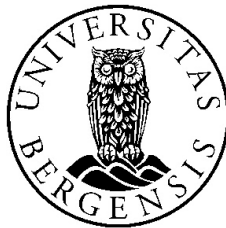# The EU as a democracy promoter in the Maghreb - A crystallization of the European dilemma?

Maia Gartland Hoff

Abstract

In 2021, High Representative of the EU, Josep Borrell, stated that; "25 years after the Barcelona Declaration and 10 years after the Arab Spring, challenges in the Mediterranean – many of which resulting from global trends – remain daunting (EC 2021c)". Has the EU failed in its most plausible attempt to create democracy in its neighborhoods?

To attempt an answer to this question, this study investigates how the nature of the EU as an actor in world affairs affects its ability to promote democracy in its neighborhoods. Normative Power Europe (NPE) has been one of the most cited theories when explaining the EU's role in world affairs, and this thesis investigates to what extent NPE can explain the EU's role as a foreign policy actor in the Maghreb. The thesis applies a comparative historical approach of the (1) Moroccan, (2) Algerian and (3) Tunisian case. The analysis is based on document analysis of primary and secondary sources as well as conducted interviews with local and European functionaries in the region.

This thesis concludes that the large gaps in rhetoric and practice reinforce the perceived nature of the EU by not fulfilling its promises in protecting human rights and promoting democracy, hindering its ability to be a normative power. However, the analysis shows that the EU has the possibility to take a *sui generis* role, because the EU does not have the same colonial baggage as many of its member countries. Nonetheless, for this to function the EU would need to solve problems of coherency and mend the gap between rhetoric and practice. This understanding of the EU as a foreign actor in its neighborhoods can help adapt the policies towards the region in such a way that they can be better implemented.

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List of Acronyms

AA	Association Agreement
AMC	Arab Mediterranean Countries
APs	Action Plans
AU	African Union
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CHA	Comparative Historical Analysis
CPE	Civilian Power Europe
DCFTA	Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area
ECJ	European Court of Justice
EDC	European Defense Community
EEAS	European External Action Service
EEC	The European Economic Community
EFP	European Foreign Policy
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
ENP	European Neighborhood Policy
ENPARD	European Neighborhood Program for Agriculture and Rural Development
ENPI	European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument (replaces MEDA)
EP	European Parliament
ESS	European Security Strategy
EU	European Union
EUROMED	Euro-Mediterranean Partnership Area
FRONTEX	European Border and Coast Guard Agency
HR	High Representative
MEDA	Mediterranean Development Assistance
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MEPs	Members of the European Parliament
MPE	Military Power Europe
NPE	Normative Power Europe
NTBs	Non-trade barriers
RRF	Rapid Reaction Force
SADR	Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic
TEU	Treaty of the European Union (Maastricht Treaty)
UFM	Union for the Mediterranean

I. Introduction

> "Europeans must deal with the world as it is, *not* as they wish it to be. And that means relearning the language of power and combining the European Union's resources in a way that maximizes their geopolitical impact (Borrell 2020)".

These words coming from Josep Borrell, the High Representative (HR) for the European Union, represent a new symbolization of the EU as a global power. Borrell seems to believe that Europeans must *relearn* the 'language of power', which indicates that this language is something that the EU has been lacking before. The European Union was created as a peace building project, which over time came to identify itself with values such as human rights, democracy and the rule of law. This understanding of the EU as a democracy promoter and protector of human rights is its own proper definition of itself. However, is this conceptualization of its own image compatible with this new language of power that Europe must learn?

The idea of Europe as an actor in world affairs is not new, but it is however a role, which is still in evolution, attempting to find its way in a very complex world order. The role of the EU as a foreign policy actor has caused much confusion for politicians and diplomats all around the world. American Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, famously asked in 1983 who he should call when he wanted to discuss international politics with 'Europe'; an affair that became known as the Kissinger problem. While some find that this problem is solved, others believe it to be equally problematic today. The EU's foreign policy is therefore, as has been stated by Tonra and Christiansen, an 'ongoing puzzle' (2004, 1). With the intent of solving this puzzle, the rise of political theories have been marked by extremes, with the EU being a superpower on the one side and as a power in decline on the other. In the middle, with a specific view of its nature, there is the Normative Power Europe (NPE) theory, which has been one of the most influential ones, basing itself on the EU as a unique power able to shape conceptions of what is normal on the international stage.

