

Paper for the Fifth Pan-European International Relations Conference, Constructing World Orders, The Hague, 9-11 September 2004
Section 33: States, Regions and Regional World Orders, Panel (4) Region-Building: The Politics of Identity and Memoring

The Maghreb from a Moroccan Perspective

The Invention of a Region and its Implications for Regional Politics

Steffen Wippel

Zentrum Moderner Orient/Centre for Modern Oriental Studies (ZMO), Berlin

Biographical note

1981/82-88 Studies in Economics and complementary Islamic Studies at Albert-Ludwigs-University at Freiburg i.Br. and University of Aix-Marseille II, final diploma in Economics; 1989-94 Research assistant at the Department for Middle Eastern Economics at the Free University of Berlin; 1996 Doctorate in Economics, Research subject: "The Islamic Economic and Welfare Institutions in Egypt between Market and Morality"; 1996-97 Lecturer in Economics at universities in Brandenburg; since 1997 Co-editor of the "Diskussionspapiere" (Working Papers) of the Department for Middle Eastern Economics, Free University of Berlin; 1998-2003 Research Associate at the Centre for Modern Oriental Studies (*Zentrum Moderner Orient*, ZMO), Berlin, Research subjects: "The Perception of Europe by Arab Muslims - Case Study: Reactions of Moroccan Parties to Co-operation with the European Union and the Process of European Integration between the mid-70s and the mid-90s" (1998-2000) and "Morocco's External Relations with Sub-Saharan Africa at the End of the 20th Century: Material and Cognitive Aspects of Regional Condensation" (2000-03; project group co-ordinator); at present Research Fellow at the ZMO

Address: Dr. Steffen Wippel, Lichtenbergstr. 67, D-14612 Falkensee, Germany

Phone & Fax: +49 / 3322 / 21 92 55

E-mail: steffen.wippel@rz.hu-berlin.de; WippelFriedrich@compuserve.com

Homepage: <http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/WippelFriedrich>

Selection of recent publications:

Editor (with L. Marfaing): Les relations transsahariennes à l'époque contemporaine, Un espace en constante mutation, Paris/Berlin 2004, including (with L. Marfaing): Espace transsaharien: espace en mouvement, Quelques réflexions pour une approche conceptuelle - une introduction, and: Le renouveau des relations entre le Maroc et l'Afrique subsaharienne: La formation d'un espace économique transsaharien? • Le renouveau des relations transsahariennes, Etude comparative des cas marocain et égyptien, in: Maghreb Machrek 178, 2003/04: 89-108 • Rückbesinnung auf Afrika: Neue Tendenzen transsaharischer Beziehungen der nordafrikanischen Staaten, in: Afrika Jahrbuch 2000, Politik, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft in Afrika südlich der Sahara, Opladen 2001: 60-70 • Editor (with I. Cornelssen): Entwicklungspolitische Perspektiven im Kontext wachsender Komplexität, Festschrift für Prof. Dr. Dieter Weiss, München/Bonn/London 2001, including: "Fraktale Integration": Überlegungen zu aktuellen Formen und Abläufen wirtschaftlicher Regionalisierung • Von "Tanger" bis "Barcelona", Zwischen Abgrenzung und Außenöffnung im marokkanisch-europäischen Verhältnis, in: H. Fürtig (ed.), Islamische Welt und Globalisierung: Aneignung, Abgrenzung, Gegenentwürfe, Würzburg 2001: 213-247 • Die "feste Verbindung" mit Europa, Infrastrukturprojekte über die Straße von Gibraltar und ihre symbolische Bedeutung für die regionalen Zugehörigkeiten Marokkos, in: asien afrika lateinamerika 28(2000)6: 631-676 • Marokko und der Euro, Folgen der Europäischen Währungsunion für ein assoziiertes Mittelmeer-Drittland, Berlin 1999.

Introduction

Studies on the actual wave of economic regionalisation¹ confirm a delay in the Middle East and North Africa as compared to other world regions. This assessment concerns first of all the institutional level, which is considered to be over-determined by politics and does not allow existing economic potential to be realised. The formation of a Euro-Mediterranean free trade area however, has revived the debate on the necessity of a mutual South-South integration. Among others, one special focus is on economic integration in the Maghreb. Here, those responsible can refer to a long existing discourse on Maghribi unity and repeated attempts at its realisation.

