway 2003: 5-6) because they "already do much of what most of the externally initiated democratization projects encourage" (ibid), e.g., they already hold regular elections, they accept a role for parliaments, and they normally have a quite independent media. Semi-authoritarian regimes are often stable regimes not because authorities are popular, but because they know how to use democratic rules for their own purposes (ibid). Big countries, in other words, are specific by definition and should be identified according to geography, population, and economic size along with their regional role (perception) and political orientation. Big states have the potential to influence their regions and offer leadership outside their borders. As far as the impact of international actors is concerned, big states are not forced to react to international conditionality or incentives: they have alternative policy options. For instance, as far as membership is concerned, these countries often either do not wish to join IOs or their demand for membership is vague. Equally, those states are reluctant towards the adaptation of the specific norm set defined by the Euro-Atlantic community (individual freedoms, civil liberties and political rights), which in the domestic realm translates into liberal democracy and adherence to human rights, the rule of law and a market-based economy (Flockhart 2006: 91) or their willingness to adopt is unclear.

Algeria and Ukraine are both big countries in the neighborhood of the EU, i.e., they are important countries in the region in geographical, geopolitical, and socio-economic terms and have therefore significant alternative policy options to play with. Geographically, with a landmass equal to France, a population of 47 million, a location at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, large agricultural and high-tech

industries, and extensive natural resources, Ukraine, as Mroz and Pavliuk indicate (Mroz/Pavliuk 1996: 52), is pivotal to the stability of the continent and any grave uncertainty would reverberate throughout Europe as experienced during the “Orange Revolution” in 2004/2005. Geopolitically, D’Anieri, Kravchuk, and Kuzio note that Ukraine is important for the West for several reasons. By its positioning as a powerful state between Germany and Russia, Ukraine ameliorates the security dilemma that led to two world wars in Europe in the 20th century. As far as Russia is concerned, a strong and independent Ukraine would hamper perceived Russian ambitions to renew its threat to Western Europe. Ukraine’s transition to Western-style political life would have positive implications for Russia’s development as well. And finally, as the authors emphasize, Ukraine is geopolitically important in a negative way because if a state of its size and strategic location should fall into instability this would reverberate throughout Middle and Eastern Europe (D’Anieri/Kravchuk/Kuzio 1999: 1). Åslund, in a similar way, notes that a stable and prosperous Ukraine facilitates interaction among neighbors whereas a weak Ukraine creates a power vacuum that encourages rivalries. Ukraine could become a major contributor to global instability from organized crime to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (Åslund 2003: 107).

The same goes for Algeria. Geographically, Algeria’s landmass is four times as large as that of France or Ukraine. Although Algeria’s population is significantly smaller than that of Ukraine, its fertility rate and annual population growth is much higher. In fact, Algeria is one of the countries in the EU neighborhood with the highest fertility and annual population growth rate. As compared to continental Europe, Algeria’s population is extremely young. With its location at the crossroads of Europe and Africa, as well as of Occident and Orient, and its large agricultural and extensive natural resources, Algeria is – as Ukraine – crucial for the stability of Europe. Geopolitically, a radicalized Algeria with an aggressive Islamist movement, which – as some authors think – could end in the “next fundamentalist state” (Fuller 1996), might lead to a spill over of terrorism and political violence outside Algeria. In addition, fear of large-scale refugee movement and undocumented immigration combined with the issue of energy security make Algeria a pivotal state, not only for its region but also for the EU. Whereas the fear of large refugee waves as a result of an Algerian collapse, in the end, turned out to be unfounded, the issue of undocumented immigration and, since 9/11, concerns about Islamist terrorism are

still high on the agenda. Groups of terrorists such as the armed wing of the Front Islamique du Salut (FIS) and networks for fundraising, arms smuggling, and political advocacy exist in Europe, especially in France and Spain. The terrorist attacks in Madrid and London have both revealed that terror can easily spread over from the Maghrib to Europe and that Algerians do play a role within.

