

Seyma Ekiz

The Role of the EU and Member States in the Arab Spring

Assessment of Interests and EU Strategy in Tunisia and Libya



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*To my sons;
Akif Zahid and Mehmet Sami*

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List of Abbreviations

AA	Association Agreement
ACAA	Agreements on Conformity Assessment and Acceptance of Industrial products
AFD	Agence Francaise de Development
AFTURD	Association of the Democratic Women
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CS	Common Strategy
CSP	Country Strategy Paper
DCFTA	Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department
EEAS	European External Action Service
EIB	European Investment Bank
ESDP	European Security and Defense Policy
ESS	European Security Strategy
ENP	European Neighborhood Policy
EU	European Union
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
FEMIP	Facility for Euro-Mediterranean Investment and Partnership
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ILO	International Labor Organization
LTDH	Tunisian League for Human Rights
MFA	Macro-Financial Assistance
MTS	Medium-Term Strategy
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
ND	Northern Dimension
NIF	Neighborhood Investment Facility
NIP	National Indicative Paper
NTC	National Transitional Council

List of Abbreviations

OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PCA	Partnership and Cooperation Agreement
PPC	Permanent Partnership Council
RCD	Rally for Constitutional Democracy
SPRING	Support for Partnership, Reforms and Inclusive Growth
TEU	Treaty of European Union
UGTT	Tunisian General Labor Union
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
US	United States
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction
WTO	World Trade Organization

Abstract

The objective of this thesis is to explain if the way the EU assesses its interests (both normative and rational interests) and foreign policy goals match EU's actions in the North Africa region during the Arab Spring. It seeks to understand if EU's foreign policy behavior in the areas of physical security, economic prosperity and value projection in Tunisia and Libya is based more on material interests or values. As a minor research area member state policies of the UK, France and Germany are analyzed. The aim is to search how competing rationales of member states impede or encourage EU's neighborhood policy in the region. In order to study these issues this thesis presents broad empirical research on the EU as the community level, on the member states as the national level and on Tunisia and Libya as the two distant cases. This research is done via the extensive usage of EU documents, expert interviews, and primary sources in addition to the study of secondary literature.

The research adopts an original approach using insights from neoclassical realism to identify the key explanatory variable of EU leaders' assessment of foreign policy goals and intervening variable of member state policies and also to identify the impact of these variables on EU actions. Neoclassical realism allows us to combine structural and domestic incentives and also to combine interests and values. It then carries out a comparative qualitative analysis based on three variables and on a foreign policy typology which combines normative and rational modes of foreign policy behavior.

The findings show that there is great consistency between speeches and actions of EU high officials in all three areas. The phenomenon of migration is the weak spot of Europe both in the case of Tunisia and Libya. This leads to the conclusion that both their discourses and actions are dominated more by security concerns rather than cooperation with North Africa on the management of migratory demands and on value promotion in particular humanitarian protection. When it comes to economic prosperity EU leaders follow the same path of assessing the interests and goals in economic relations in a neutral way both in Tunisia and Libya. Whereas in Tunisia EU actions are more in the category of normative while EU actions in the case of Libya are more in the category of rational. This is

largely the result of the difference in economic and security situation of Tunisia and Libya. On value projection, the last part of EU's strategy, the EU pursued strongly normative policies both in Tunisia and Libya. Despite the great emphasis on 'national interest' of member state leaders the EU pursued an independent policy by focusing only on transnational concerns of promotion of good governance, sustainable development, human rights, rule of law, anti-discrimination, peace and liberty. The EU, as a community, is more present in Tunisia than in Libya. The research also shows that there is a negative correlation between rational policies of member states and normative policies of the EU in the area of physical security, which cover the issues of the military intervention in Libya and migration, and in the area of economic prosperity especially in the case of Tunisia.

This thesis is divided into 12 chapters. The first, second and third chapters present the key questions, research design, methodological and theoretical framework. Chapters 4 and 7 provide an analytical overview of the comparison of speeches and actions of the EU in Tunisia and Libya. Chapters 5, 6, 8 and 9 explain the speeches and actions of member states and eventually their foreign policy in the region. Chapter 10 and 11 synthesize the results and illustrate the key findings in summarizing tables. The last chapter is left for lessons and advices derived from the analysis of EU foreign policy and for ideas on future research.