Regardless of these extremities, it is clear that during its history as a foreign policy actor, there has been an increased focus on wanting to bring democracy to its neighbors - and an important test came in 2011 with the Arab Awakening. As ten years have passed since the

unfolding of events in the south, democratic development in the North African states has achieved different results. This thesis seeks to evaluate the role of the EU before, during and after these events in the Maghreb, and to what extent the 'language of power', or lack thereof, can be said to have acted with the EU's own 'normative base values'.

The EU and the Maghreb are linked by geography and a complex history. The Maghreb countries have strong connections to the EU, but with different terms and conditions. Key EU member states, such as France, Spain and Italy maintained enormous influence over the North African countries in the post-colonial period, but the EU as an institution has had difficulties devising one clear policy for the area. Before the Arab Uprisings, the EU maintained a strategy of securing stability by supporting incumbent authoritarian leaders, such as Ben Ali in Tunisia, Mubarak in Egypt and Qaddafi in Libya. The Arab Awakening forced the EU to reassess their position. These changes have led to revised EU policy initiatives and strategies that have focused on promoting democracy to a larger extent. The reasoning behind these policy changes is, however, not very clear and the EU is still being criticized for inconsistency in its dealings with the region. The question that becomes interesting is therefore whether these new policy initiatives have changed the perception of the EU in the region, and if so, how this position can influence the EUs ability to promote democracy, human rights, and the rule of law in the neighborhood.

The analysis will focus on how we can understand the EU as a foreign policy actor in the region, and whether it can be understood as a democracy promoter, or if it is simply posing as one, viewing the EU more as *Tartuffe*, the hypocrite in Molière's most famous play, the Impostor. This thesis targets a geographic specificity, namely, the Maghreb region, and how the EU's policy towards the area functions together with its perceived identity. By studying two important axes, (1) the practices versus the rhetoric of the EU in Maghreb, and (2) the perceived role of the EU as foreign policy actor, this thesis will attempt to understand how these axes influence the EU's ability to promote democracy in the region. A comparative historical approach of three cases, based on document analysis and interviews with European functionaries as well as functionaries in the region will be the foundation for analyzing the thesis question. The interviews help understand the evolution of the role of the EU in retrospect from an external perspective, while the primary documents help to enlighten the case from its own time.

I.I Thesis question and operationalization

Based on the introduction, this thesis will attempt to break down the resultant complexity of EU foreign policy in the Maghreb, and analyze the EU's influence in the region by focusing on the following thesis question:

> *How does the nature of the EU as a foreign policy actor affect its ability to promote democracy in the Maghreb?*

How does the nature of the EU as a global actor, both in material and ideational terms, affect its ability to diffuse its 'normative base' of human rights, democracy and the rule of law? Are there conditions which make it easier or more difficult for the EU to have a positive effect on democratic development? While some North African countries have slid into instability and authoritarianism after the Arab Awakening, other states have been able to focus on creating more stable systems which attempt to promote democratic interests. Has the 'success' of the Tunisian case been influenced by the EU? What has the role been in Morocco's path towards a more democratic system? Or in the case of Algeria, where a new 'awakening' took place in 2019? Moreover, how does the EU's handling of the migration crisis impact these conceptions and perceptions of the EUs nature?

Operationalizing the research question will entail an understanding of the constitution of the EU as an actor in foreign affairs. The policy-making procedure in the EU is composed of many actors having their say, amongst them, the member states, the Commission, the Council, the HR, the Parliament, and the Courts. The critique of EU foreign policy as being incoherent is a recurring one, hence, a comprehension of the different power dynamics is therefore a must. Moreover, could the EU even be said to have a foreign policy, and is it at all possible to have one as an 'unidentifiable political object'? This thesis will focus on different EU policy-initiatives towards the region for an understanding of the EUs involvement as a foreign policy actor, attempting a justification of why these policies are important or not.

