
Preface

We know a lot about the European Union's (EU) political impact on its member states and also on countries in the process of accession. Comparably little, however, is known about the EU's capability to exert influence on those countries in its neighborhood that have no perspective of becoming a member of the Union. It is puzzling that the EU has developed so many instruments to exert influence on processes of transformation in its neighborhood without really knowing how, and to what extent, these instruments influence policies in neighboring countries. It is therefore with high political and academic interest that one dives into Eva Maggi's exciting book on EU-Moroccan relations. How do we measure political impact and what are the relevant factors that trigger institutional change? These questions are all the more significant in the political context of the uprisings of Arab societies which disclosed previous failures and limits of the EU's approach towards the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Having tacitly supported authoritarian regimes in the hope that they would preserve stability, the EU's self-portrayal as an agent of democratic change has lost all credibility. In the post Arab Spring era, however, the EU contends to have learned a lesson and therefore promised to side with the forces of change from now on. But, what exactly do domestic actors expect from the EU? To what extent – if at all – do they want to be *europeanized*?

While Eva Maggi developed actor-centered Europeanization as the theoretical framework for her analysis, her approach is anything but Eurocentristic. On the contrary, by adapting two approaches from new institutionalism, she develops a theoretical perspective that focusses on the role of political actors in processes of institutional change on *both* sides of the Mediterranean. The astonishing outcome of her research is that no European elites take the driving position, but in many cases their Moroccan counterparts are at the wheel. In contrast to the common narrative of neo-colonial EU dominance over third world countries, this book identifies the Moroccan political elites as the decisive actors who set the pace in the Moroccan transformation process. In two thoroughly conducted empirical case studies, one

on the EU's impact on Moroccan economic policies and the other on Moroccan environmental policies, Maggi substantiates how Moroccan political elites use the political design of the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) according to their own interests. As she explores in her work, change is welcomed in some policy fields, while resilience dominates others. Against this background it becomes clear that top-down approaches to promote transformation in other countries do not work. The message that practitioners in particular can take from this book is simplified as: Only if working in dense cooperation with the political elites, the EU can exert its influence in a partner country, and this influence will always be limited by their specific political interests. Maggi leaves it to the reader to decide whether we like this message or not, given that many partner countries are still (semi-) authoritarian. Many change agents within the MENA countries, which is also part of the story, are excluded from Euro-Mediterranean policymaking.

Maggi's theoretically profound and empirically rich study has been defended as a PhD thesis in November 2014 at the Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences, Helmut Schmidt University in Hamburg (Germany). The work fits perfectly into the VS-Springer series 'Politics and Society in the Middle East', which has a focus on theory-lead research on the Middle East and North Africa, including its interchanges with Europe. Together with Sabine Lang from the University of Washington in Seattle (USA), I had the great joy of supervising this research project in a most inspiring process of reciprocal learning. This book is the result of a truly transatlantic endeavor. After working for several years at the European Union Center of Excellence (now Jean Monnet Center) at the University of Washington in Seattle, Eva Maggi continues her research and teaching on Europe, the Middle East and transatlantic relations at the School of Government and Public Policy at the University of Arizona in Tucson.

Annette Jünemann, Hamburg in June 2015

The Will of Change

European Neighborhood Policy, Domestic Actors and
Institutional Change in Morocco

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2016, XIV, 183 p. 3 illus., Softcover

ISBN: 978-3-658-11035-2