1. Introduction

1.1 *The Research Question*

Middle Eastern people are demanding jobs, democracy and freedom through protests since December 2010. Long lived dictatorships, years of oppression and poor socioeconomic conditions took thousands to the streets. Public revolutions first started in Tunisia and the events jumped up to Syria. The EU has a deep interest and engagement with the regional countries as an actor claiming to be a growing global power.

The EU's reaction towards the Arab Spring¹ has been criticized at first for not being able formulate a common response on time. According to Behr "Internal divisions and national rivalries for a strategic stake in the post-revolutionary regional order have further prevented the EU from adopting a more coherent approach." (Behr, 2011, p.1) However many national leaderships in the EU believe that the Middle East uprising is as important as communist Europe's revolution in 1989 in the way that it has the potential to improve economic growth and democratic governance.²

This research analyzes some of the determinants of EU's promotion of values and interests in Tunisia and Libya from the perspective of neoclassical realism. The aim is to explain if the way the EU assesses its interests (both normative and rational interests) and foreign policy goals match EU's actions in Tunisia and Libya during the Arab Spring process. It seeks to understand if EU's foreign policy behavior in the areas of physical security, economic prosperity and value projection is based more on material interests or values. Despite the normative positioning of the EU and member state leaders in their discourses the apparent overlapping of member states' domestic rationales and EU's prioritizing of security and sometimes

-
- 1 Although there are no agreed terms of whether the uprisings can be associated with the word 'spring', which reminds that positive economic, political and social developments are on the way in the transitional countries, the author prefers to use the term 'Arab Spring' as it is the most common usage to name the regional protests.
 - 2 An analysis of the EU's immediate reaction to the historic Arab uprisings delivered by Edward McMillan-Scott, *Vice-president of the European Parliament for democracy and human rights* can be found on <http://www.euractiv.com/global-europe/arab-spring-reveals-eu-weakness-analysis-502766>, (accessed 18.10.2015).

business rather than values like human rights, democracy and civil liberties make its relations with the southern neighborhood complicated. Therefore it is important to understand how EU leaders perceive and assess their interests and what they have done in terms of policies in the region taking also into account the consistent cooperation and conflicts within the member states.

This research is done via the extensive usage of EU documents, expert interviews, and primary sources in addition to the study of secondary literature. By looking at speeches, resolutions, communications and press releases we can find how EU leaders assess their normative and rational interests and foreign policy goals and we can also find whether the EU positions itself as a Normative Power or a Strategic/Pragmatic Power. (Wood 2011, Zimmerman 2007, Manners 2002). EU actions, in the areas of physical security, economic prosperity and value projection, together composes Grand Strategy. (Smith, 2011) A linkage between speeches and actions is established.

It is also important to look at the internal environment, which means the impact of member states' assessment of domestic interests and their policies on EU foreign policy, as the intervening variable. In Balducci's words: 'The EU-as-an-international-actor approach tends to only make reference to the EU and its main institutions and it overlooks the analysis of member states' foreign policies, thus uncritically assuming that they are in line with those of the EU.' (Balducci 2010, p.36 in Wood 2011, p.245) As a minor area of research speeches and actions of the UK, France and Germany are also scrutinized along with the EU's position. By doing so it is aimed to be found whether their competing rationales encourage or impede the EU's neighborhood policy.

These three member states (the Big Three) are chosen as they have the ability to influence EU policy with their economic and military weight. They are involved in the most important multilateral diplomatic platforms. This sovereignty of them also shows that they are not dependent on multilateral institutions as much as other member states are. (Lehne 2012, p.1) When we look at the range of high officials in the EU we see that the amount of technocrats from these three countries are quite high and this gives them enormous political power. In the EP, for instance, 20% of highest posts are from Germany and this percentage is the same with the UK.

France is also trying to get more and more weight.³ Furthermore they have strong economic relations with Tunisia and Libya with their existing companies and with high trade volumes. They also have serious concerns on migratory demands, management of borders and extension of terrorism regarding these two countries. Germany has no military involvement in Libya unlike the UK and France but Germany is mainly active in the reconstruction processes with numerous development projects. Within this frame the assumption is that the mode of foreign policy of the UK and France in the areas of physical security and economic prosperity is strongly rational while Germany is expected to pursue strongly normative policies in the area of value projection.