3.3. Analysis of policy failure: some evidence from the Algerian case⁵

Literature underlines the ineffectiveness of EU conditionality policy on the one hand and the 'big' state behavior of Algeria on the other. As for the EU policy there are two factors for failure, one internal, the other external. The external factor corresponds to the unwillingness of the EU to exert pressure and coercion in order to initiate change. Democracy promotion clashes with global economic interests and geo-strategic considerations. The main problem lies in the implicit link between global capital interests in the developing market, on the one hand, and Western democracy promotion policy, on the other: particular forms of democracy promoted by the West in developing countries such as Algeria were seen as tailored to serve the interests of global capital, "with elite conservative democracy representing the political corollary of economic liberalization and internationalization" (Youngs, 2004: 17). Furthermore, European private entrepreneurship, in general, is not interested in the Algerian market. Thus, there is no strong pressure from European investors on EU governments to intervene in a more forceful way in Algeria's democratization process (ibid: 105). Geopolitics of the Mediterranean and North African countries (MENA) also has a considerable impact on the effects of conditionality. It has convincingly been argued that the real interest of the West (EU and USA) in the MENA in general, and in Algeria in particular is not democracy but political stability. EU member states are, in general, more interested in supporting authoritarianism as a means of containing political Islam. Security and commercial interests prevail over democracy (Cavatorta, 2001: 181; Cavatorta, 2002; Youngs, 2004: 96; Morisse-Schilbach, 2002). "Rents", so to speak, condition the nature of international linkages. Viewed from the outside, international actors like former colonial powers are more interested in supporting undemocratic military regimes while simultaneously offering only rhetorical support for ongoing transitions (White/Taylor, 2001). As far as the internal preconditions of

EU policy are concerned, its structural incapacity to conduct externally coercive policy is highlighted. Weakness is explained by institutional incoherence and contradictions between community (EC) and union affairs (CFSP) on trade and democracy/human rights, but also by the lack of material capacity to exercise power (no common European army and armament industries, lack of appropriate budget capacities). The EU, in general, is badly equipped to impose punitive measures on Algeria (Morisse-Schilbach 2001, 2002).

As far as the policy of incentives is concerned, effects are also weak. In fact, economic incentives have been counterproductive as regards political liberalization and ineffective due to weak leverage. As for the former, economic cooperation and financial programs, for instance, have hardly led to privatization. Only a small percentage of credits are destined for private companies and the Algerian government determines the actual beneficiaries. Much of the credits go to restructuring public enterprises, public administration, and upgrading infrastructure. External economic incentives, in the end, allow the existing regime to reinforce political patronage and keep private companies in dependent positions (Dillman, 2002: 206). The financial support of the EU (and of others like the USA and IMF) has contributed to the political stabilization of the elites. The latter utilized the externally supported macroeconomic success to present Algeria abroad as a "normal" country (Schwarz, 2002: 79). Although many policy reforms have been implemented, in particular those demanded by the international financial institutions IMF and World Bank, many of the structural legacies still persist. As far as the issue of leverage is concerned, incentives are weak because Algeria does not really need economic or financial help. Here is where the condition of "bigness" comes in at its best. A long time, the EU governments hoped that Algeria's need to access the European market would be acute enough that actually offering a preferential trade agreement would provide sufficient motivation for progress on political reforms (Youngs, 2004: 105). However, reality is different: Algeria has a range of policy choices to deal with EU incentives. The regime can extract advantages from the international system's globalization as a whole. State elites seek to use resources derived from participation in the international economy to shape and sustain a coalition of winners from economic reform - and whose members are not interested in democratization. After implanting reforms demanded by the EU, the Algerian regime has created new mechanisms to regulate actors, expand regime power, and expand its supporting

coalition (Dillman, 2002: 69, 71). The ineffectiveness of economic incentives in rent-seeking states like Algeria lies in the fact that side payments, rents, and compensations constantly nourish the state and its subordinate structures so that the regime is able to sustain winning coalitions by distributing benefits. For instance, when the EU suspended negotiations on the partnership agreement in 1997, this sanction did not matter to Algeria because the Algerian economy is rich in natural resource revenues. By consequence, the country does not need trade with the EU to nurture its own population as long as international oil and gas prices are on the rise. The EU leverage to stimulate change is weak because Algeria's alternative policy options are strong.