Finally, the complex causality of such a question requires good knowledge of the North African cases being studied. Understanding how the region has developed over the decades will be of great importance. In this sense, this thesis will attempt to contribute to literature on EU foreign policy, as well as to the field of democratization in North Africa.

Clarifications

> "As we are prisoners … prisoners of the words we pick, we had better pick them well (Gerring 1999, 357)"

In this study, the concept of *the Maghreb* implies the following countries: (1) Morocco, (2) Algeria and (3) Tunisia, and not the Great Maghreb, which includes Libya and Egypt. The Maghreb and North Africa will sometimes be applied interchangeably, but this thesis refers to the three countries mentioned above. Conceptual clarifications about the Maghreb will be presented in the third chapter.

A terminological debate has occurred about which expressions that can best explain the events that have occurred since December 2010 in the Arab World. Ramadan (2012, 7) and Pace and Cavatorta (2012, 136) have argued that 'Arab Awakening' and 'Arab Uprisings', are the terms that can best describe these events. The debate has revolved around the possibility of the term 'Arab Spring' having an orientalist connotation to it. This thesis will apply the terms 'Arab Uprisings' and 'Arab Awakening' somewhat interchangeably, as the thesis attempts to get an understanding of the EU's role in a region where critiques have arisen towards this concept.

Democracy is applied as a term to understand how the case studies can be said to have moved towards a more democratic society, and the role of the EU in this development. This thesis will not concern itself with conceptual discussions of democratization and what democracy is. Rather, it will follow the understanding of democratic development as a process towards a democratic system, following Robert A. Dahls mainstream definition of democracy. According to Dahl, democracy must allow for open competition and provide free and fair elections (Dahl 1971). The state must also be able to secure basic rights for its population.

Previous findings and the contribution of this study

There is comprehensive research on the EU as a foreign policy actor as it is an actor in constant change. As mentioned, the most influential theory on the nature of the EU would be the Normative Power Europe (NPE) theory by Ian Manners, viewing the EU as a unique actor diffusing norms into its dealings with third actors (Manners 2002, 2006b, 2008). Others have focused on the EU's difficulties in combining values and interests, finding that security seems

to be of the highest importance (Seeberg 2009, Hyde-Price 2006, Romeo 1998, Pollack 2012, Scott and Scott 2020). Specifically, the response of the EU towards the Arab Uprisings has been studied, and the recurring critique is that the EU has been incoherent in its response to the events (Pace 2014, 2009, Noureddine 2016, Johansson-Nogués and Rivera Escartin 2020).

Separately, there has been a debate on the external perceptions of the EU as a global actor, showing that perceptions of the EU are important for its ability to influence or 'diffuse norms' (Larsen 2014, Pardo 2015, Chaban et al. 2013). This thesis will therefore attempt to bridge the external perceptions perspective with the study of the EU as a normative power. By focusing on these two axes, the thesis will contribute to the larger discussion on the EU's nature as a global actor. More specifically, it will contribute to the discussion of Normative Power Europe, by focusing on how the implication of external perceptions guide the EU's ability to influence and 'diffuse' its normative base.

I.II Structure of thesis

Chapter I, which has now been presented, has introduced the theme of the EU as a foreign policy actor and emphasized the importance of gaining a better understanding of EU foreign policy in global affairs today. Chapter II will present the background of the EU as an actor in world affairs and why this is interesting specifically in the case of the Maghreb. Chapter III maps out the scholarly debate revolving around the EU as a global actor. It reviews the Normative Power Europe (NPE) perspective, and its critiques. Chapter IV presents methodology, namely the method of comparative historical analysis (CHA) and the case study method. In addition, chapter IV clarifies the way data has been collected by document analysis and interviews. Chapter V presents the empirical analysis of the three cases chosen in this study: (1) Morocco, (2) Algeria, and (3) Tunisia, through a periodical diachronic perspective. Chapter VI analyzes firstly, in a periodical comparative context, *how* and/or *why* these cases vary in relation to each other and as a region. The second part of the chapter focuses on a thematic analysis of paradoxes that have arisen during the periodical analysis and from the interviews. Lastly, chapter VII summarizes the findings of the thesis and makes some concluding remarks which also outlines implications for further research.