Neoclassical realism allows us to make assumptions from both constructivist and realist thinking. The empirical reasoning reveals that EU rhetoric in the Tunisian case, unlike the rhetoric on the Libyan case, refer more to values than interests. As for the constructivist thinking this study poses the hypothesis that if normative/value-based assessment of interests and foreign policy goals leads to normative policy implementation then the EU pursues normative policies in Tunisia whereas the EU pursues rational policies in Libya. To put it another way analyzed cases determine whether the EU inclines more to a normative position or a rational position.

The second hypothesis derived from the classical realist thinking is that normative/value-based assessment of foreign policy goals, both at the community and member state level, is not positively related to normative/value-based policy implementation, which inclines the EU to act in a normative way without resorting to coercion and without gaining wealth to the exclusion of others. (Manners 2002, Wolfers 1972 in Laidi 2008). This means that values are used for maximization of interests in the areas of physical security and economic prosperity.

The last expectation is that increases in rational policies at the member state level are associated with decreases in normative policies at the EU level. This again means that national interests of member states trump EU's normative policies in its neighborhood.

3 Int. No: 10.

1. Introduction

1.2 Importance of the Topic

1.2.1 Theoretical Relevance

While Council conclusions, resolutions or joint communications set the parameters of EU policies in the MENA region unit level factors such as dominance of national objectives or colonial ideals of member states also determine the character of EU response to the Arab revolutions. It is fair to say that the relation between systemic level (EU) and unit level (member states) shapes foreign policy of the EU. In parallel with this idea neo-classical realism specifically seeks to explain how internal characteristics of the EU -domestic rationales of member states like avoiding migration, searching for energy resources, pursuing colonial politics- intervene between EU leaders' assessment of interests, threats and opportunities and their actual foreign economic, security and value projection policies in the region. As illustrated in figure 1 neoclassical realism clearly links specified independent, intervening and dependent variables in a direct causal chain. (Rose, 1998, p.167)

Figure 1: Causal Logic



The Arab Revolutions are too new to the literature and this phenomena of the Middle East uprisings has not been covered so far with the above neo-classical theoretical logic. An alternative explanation is sought by asking how norms are utilized for explaining foreign policy outcomes. As Lehnert, Miller and Wonka put it, this piece contributes to the literature on the topic of EU's foreign policy in the Arab Spring by adding to the the general stance of constructivist and rational theories. (Lehnert et al. in Gschwend and Schimmelfennig 2007)

Whether it is a constructivist theory or a rational theory, none of these theories alone can explain the EU approach in Tunisia and Libya. There has been a conflict between constructivists and rationalists and as Kratochvil and Tulmets discuss it and this debate has gradually has given way

to experiments which try to combine the two approaches in a single framework. (Kratochvil and Tulmets, 2010)

It depends on time and space whether the EU shifted more to norm based or material based policies or a combination of the two in their foreign policies. Exploring the formation and functioning of EU values during the course of the revolutions along with the member state interpretations adds a theoretical as well as an analytical value to the scientific discourse. (Gschwend and Schimmelfennig 2007)

1.2.2 Political Relevance

Empirically European foreign policy analysis is of great importance for the region as the region is passing through a historical change. European perspectives on the political unrests, protests and on the era of a fresh start in the Middle East has the chance to whether prove EU's geopolitical strength or depreciate its image in the world. Since the beginning of the revolutions it has been discussed in EU circles that there is an effort to pursue normative policies towards consolidating socio-political and economic situation in Arab Spring countries but no one has ever asked if speeches and goals are matching actions. This study adds to the literature by empirically asking this question and also by testing so far untested hypotheses. (Gschwend and Schimmelfennig, 2007:22) It is important for the EU to test its normative power without even offering a membership perspective. With the Barcelona Process, established in 1995, the EU aimed to apply a normative approach towards the MENA region and to put emphasis on democratization and political reforms. However EU discourse on democracy and human rights didn't help in practice. (Kucukkeles, 2013:5) The colonial history of Europe and its recent past, proving close relations with the dictatorial regimes are the factors that make the diffusion of EU norms hard. On the other hand there is this fact that the EU and the Arab countries need each other for different reasons. The regional countries need EU guidance for socio-economic and political transition and the EU has some concerns like avoiding migration and need for energy. So this study aims to shed light on the future relations by sorting out what the EU has claimed in discourse and what the EU has done on the field.