While recalling the past we should not, however, forget that the Maghreb is not a fixed regional entity with clearly defined forms and contents, even if in the public sphere, in politics and even in academic research one often starts from such mentally pre-established "meta-geographies" (Lewis/Wigen 1997). However, regions, in which integration takes place, are not "naturally" given. Rather, such regional economic spaces are to be considered as socially constructed and constituted entities. Such "social constructivist" considerations on regions and regionalisation have also been introduced in geographic and political approaches since the 1990s, but still much less in economics (e.g. Lackner/Werner 1999). Related approaches in political science can be found especially in International Relations (IR) and regional integration theory dealing, for example, with characteristics of actual regionalisation processes.² They don't negate influences of rational interests and calculations on political activity (as well as the conscious construction of institutions), as they underlie "rationalist" approaches. But they also consider repercussions of socially constituted entities of the human environment on the preferences and the behaviour of the respective agents, and emphasise the importance of perceptions, ideas and interpretations as mediators between institutions, in a broad sense, and political and economic action.

In my presentation I will refer to the variants of meaning that the notion of "region" shows, as given by the geographer Peter Weichhart (1999).³ So, observers may undoubtedly try to define regions as homogeneous as possible on the base of (e.g. natural) criteria of similarity. In social contexts other significations seem to be more relevant: so regions can be normative and administrative entities that are politically defined and institutionalised, e.g. through regional organisations or other contractual agreements. Further, functional spaces of interweaving may emerge out of a multitude of individual (economic) activities and social interactions and their regional concentration and intensification. We also have to consider perceptive and identity regions based on cognitive processes. They are mental constructs of those who, being politically responsible, contribute actively to the formation of regions "from above" or, as acting economic subjects, to their emergence "from below". First, these agents have to imagine the spaces in which they act, and they have to recognise common features and to assess consequences of integration. These several dimensions of regions co-exist and can even be com-

¹ I prefer the general term of "regionalisation" to the notion of "regionalism" to emphasise the process character of region building, even if normative and ideological as well as political and institutional issues are concerned.

² For an overview on general political approaches to regionalisation, see Pollack 2001. Cf. as well for social constructivist approaches, Laffey/Weldes 1997; Adler 1997a, b; Breslin/Higgott 2000; Marchand/Bøås/Shaw 1999; Higgott 1997a, b; Hettne 1993; Hettne/Söderbaum 2000.

³ Hettne 1993 proposed another differentiation of dimensions initially distinguishing five generalised levels of "regionness" (with an evolutionary logic): regions as "geographical and ecological units", "social systems", "organised co-operation" areas, "regional societies" and, finally, as "acting political subjects". This scheme is elaborated further in Hettne/Söderbaum 2000, identifying "regional spaces", "regional complexes", "regional societies", "regional communities" and "region-states". In this paper, however, I will follow a categorisation which is closer to Weichhart.

plementary, but they also may come into conflict. With that, they are normally not independent, but regularly interact, stimulating or blocking each other.

One special feature of actual world-wide processes of regionalisation is their openness and overlapping as regards spaces, institutions and contents.⁴ In general, regions are characterised by continuously changing internal and external borders. "Fuzzy borders", "interstices" and "border areas" instead of rigid "border lines" were just rediscovered in European integration processes (Christiansen/Petito/Tonra 2000; Kux/Sverdrup 2000; Krämer 1999 and others). So, we have to start by assuming that the Maghreb also is not a given, clearly defined spatial unit, but constitutes a continuously changing result of social processes.

In the following presentation, I will give you an overview on variations in form, content and the spatial dimensions of the Maghreb on the three levels: the political and institutional one, with regard to real economic flows and their regional interweaving and third, to the cognitive dimension. Most of my results reflect research on Moroccan perspectives of the Maghribi integration process; however comparative positions in other countries are included as found in existing literature.⁵ Morocco is particularly emphasising its multiple regional orientations and its intermediate situation between several greater regions. This is of special interest as I consider the Maghreb an open space overlapping onto other regions. In addition, Morocco has a relatively pluralistic tradition in the region: that allows me to include perceptions into the big political parties which dominated the political landscape over several decades: intellectually and for a short time, especially since 1998, executively.

The study pursues a historical perspective, which permits one to comprehend the gradual formation of the region and its evolution from the beginning until today. Special attention has been given to more recent developments since the 1990s. Essential are the cross and reciprocal influences of the three previously mentioned aspects of regionalisation. However, the spatial dimension of the region is of special interest: Which territories and countries are considered to belong to the Maghreb, to what extent does the region represent a coherent, homogeneous space, where do its external boundaries run and how is it defined as regards other regional spaces? There we also have to look at alternative co-operation areas who present themselves to the Maghreb countries. In the following, I will introduce my results to you with seven theses.

The evolution of the Maghreb idea

My first thesis concerns the evolution of the Maghreb idea: Here, I want to emphasise that the vision of the Maghreb is not static, but has evolved continuously over the last 80 years.