Finally, instrumental socialization has proven to be ineffective, as Schwarz has convincingly shown, because the military still plays an uncontested role in Algerian politics (Schwarz, 2002). Due to their isolated position, internally as well as externally, military elites do not easily socialize into European norms, values, and rules. Furthermore, the EU has not succeeded in promoting and reinforcing civil society in Algeria. Without the existence of clearly identifiable opposition groups in domestic society, however, the mechanism of norm diffusion, prominent in the strategic socialization literature (Risse et al., 1999) is doomed to failure. Transnational advocacy networks lack suitable domestic actors and institutions able to transfer international norms into domestic structures.

4. Conclusion

What can research on EU external democratization gain by analyzing democratic change 'by default'? First, democratic 'by default' add to an already crowded literature on the conditionality-compliance nexus another, third type of compliance. Second, compliance through model learning might be especially interesting for cases studies of 'big' states. In those cases, it is assumed, strategic and social compliance - both external agent driven processes - hardly occur. Democratization 'by design', here, is strong in discerning resistance and policy ineffectiveness but weak in identifying change though. Democratization 'by default' might, in this respect, add something. Further research will ask in which way and to what extent compliance through model-learning is more likely than strategic and social compliance in 'big' states. Of special

interest is the assumption that compliance through observation and model-learning is more attractive for domestic agents of 'big' states because it allows to comply without undergoing trial and error processes of performing it. Compliance through modeling keeps them from risking costly and potentially fatal mistakes. Finally, as far as the supply side is concerned, democratization 'by default' broadens the panoply of mechanisms of external democratization by focusing on the impact on functional domains in which the degree of interconnectedness is high, in which, in other words, territorial borders became functional boundaries and in the end, common spaces. The focus on 'functional spaces' has advantages for empirical analysis: although one could plausibly argue that Ukraine is in general more 'responsive' towards the EU system's stimuli than Algeria and features of compliance (be it strategic or social compliance) are more likely to occur in Ukraine, this seems to be less evident when comparing different *functional* domains, e.g., environment, justice, and social affairs. The unintended diffusion of ideas such as social citizenship, labor rights, welfare, environmental protection (sustainability) or redistribution of wealth, for instance, might differ in these domains due to different degrees of interconnectedness. As for the environmental issue, for instance, the democratizing behavior (imitation or adaptation of innovation, i.e. of new ideas) might be more visible in the case of Algeria than in the case of Ukraine due to longstanding functional cooperation and experiences within the framework of the Mediterranean Sea protection regime (Haas 1990).

Notes

¹ Looking at interconnectedness as a source for change is, of course, not new. Its intellectual heritage stems from early 'interdependency' literature in IR as well as from supporters of the globalization thesis. The latter starts from the assumption that mutual interconnectedness among states, societies, and cultures, by way of boundary-crossing processes like migration, institutional engineering, and ideas, will lead to learning effects, processes of institutional isomorphism, and, in the end, to convergent processes of democratic change. Globalization as such can even be a 'democratizing engineer' (Held/McGrew 2000, Przeworski 1991).

² Albert et al (2001) highlight the impact of bordering and de-bordering processes on order and identity change among different units.

³ In Manner's normative power Europe (2000) one of the mechanisms of EU norm diffusion refers to contagion. Contagion, here, means that diffusion of norms is entirely symbolic, i.e. normative power resulting from the unintentional diffusion of ideas from the EU to other political actors. He quotes Coombes (1998) as an example for this kind a norm diffusion mechanism.

⁴ Checkel (2005: 808-813) proposes three mechanisms of socialization which all describe strategic and social compliance in a way. The first mechanism is strategic calculation. Here the degree of internalization of the international norm is the weakest since the adaption of the norm is based on strategic cost and benefit calculation. Next comes socialization through role playing. Here, according to Checkel, compliance is still in the modus of behavioural adaptation although on a noncalculative basis. Finally, socialization through norm suasion is similar to what has been presented as compliance through persuasion

⁵ This section is drawn from Morisse-Schilbach (unpl. manuscript).

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