Apart from EU's role in the newly emerging regimes it is also necessary to explain what all these revolutions mean to member states which used to

1. Introduction

have considerable economic and political relations with the regional countries. This research is also providing a close look to the internal bargaining process of the EU. Member state preferences and policies compose one of the most important determinants of where the EU stands in its relations with the neighborhood. The rationales that member states bring forward in their approach towards Tunisia and Libya explain what type of relations they are going to establish with the new regimes. Member states insist on their realist agenda and they seek for their business, security and strategic interests. This shows us that they tend to have substantial leverage over EU's foreign policy. As Zimmerman highlights the EU behaves strategically as long as it manages to have the member states on its side and it doesn't violate member state interests. (Zimmerman, 2007, p.828)

It is an endeavor to offer an alternative explanation of the transforming geopolitical and domestic environment. The civil uprisings leading to a change in their socio-political setting in the MENA region have powerful impact on the global actors as well as neighboring countries. These actors apply to different strategies in their policies in accordance with the newly establishing conjecture. There is certainly a rivalry between the intervening actors in terms of the diffusion of their influence and evaluating the opportunities. As a matter of fact instrumentalization of the Arab Spring policies occurs in a way that certain countries intervening in the region in the post-revolutionary space find the opportunity to redesign their foreign policies. This means that the Middle Eastern uprisings lead to a general transformation in the countries' ideological and political positioning. These rationales that are analyzed in this study also explain how they affect EU policy outputs. By doing so principles that shape foreign policy measures of EU members and institutions are enlightened.

1.2.3 Social Relevance

Socially relevant studies help us to advance our understanding of a topic which has an impact on people's lives and the course of international politics in this research. Social relevance is related with the question whether citizens and policymakers care about something. (Gerring, 2006:114) Lehnert, Miller and Wonka, alternatively, argue that the idea of being affected is a more precise criterion than people's caring. (Lehnert et al. in Gschwend and Schimmelfennig 2007:26) In this regard King, Keohane and Verba suggest that for a topic to be socially relevant it needs to affect

many people's lives. They suggest that a research project should ask an important question in a way that it affects many people's lives. (King et al.1994:15) In addition to these points practical advice is also an expected outcome for a socially relevant research project. Middle Eastern revolutions have a huge effect on people's daily lives that it transforms the whole region just like 1989 revolutions transformed Eastern European countries and ended communism. The collapse of the authoritarian regimes with violent (Libyan revolution) and non-violent (Tunisian revolution) uprisings is the initial stage for a democratic future. EU policies, which form the focus of this research, help these countries and societies transform their political and socio-economic establishment to a democratic and a liberal one. In this way it is fair enough to say that the research question affects millions in the Middle East.

1.3 State of the Art

1.3.1 Relevant Literature

Literature on the relation between the EU and the Arab Spring countries is mostly comprised of articles or books which are compilations of articles. (Peters, 2012, Bauer 2015) Some of these studies are in the form of commentaries, policy briefs, opinion papers and reports. (Kleenmann, 2010, Tocci 2011, Asseburg 2014, Leigh 2011). These research pieces, mostly released in 2011 and 2014, offer the EU a practical guidance for what is wrong with EU policies and what should the EU do in its neighborhood and focus on the causes and consequences of the uprisings.

In an attempt to provide a first look to the sweeping revolutions in the Middle East two pieces from the Arab Spring literature are introduced. The first one is Dietrich Jung's 'Unrest in the Arab World: Four Questions' which looks for the answers of four questions that the Arab Spring has raised. Jung's questions are: 'Why did scholars fail to predict the recent developments?' 'should we throw the work on Middle Eastern authoritarianism in the garbage of academic misinterpretations?' 'In which ways can we support the move toward democracy in the region?' and 'Is there a "new Middle East" in the making?' Looking from an understanding of the international and regional context Jung also questions whether there is a new Middle East born. He predicts that neither Arab culture and Islam nor international politics can serve as a sufficient analytical refer-