Originally, historians and geographers considered the Maghreb as a vaguely defined geographical and cultural entity located between the Sahara, the Mediterranean and the Atlantic. However, the idea of a political and economic unit, that is also to integrate institutionally, is a

⁴ For concepts of "differentiated integration" (in a broad sense) developed in the context of European integration, see e.g. Wessels 1994; Giering 1997; Deubner 2003; for the concept of "open regionalism" following experiences in the Asian-Pacific area, cf. Soesastro 1998.

⁵ Sources are, among others, national Moroccan (semi-official, party and economic) newspapers, party programs and publications of politically engaged authors; with regard to political parties I concentrated on prominent representatives of the three major parties, the *Istiqlâl* (= Independence) Party, the *Socialist Union of Popular Forces* and the *Party for Progress and Socialism* (= former Communists). In contrast to the title and the abstract submitted, I decided to focus more on the Maghreb as a whole in this paper and less on Moroccan perspectives solely or on perceptions of individual or collective political agents there. Some of the more important publications and studies on the regionalisation process in the Maghreb comprise, among others, Zartman 1999; Oualalou 1996; Touiti 1996; Kistenfeger 1994; Aghrout/Sutton 1990; Balta 1990. A more detailed (German) version of the paper will be published in October 2004 (Wippel 2004b).

relatively recent "invention" (according to Hobsbawm/Ranger 1992) of the 20th century, originating outside the region itself. A slowly evolving idea after World War I, its originators were political leaders, students and migrant workers coming from North Africa under French colonial rule, who lived principally in France or were in Egyptian exile. Struggling for the independence of their home countries, they contacted each other and discovered numerous similarities in their respective origins, conditions and objectives.

After the independence of the Maghrebian states, the idea of regional unity was repeatedly called upon and even included prominently in their national constitutions. Common characteristics were seen in the shared history, especially in similar colonial experiences, in the special geographical situation at the periphery of the Arab world, in cultural, linguistic, religious and ethnic affinities, and in existing economic and political problems. Since the 1960s, the Maghreb idea seems to be largely embedded in the political thinking of the region. However, the conception of the Maghreb has changed considerably over time. In the 1960s high ambitions dominated to form a union, allowing deeper integration and creating extended markets; at the same it was conceived primarily as a political project that, according to some (especially leftist and "progressive") authors, even extended to a comprehensive fusion of the Maghreb states. These ideas, around the 1980s, increasingly gave way to more pragmatic approaches - as they were already favoured rather early by the Moroccan government -, which aimed first and foremost at an economic community and at limited co-operation in trade, economic and other issues, keeping high degrees of national sovereignty. Also, for many politicians the Maghreb still can serve as a frame for solving political problems in the region; that is especially true for Moroccan representatives with regard to integrating "their" Sahara in a wider regional space.

Looking at the evolution of the Maghreb idea, we can come to the conclusion, on the one hand, that it proved to be very resistant to frustration over the many decades and that it was continuously reproduced in one form or another. On the other hand, growing scepticism seems to have spread in the last years in politics and in the population with regard to the slim chances of realisation, due to the discouraging institutional reality. Therefore, without any real commitment to its realisation on the part of responsible political agents, there is a risk that the vision will lose more and more credibility in the long term.

The institutionalisation of the Maghreb

From the preceding remarks we learn that, intimately linked with the idea of a common, unified Maghreb are the political attempts to realise and to institutionalise the Maghreb concept. However, these attempts remained limited in number and did not show much success; hence, institutionalisation of the Maghreb remained generally weak. Reasons for that are mainly political.

Even historically, an extensive political unity of the Maghreb under autochthonous rule only really existed for the time of the Almohades in the 11th and 12th centuries. Contemporary attempts by North African states to realise the goal of Maghrebian unity regularly failed. The North African states had just gained independence when reciprocal mistrust and striving for regional hegemony characterised political reality. In Morocco, the idea of a "Greater Morocco"⁶, initially conceived by the *Istiqlâl Party* leader, Allal El Fassi, had gained ground in the late 1950s.

So, the first attempt to institutionalise the Maghreb region, the *Comité Permanent Consultatif du Maghreb* (CPCM) only took place in 1964. Four North African states became members;

⁶ Including the Spanish Sahara, Mauritania, Western Algeria and parts of Mali.

when Libya left in the 1970s, it was replaced by Mauritania, which was recognised by Morocco meanwhile. But already, soon after the establishment of the CPCM, the lack of commitment of the member states had paralysed any further institutional development and, ten years after its foundation, the organisation officially dissolved. In the following years, Moroccan (and temporary Mauritanian) occupation of the Western Sahara blocked any progress toward regional integration. In the first half of the 1980s, competing agreements, the tripartite *Fraternity and Co-operation Treaty* among Algeria, Tunisia and Mauritania (1983) and the ephemeral *Arab-African Union* of Morocco and Libya (1984) confirmed the existence of two rival blocs in the Maghreb, even on the institutional level.