II The European Union and its foreign policy

Former President of the European Commission, Jaques Delors, used to call the EU an 'unidentified political object'. The debate around the identity of the EU seems as much of an unresolved puzzle today as it was in the early stages of the European Economic Community (EEC). When attempting to understand the EU it is, however, essential to comprehend that the EU is a system that was forged by history. In the words of Costa and Brack (2014, 13); "[…] We need to consider the EU as the result of a Darwinian evolutionary process and not one of intelligent design." This chapter will seek to shed some light on this reflection, and more to the point, discuss some important prerequisites, before presenting theory and methodology.

First, the definition of the EU is discussed. Second, the historical background and the evolution of EU foreign policy until present-day is presented. Finally, a historical overview of the EU as an actor in the Maghreb is conferred as it will contextualize the role of Europe, and specifically the EU, in this region. This chapter presents the context and the history of the EU as a foreign policy actor, and hence, lays the foundation for an analysis of the thesis question in a structured manner.

II.I Defining the EU

Defining the EU seems to be a difficult task, not only for researchers of political science, but also for the average European. Three out of four Europeans acknowledge that they have *poor* understanding of the EU, while one in eight confess that they have *no understanding* of it whatsoever (McCormick 2002, xii). What the EU is, and what it does, still seems to have a mythical aspect to it. Is it best described as an international organization of 27 states, or is it a whole new form of political organization that the world has not witnessed before?

> "In the simplest of terms, the European Union (EU) is an international organization, founded on treaties between European states. But such a description does not do justice to a body that has grown and developed since the 1950s to cover many areas of public policy and to reach deep into the political, economic, and social lives of its peoples (Usherwood and Pinder 2018, 1)"

It should be remembered that the EEC was constructed because of the special circumstances during the aftermath of the Second World War, and that the context during which it was given birth to, is quite different than the present-day landscape. This has resulted in the EU becoming

some sort of a paradox, being a new form of political unit both during its very creation, as well as today. In many ways one can argue that the very nature of the EU is fundamentally ambiguous (Costa and Brack 2014, 18), namely because of the complexity of its political system and how it was created as a meeting point of national interests, external policies and economic pressures. The current system not only requires 27 nation states attempting to work together within one framework, but it also entails a system based on the cooperation of a multitude of different institutions (such as the Commission, the Parliament, the European Courts, and the Council). This ambiguity makes the question of definition difficult. Is the EU an international organization or a quasi-federal political institution? Is the main objective that of trade or to create values and develop direct links with citizens? In whichever way one decides to argue these positions, the EU could be said to have a *supplément d'âme* (addition of soul) (Costa and Brack 2014, 247). Through this "addition of soul", the EU has; (1) objectives and values which are typical of a state and not an international organization; (2) institutions that are not directly controlled by the member states, and that also cannot be removed by them; and (3) EU citizenship and favoring the creation of European political parties. In sum, the definition of the EU will be different depending on the aspects one takes into account.

Costa and Brack (2014, 241) argue that the EU is grounded in this double inspiration, between an international regime and a political regime. As an international regime, the EU has the ability to work together collectively based on its common institutions, policies and sets of norms, which makes it easier to solve certain problems collectively rather than individually; while as a political regime, the EU takes the shape of a typical state government. However, it should be remembered that even though there has been much validation of the *acquis communautaires* (EU body of law) in the Courts as well as massive treaty reforms over recent years, the EU is still vulnerable to the possibilities of regression and rupture. If anything, the latest crises with the Euro, Brexit, and the issue of 'democratic deficit' provide evidence to these claims. Regardless of how one feels about the EU's handling of these crises, the next query would be how the EU construes itself, be it either despite of or because of these challenges.

