



EUROPE AND ITS 'OTHER': FREE TRADE AND THE GEOGRAPHICAL IMAGINERIES OF EURO-MEDITERRANEAN POLITICS

Filippo Celata¹

Raffaella Coletti²

ABSTRACT

The creation of a Free Trade Area is the main pillar on which regionalization in the Mediterranean has been pursued since the establishment of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership in 1995. The aim of this paper is to reflect upon the relation between commercial integration and region-building in the Mediterranean from an interpretative perspective, in order to offer a critical evaluation of the aims, the impact and the evolution of Euro-Mediterranean policies. To this end, we will show some evidence about the intensity and spatiality of cross-Mediterranean trade relations. We will see how the idea of constructing a Mediterranean region does indeed coexist and conflict with other geographical imaginaries: the idea of the Mediterranean as a border and the attempts to establish a regime of managed and differential relations in the area. Moreover, we will present the different delimitations which have been proposed for the Euro-Mediterranean area, in order to give an idea of the struggle between alternative geopolitical representations which is behind regionalization strategies in the Mediterranean. We will discuss the attempts to use conditionality to promote reforms in the partner countries, and the Eurocentric character of such attempts. Finally, we will reflect upon the concept of 'selective' Europeanization: the spatial metaphor that, in our opinion, best captures the content and the outcome of the recurrent attempts to construct a Mediterranean region.

Classification JEL: F5, O24, F13, N74

Keywords: Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, European Neighbourhood Policy, commercial integration, regionalization, Europeanization.

**Working Paper n° 103
Novembre 2012**

¹ Department Memotef – University of Rome “La Sapienza” – Via del Castro Laurenziano, 9, 00161 Roma (e-mail: filippo.celata@uniroma1.it).

² Department Memotef – University of Rome “La Sapienza” – Via del Castro Laurenziano, 9, 00161 Roma (e-mail: raffaella.coletti@uniroma1.it).