Another period of general détente since the mid 1980s allowed the foundation of the *Union du Maghreb Arabe* (UMA) in 1989. A comprehensive step-by-step plan for economic integration, from a free trade area to an economic union, was adopted. But soon again serious difficulties emerged. Reasons were again of a political nature - among others, a rapid deterioration in Moroccan-Algerian relations - in addition to institutional insufficiencies. New hope for resuming the integration process only arose towards the end of the 1990s. But as these hopes showed no real results, relations were mostly deepened on a bilateral level. Especially Tunisia and Morocco see themselves as "vanguard" in constructing the Maghreb "from below", through a network of bilateral agreements which will in fact constitute a Maghreb of "multiple velocities". At least since 1999, UMA committees and ministers have met again, even if the long-awaited summit of state leaders had to be cancelled several times.

So, politically, the Maghreb still remains a space more of repeated conflicts than of lasting co-operation. A central characteristic is the Moroccan-Algerian rivalry for power, influence and territory. If the Maghreb option should constitute a possible frame for resolving political and economic problems of the region, it is not only necessary to calm down such political disputes, but also institutional agreements are needed which are adapted to reality. In view of rapidly changing conditions and economic flows, it seems useful to pay attention to flexibility, openness and permeability of such a framework, as it is done in numerous recent regional agreements in other parts of the world.

The economic interconnectedness of the Maghreb

My third point is the analysis of economic flows in the region to see if the Maghreb is established as an interconnected economic space. My thesis is that, if we use more adequate measures, existing trade flows reveal themselves to be more important than we may imagine at first glance; but they are still characterised by significant fluctuations over time and depending on implicated countries. Other economic interconnections, however, like investment and enterprise co-operation, tourism or labour migration remain low, with the exception of timely limited growth.

Already in colonial times, the economic interweaving of the several French territories was relatively limited. After independence, existing potential for trade was still not fully utilised. The share of the intra-Maghreb flow of goods among the whole foreign trade of the Maghreb countries remained below a few points and tended even to decrease heavily until the beginning of the 1980s (to less than 1%). Only afterwards can we observe an important increase of trade in volume and in percentage; the trade share finally stabilised on a slightly higher, but still insignificant level (around 3%; average of all Maghreb countries between 1996-2002).

However, the importance of intra-Maghreb trade is much higher when we consider "relative trade intensities" instead of percentages.⁷ These figures exclude the economic importance and openness for trade of respective partner countries. They showed relatively high values in colonial times (2 to 5); from then on however, they decreased continuously until the 1970s, when figures below "one" did not show any further regionalisation of trade (except for Tunisia). Only in the following decades, a new increase can be observed which was even initially considerably strong. These figures now show a clear regional intensity of trade among an increasing number of national economies in the Maghreb (1996-2002, over all countries: about 5). Today Tunisia and Libya are those economies which are the most intensively linked to the Maghreb region as a whole. Morocco, for example, has been intensively linked to Mauritania and Tunisia (as well as to the Senegal⁸) since the mid 1970s, but to a lower, and more volatile, extent with Libya and Algeria. However all these calculations of regional intensification would be even higher if the important informal trade flows across intra-regional borders were considered.

In contrast to trade, border crossing co-operation of firms shows only little progress. Yet a lot of declarations of intent and even some attempts at project installation were made in the initial phases of the Permanent Comity and the Maghreb Union. However, for their realisation reliability of surrounding political and economic conditions plays a much more important role than for trade. Also the Maghreb countries are rather weakly linked by labour migration; only Libya shows a significant demand for a foreign workforce (from Tunisia, at times also from Morocco). In some periods even considerable tourist flows (hand in hand with an increase in informal trade) had been observed. But the importance of both flows is likewise depending to a large extent on the situation of bilateral political relations.

Internal coherence and homogeneity of the Maghreb region

In the following, I will analyse the three preceding dimensions of the Maghreb - the cognitive, the institutional and the economic - if they form a coherent and homogenous, self-contained region. My thesis is that the Maghreb does not constitute any homogenous regional bloc. Rather it is characterised by inner differentiation, not only with regard to diverging political and economic systems and levels of socio-economic development, but also in view of the perceptions and conceptions of the Maghreb as well as the emergence of partial institutional blocs and economically interconnected sub-groupings.