The EU defines itself as a 'unique economic and political union between 27 countries that together cover much of the continent', whose goals are to promote peace and the well-being of its citizens. Moreover, it states that; "the EU plays an important role in diplomacy and works to foster stability, security and prosperity, democracy, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law at international level (EC 2020a)." The EU, therefore, neither explains itself as a

political system nor as an international regime, but simply as a unique economic and political union, putting emphasis on the word unique. Nonetheless, it is namely this definition, that the EU has of itself as a unique political structure and as a democracy promoter that will be investigated in this thesis. Whether these objectives, by which the Union defines itself, are applicable in the North African cases.

II.II The origins of European Union Foreign Policy

To address the question of whether the EU is a normative power in the world, one must first understand whether it indeed has the mechanisms and tools to be one. The foreign policy of the EU has been developing accordingly with the general development of the Union. Initially, the EEC did not have a coherent foreign policy in the *stricto senso*, but it did make important contributions to external relations which became increasingly important with time (Bindi and Angelescu 2010, 13). This section will focus on the history and evolvement of EU foreign policy, as to get a better understanding of its conceptualization. Moreover, this will allow for comprehension of the role of the different EU member states and their involvement in the early development.

The creation of a European Community was based on the idea of securing peace in an unstable region, which is a foreign policy statement in itself. In 1962, Walter Hallstein's statement indicated this point further: "One reason for creating the European Community [was] to enable Europe to play its full part in world affairs… [It is] vital for the Community to be able to speak with one voice and to act as one (Hallstein 1962, 79). Even as early as 1950, the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) discussed the creation of an integrated operational structure in Europe. The French government proposed the creation of a common European army that would be placed under the control of a European ministry of defense (Bindi and Angelescu 2010, 4). This plan was named the *Pleven Plan,* and would imply that soldiers from different European countries were to be merged into a common European Army, with the purpose of creating a common defense tied to the political institutions of a united Europe (Gegout 2010, 6). Even though the Pleven Plan ended up failing, it did result in another treaty, *the European Defense Community* (EDC), which was signed on May 27th in 1952 (Bindi and Angelescu 2010, 14). Even though it was France that initiated the process, the EDC was never ratified in France, and therefore failed to become EU policy. Due to the large discussion about

rearmament of the German army after the Second World War, a common European defense policy became a taboo, and was not discussed much in the decades to come.

The agreement on the European Economic Community (EEC), also known as the Treaty of Rome, signed in 1957, did however establish some foreign competences. These capacities included a common external trade tariff, external trades, the establishment of a free trade area between some territories, as well as the creation of a European Fund for Development (Bindi and Angelescu 2010, 16). The language used in article 110 in the EEC shows that its primary focus was the liberalization of trade: "to the harmonious development of world trade, the progressive abolition of restrictions on international trade, and the reduction of customs barriers (EEC 1957, 92)." These capacities, which were focused on *la politique commerciale* formed the commencement of a foreign policy.

In 1992, the Treaty on European Union (TEU), also known as the Maastricht Treaty, established the foundation for European foreign policy through the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). The objectives of the CFSP were to; (1) safeguard the common values and interests of the Union; (2) strengthen the security of the Union and its members; (3) preserve peace and strengthen international security following the UN Charter; (4) promote international cooperation; and (5) develop and consolidate democracy and the rule of law, the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms (TEU 1992, 58-61). Moreover, the High Representative (HR) gained an established role in the European Council in 1999.

The Treaty of Nice, from 2003, gave the Political and Security Committee the power to strategically direct crisis management operations as well as to exercise political control. At this point there were still many uncertainties about the actual role of the HR and its team. It was not until the Treaty of Lisbon that the external service received a legal personality and a proper institutional structure. The year 2003 also saw the creation of the European Security Strategy (ESS), which for the first time laid out clear objectives for advancing the EU's interests in global affairs. Javier Solana, the HR at the time, starts the ESS by stating that:

> "Europe has never been so prosperous so secure nor so free. […] The creation of the European Union has been central to this development. Over this period, the progressive spread of the rule of law and democracy has seen authoritarian regimes change into secure, stable and dynamic democracies (ESS 2003, 3)."