If we reconsider the Maghreb idea, we have to state that for a long time considerable differences of opinion existed among states and their leaders on the political and economic character of a united Maghreb, on its institutional form, on the depth, speed and contents of integration as well as on the geographical extension and further spatial references of the region. Especially Morocco and Tunisia always pleaded for more pragmatic, essentially economic and Europe-oriented approaches in contrast to suggestions of more radical political and pan-Arabist solutions by Algeria or Libya. This factionalism was also true inside some countries among different political parties and trends - as it could be openly pronounced in politically more pluralistic Morocco. Here especially leftist parties conceived a common political space, economically dissociated from Europe and oriented towards developing respectively Eastern bloc countries in opposition to royal and governmental convictions. However, over time posi-

⁷ Trade intensities are defined as the share of bilateral trade in international trade related to the product of the respective international trade shares of the trading partners. They exclude some distorting size effects of economic weight as well as of the number of countries included in a region. Values above "one" point to relative regionalisation in trade. Cf., for example, Frankel/Stein/Wei 1997: 19-33; Freudenberg/Gaulier/Ünal-Kesenci 1998.

⁸ For that as well as for mentioning Egypt below, see my sixth thesis.

tions were brought more into line internationally as well as intra-nationally. Also typical were nationally divergent historical references (e.g. with regard to the rulers who considerably influenced the destiny of the Maghreb in history, as it were the Almohades in the Moroccan perspective) and political priorities.

In an institutional respect, too, we regularly had to do with differentiation inside the Maghreb which also found expression in space, as shown by the formation of two sub-regional blocks in the 1980s. And with regard to its inner economic interconnections and their regional intensification it is also difficult to consider the Maghreb as a homogenous, clearly defined unit: when we look at regional trade flows, we will rather discover *sub*-regional concentrations; in addition, the several groups of countries which do "regionalised" trade with each other, overlap.

References of the Maghreb to other regions

The delimitation of a region implies the definition of its relations with other regional entities. Therefore, a further aspect of my presentation concerns the references of the Maghreb to other surrounding or overlapping regions. These may be incentives and models for Maghreb integration as well as complements or competitors for Maghreb unity.

Especially the relationship with the "North", first with France, then with Europe, had considerable effects on the shape and development of relations within the "South" itself. The numerous meetings and agreements among Maghreb countries since the end of the 1950s essentially constituted reactions to new steps in the European unification process and were intended to reinforce one's own economic position and political bargaining power. However, failing results to Maghreb integration regularly lead to (the call for) bilateral (instead of multilateral) negotiations with the European side. Also, in the mid 1990s the Euro-Mediterranean process dominated regional and external economic policies of the core Maghreb countries in comparison to internal integration. Countries such as Morocco and Tunisia have tried for a long time to establish a special relationship with the EC/EU. Currently, this is becoming quite compatible with very actual considerations on the part of the EU to develop more intense relations within an "enlarged Europe" through a new "neighbourhood policy" (Wippel 2004a). Vice versa, the fear of the consequences of a "hub-and-spokes"-effect, i.e. the unilateral institutional linking to a yet integrated North impeding regional trade and foreign investment in the Maghreb further, may be an incentive for deepening complementary South-South integration.

Already at the end of the 1990s, when it became obvious that the Euro-Mediterranean partnership will not meet expectations and that Maghreb integration is still blocked, other regional orientations were revived. Therefore, the Maghreb came under increasing pressure from further institutional offers in the Arab world (as the *Great Arab Free Trade Area*/GAFTA [Englert 2000]), in Africa (e.g. the *Community of Saharan and Sahelian States*/SinSad [Mattes 2001]) and in the Southern Mediterranean (in the context of the Agadir agreement, which includes the option of being extended to a larger *Mediterranean Arab Free Trade Area*/MAFTA [Hamoudeh 2002]). In addition to that, an additional Atlantic component is actually beginning to emerge on the Western edge of the Maghreb.⁹ Among these multiple and

⁹ The founding members of the SinSad include those sub-Saharan states Libya had demanded for inclusion into the UMA in 1989; actual North African members (out of a total of 18) are Libya, Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt. Egypt also became a member of the *Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa* (COMESA) in 1998 and is now part of its core free trade area. Morocco concluded a preferential trade agreement with the *West African Economic and Monetary Union* (UEMOA), which Tunisia also wants to do. Mauritania however decided to retire to its Northern dimension and left the *Economic Community of West African States* (ECOWAS) in 2000. All North African countries, except Algeria, signed the GAFTA implementation program for a trade area in 1997. Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt and Jordan, which were already linked by bilateral

overlapping regional dimensions, admittedly the Euro-Mediterranean one generally remains the most important, especially for Morocco and Tunisia.

On the economic level, too, Europe, according to its trade share, still dominates external flows of the Maghreb countries until today, perpetuating economic dependence. Already in the colonial period the three central Maghreb countries were linked economically, like spokes, to France. If we consider, however, trade intensities, the importance of Europe becomes relative, and figures show strong links with further non-European neighbouring regions (see e.g. Morocco's or Egypt's trans-Saharan trade); the same is true for Maghrebian investment and firm co-operation abroad.

Very essential is the shift in meaning of the Maghreb in relation to Europe on the cognitive level. In the beginning, the Maghreb project served to achieve political independence from France. Later the main objective was economic dissociation from Europe. Today, with the growing inclination to open up toward Europe, at least in Moroccan politics, the Maghreb is principally conceived as a vehicle for common, mainly economic integration with the Northern partners, and it is seen as part of a general Mediterranean space. But incentives for integration in the past also came from simultaneous unification projects in other parts of the Arab world. However, the Maghreb project is perceived less and less as a first step to comprehensive political and economic unity of the Arab world, as it had been for a long time, even if "arabity" was still included in its actual institutional denomination. Other important, even though futile, recent stimuli came not only from EU support for regional integration, but also from the US government: at the end of the 1990s, it pressed for building a common market among the three core states (the so called "Eizenstat initiative"), which would be more attractive to American investors than the separate, narrow national outlets.

Accordingly to institutional developments, other regional debates pushed to the forefront recently, even if the continuing necessity for a united Maghreb is repeatedly emphasised. So, on the ideal level as well, the Maghreb opened in several directions and constitutes a space with simultaneous (trans-)Mediterranean, (trans-)Arab and (trans-)Saharan characteristics. Previously, some states had regularly underlined their multiple regional belonging. A special, additional issue is the position of the Berber or "Amazigh" movement which has gained strength in the last years: it repeatedly pronounces itself against an "Arab" Maghreb and emphasises the Berber identity of the region (Lehtinen 2003)¹⁰. In addition, the "Arab Mediterranean countries" were recently defined as a new region in the MAFTA context. As well, from a Moroccan perspective, a North-West African region (stretching from the Strait of Gibraltar to Senegal) has emerged in the last years, overlapping with the Maghreb.

The outer borders of the Maghreb

This issue of overlapping alternative or complementary regions leads us to the problem of the spatial extension of the Maghreb itself and its own external borders. One main result will be that inner differentiation and the multiple external regional references go hand in hand with a

agreements, signed the Agadir declaration in 2001 and the founding documents of the MAFTA in 2004. In addition, we can observe further bilateral - and especially trans-Atlantic - preferential and free trade agreements. Morocco, Mauritania and Senegal installed a "Consultation Council of the African States of the Northern Atlantic" in July 2004 and are beginning to co-operate further with the nearby Macaronesian islands.

¹⁰ In contrast to the Arab dimension, the Berber movement prefers to underline the African and Mediterranean components of the region which they designate as "Tamazgha", stretching from the Canary Islands to Western Egypt and the Sahel. See e.g. contributions in newspapers like *Alien* in April 1997 (www.dialogo.org/alien/1997/04/tifi2.htm) or *Le Monde Amazigh* 29, 30.11.2002 (www.kabyle.com/imprimer.php?id_article=3588; both accessed 3.5.2004).

fuzzy and changing outer delimitation of the Maghreb. All in all it does not constitute a closed, clearly defined region, but has to be understood more as an open space with multiple regional orientations.

Even well into the past, there was no unanimity on the exact delimitation of the *bilād al-maġrib* which was situated approximately between the Mediterranean, the Atlantic Ocean and the Sahara. In the West normally the Souss (i.e. the Agadir hinterland) was included, others regarded the Higher Atlas mountains as its Southern border, for some it even extended to Mauritanian oases like Ouadane. However, land and sea borders of the region were never insurmountable for people, goods and ideas. On the contrary, important trade, pilgrimage, and intellectual exchange crossed to other regions. Fluctuating territories and only vaguely-defined border *zones* instead of rigid border *lines* between political territories were also characteristic for the Maghreb. So, contemporary borders between modern states are historically seldom fixed and therefore are repeatedly creating territorial struggle.

In the Maghreb debate since the late 1910s, generally a continuous geographical enlargement of the Maghreb has taken place. The starting point was a Maghreb of the three countries in French North Africa, even if a thinker and political leader like El Fassi, as early as in the 1950s, claimed a larger definition, including all of Northern Africa up to the Red Sea. Since the 1970s, the Maghreb has mostly been conceived as a community of five, including Libya and Mauritania, whereas Algeria's demand to include the Sahrawi Republic as an independent state remained without success. However, the Saharan areas excluded in the historical definition and which France intended to detach in the 1950s as a separate entity, are meanwhile integral parts of the Maghreb, even if the status of the Western Sahara still remains unsettled. Options for enlargement, included in the UMA charter due to Libya's demand, allow speculation on a Maghreb today of seven or more members: in this respect, Egypt as well as Senegal have expressed their desire for integration several times since the 1990s. Economically, both countries are intensely linked to (parts of) the Maghreb. At the same time, not only Libya and Mauritania as it is often said, but in principle all Maghreb countries are exposed to centripetal as well as centrifugal orientations and do not localise themselves, either mentally, politically or economically, exclusively within the Maghreb. Regarding, for example, regional trade flows, groups of countries with "regionalised" trade among them often cross the institutional borders of the Maghreb Union (e.g. Tunisia-Morocco-Mauritania-Senegal or Tunisia-Libya-Egypt, etc., according to high intensity values at the end of the 1990s).

Management problems of an open, multi-oriented Maghreb

The insight into the gradual social constitution, the evolution, as well as the diverse aspects and the openness of a Maghrebian region questions traditional ideas of given, uniform and closed spaces: this is not only true for academic research, but is also revealed to be of high political relevance. So, it is not at all necessary to decide if the Maghreb is or should be exclusively "Mediterranean", "Arab" or even "African". Especially Europe and Asia offer models for flexible and "differentiated" integration schemes. The new co-operation spaces and forums which are competing with the UMA may, in principle, contribute to get the urgently needed South-South co-operation off the ground.

Finally, the question arises as to how the multiple options, especially perhaps conflicting trade agreements (e.g. with regard to customs unions or rules of origin) in overlapping economic areas are to be managed intelligently. This crucial problem cannot be solved here. However, it is intimately linked with the political will and commitment of those responsible.

Only with colonial rule did the idea of the modern territorial state spread in the Maghreb. Actually, subconsciously the option to return to the initial state continued to exist and in stereo-

typed phrases it was regularly appealed to. In fact, however, the modern nation states were always concerned about their sovereignty. As Ulla Holm and Pertti Joenniemi (2001) reminded us, still today the political regimes in the Southern Mediterranean have much bigger problems to deal with post-modern principles with regard to borders and territoriality than European governments do. So the actual situation is quite contradictory: On the one hand, multiple regional localisation seems to be increasingly perceived and even accepted by high political representatives, and accordingly several regional integration schemes are tackled politically. On the other hand, in political practice there is only limited willingness to open national borders and to admit greater porosity or to overcome political blockades inside what is perceived as the Maghreb itself.

Bibliography

- Adler, E.: Imagined (Security) Communities: Cognitive Regions in International Relations, in: *Journal of International Studies* 26(1997a)2: 249-277.
- Adler, E.: Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics, in: *European Journal of International Relations* 3(1997b)3: 319-363.
- Aghrout, A./K. Sutton: Regional Economic Union in the Maghreb, in: *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 28(1990)1: 115-139.
- Balta, P.: *Le grand Maghreb, Des indépendances à l'an 2000*, Paris 1990.
- Breslin, S./R. Higgott: Studying Regions: Learning from the Old, Constructing the New, in: *New Political Economy* 5(2000)3: 333-352.
- Christiansen, T./F. Petitto/B. Tonra: Fuzzy Politics Around Fuzzy Borders: The European Union's 'Near Abroad', in: *Cooperation and Conflict* 35(2000)4: 389-415.
- Deubner, C.: Differenzierte Integration: Übergangerscheinung oder Strukturmerkmal der künftigen Europäischen Union?, in: *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* B01-02/2003: 24-32.
- Englert, A.: *Die Große Arabische Freihandelszone, Motive und Erfolgsaussichten der neuen Initiative für eine intra-arabische Integration aus arabischer Sicht*, Berlin 2000.
- Frankel, J.A./E. Stein/S. Wei: *Regional Trading Blocs in the World Economic System*, Washington, DC 1997.
- Freudenberg, M. /G. Gaulier/D. Ünal-Kesenci: *La régionalisation du commerce international: Une évaluation par les intensités relatives bilatérales*, Document de travail 1998-05, Centre d'Etudes Prospectives et d'Informations Internationales, Paris 1998.
- Giering, C.: *Europa zwischen Zweckverband und Superstaat, Die Entwicklung der politikwissenschaftlichen Integrationstheorie im Prozeß der europäischen Integration*, Bonn 1997.
- Hamoudeh, M.: *The Aghadir Process*, Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies, University of Malta 2002 (www.euromed-seminars.org.mt/seminar12/papers/Aghadir21.pdf; 15.12.2003).
- Hettne, B.: Neo-Mercantilism: The Pursuit of Regionness, in: *Cooperation and Conflict* 28(1993)3: 211-232.
- Hettne, B./F. Söderbaum: Theorising the Rise of Regionness, in: *New Political Economy* 5(2000)3: 457-473.
- Higgott, R.: Mondialisation et gouvernance: l'émergence du niveau régional, in: *politique étrangère* 62(1997a)2: 277-292.
- Higgott, R.: De facto and De Jure Regionalism: The Double Discourse of Regionalism in the Asia Pacific, in: *Global Society* 11(1997b)2: 165-183.
- Hobsbawm, E./T. Ranger (ed.): *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge 1992.
- Holm, U./P. Joenniemi: *North, South and the Figure of Europe: Changing Relationships*, Copenhagen Peace Research Institute [Working Paper 11, 2001, Copenhagen 2001] (www.copri.dk/publications/WP/WP%202001/11-2001.doc; 22.3.2004).

- Kistenfeger, H.: Maghreb-Union und Golfat, Regionale Kooperation in der arabischen Welt, Bonn 1994.
- Krämer, R.: Zwischen Kooperation und Abgrenzung - Die Ostgrenze der Europäischen Union, in: *WeltTrends* 22, 7(1999): 9-26.
- Kux, S./U. Sverdrup: Fuzzy Borders and Adaptive Outsiders: Norway, Switzerland and the EU, in: *European Integration* 22(2000)3: 237-270.
- Lackner, M./M. Werner: Der cultural turn in den Humanwissenschaften, Area Studies im Auf- oder Abwind des Kulturalismus?, Werner Reimers Stiftung, Schriftenreihe Suchprozesse für innovative Fragestellungen in der Wissenschaft, Heft 2, Bad Homburg 1999.
- Laffey, M./J. Weldes: Beyond Beliefs: Ideas and Symbolic Technologies in the Study of International Relations, in: *European Journal of International Relations* 3(1997)2: 193-237.
- Lehtinen, T.: Competing Geopolitical Representations and Regional Identities in North Africa - Reflecting on the Berber/Tuareg problem?, Paper for the International Studies Association's Annual Convention, Portland, USA, 26th February to 1st March 2003 (Draft version).
- Lewis, M.W./K.E. Wigen: *The Myth of Continents, A Critique of Metageography*, Berkeley/Los Angeles/London 1997
- Marchand, M.H./M. Bøås, M./T.M. Shaw: The political economy of new regionalisms, in: *Third World Quarterly* 20(1999)5: 897-910.
- Mattes, H.: *Die Sahel- und Sahara-Staatengemeinschaft (SinSad): Instrument der wirtschaftlichen Entwicklung, Konfliktvermittlung und regionalen Interessensicherung*, Hamburg 2001.
- Oualalou, F.: *Après Barcelone, le Maghreb est nécessaire*, Casablanca/Paris 1996.
- Pollack, M.A.: International Relations Theory and European Integration, in: *Journal of Common Market Studies* 39(2001)2: 221-244.
- Soesastro, H.: "Offener Regionalismus" im asiatisch-pazifischen Raum, in: H.W. Maull (ed.), *Regionalismus in Asien Pazifik*, Bonn 1998: 7-58.
- Touti, M.H.: *L'Union du Maghreb Arabe 1989-1995*, Casablanca 1996.
- Weichhart, P.: *Raumbezogene Identitäten 4*, Lecture notes, Intensive course at the Department of Human Geography, University of Nijmegen, 16.-17.9.1999 (www.kun.nl/socgeo/n/colloquium/PlaceId04new.pdf; 17.7.2002).
- Wessels, W.: Integrationspolitische Konzepte im Realitätstest, in: *Wirtschaftsdienst* 74(1994)10: 499-503.
- Wippel, S.: Zwischen Partnerschaft und Integration: Marokkanische Sichtweisen und künftige Gestaltungsmöglichkeiten des euro-mediterranen Verhältnisses, in: Michael von Hauff/Ute Vogt (Hrsg.), *Islamische und westliche Welt - Zur Neuorientierung der Kooperation in Politik, Wirtschaft und Entwicklungszusammenarbeit, 2004a (forthcoming)*.
- Wippel, S.: Regionale Integration im Maghreb: Wirtschaftliche, kognitive und räumliche Aspekte, in: S. Wippel (ed.), *Wirtschaft im Vorderen Orient (working title)*, Berlin 2004b (*forthcoming*).
- Zartman, W.I.: The Ups and Downs of Maghrib Unity, in: M.C. Hudson (ed.), *Middle East Dilemma, The Politics and Economics of Arab Integration*, London/New York 1999: 171-186.

5576 words

Date of presentation: 10 September 2004