The EES was criticised for its idealistic approach, and specifically so towards its neighbours (Ghafar and Jacobs 2019, 8). The ESS focused on democracy promotion as an important tool for securing stability and building safer surroundings.

With the Lisbon Treaty in 2009, the EU stated: "the so-called Kissinger issue is now solved." (Brunnstrom 2009). It was believed it had now become clear whom foreign ministers were to call when they wanted to talk to Europe; the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. With the Lisbon Treaty, the HR received its current name and would also serve as the Vice-President of the European Commission as well as a member of the Council of Ministers. Moreover, the treaty established the European External Action Service (EEAS), which is the diplomatic, foreign and defence ministry of the EU. The Lisbon Treaty also recognized democracy as a fundamental value of the Union and guiding principal for its foreign policy (Zamfir and Dobreva 2019, 4). Today, foreign affairs ministers, the High Representative, state diplomats as well as military representatives meet in the Council of the EU to discuss foreign affairs on a regular basis, and they have the right to deploy troops within and outside the borders of the EU.

In 2016, the EU launched a new Global Strategy for the EU's foreign and Security Policy (EUGS), which replaces the European Security Strategy from 2003. Where the ESS went in a clear direction of the normative stance of the EU, the Global Strategy was more focused on strategy and ambition, probably as an attempt to adjust to the multipolar world order, which is increasingly driven by power politics (Lehne 2017, 1). The language used in the Global Strategy, particularly the first words, written by Federica Mogherini, the HR of the time, shows that there seemed to be some sort of a newfound realism in the EU's approach to the global state of affairs; " The purpose, even existence, of our Union is being questioned. […] The crises within and beyond our borders are affecting directly our citizens' lives. This is no time for uncertainty (EUGS 2016, 3)."

> "To engage responsibly with the world, credibility is essential. In this fragile world, soft power is not enough."(EUGS 2016, 44)."

Even though the Global Strategy has put more focus on the strategic ambitions of the EU, the values of the Union are still present and considered as an important part of the policy. Nonetheless, it does mean that the EU is moving away from the more idealistic and normative approach that the ESS put in place in 2003 (Keukeleire and Delreux 2017, 3). The guiding principles put forward by the EUGS suggest that; "Principled pragmatism will guide our

external action in the years ahead (EUGS 2016, 16)". Of course this requires a comprehension of what 'principled pragmastism' really means, and whether it is at all possible for the EU to subscribe to this oxymoron as a guiding principle. Can EU foreign policy be principled, meaning 'behaving in an honest and moral way', and at the same time be pragmatic, by 'behaving in a sensible way that suits conditions, rather than following fixed ideas' (Mihalache 2016, 3)?

II.III EU foreign policy towards North Africa

The ties between Europe and North Africa symbolize a complex relationship which is linked by history and geography. Europe has seen its time of Moorish rule in the Iberian Peninsula and parts of northern France from the 8th century until the 15th century. North Africa, on the other hand, saw European colonization from the 18th and 19th century up until the last half of the 20th century, when most of the colonies became independent (except Western Sahara[1]). The Maghreb countries studied in this thesis (Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia) have been under French rule, while Morocco has seen both Spanish and Portuguese occupation as well. It is important to remember these ties, and the effects that this period of colonial rule could have introduced. After decolonization, Tunisia and Morocco made bilateral agreements with France of continued cooperation, while Algeria decided to break much contact. The reasoning behind these choices will be described further within the case studies. Nonetheless, these ties shared with Europe, for better or worse, have laid the foundation for these countries' dealings with Europe as we know it today.

The first signs of official agreements between the EU as an institution and the North African countries occurred in 1995 with the initiation of the Barcelona Process, also known as the European Mediterranean Partnership Initiative (EMPI). Trade relations as well as political and security affairs were central to this strategy. This agreement was the first major multilateral framework that the region had seen. Nonetheless, viewing this agreement in retrospect, the unbalances between the EU and the North African states were quite clear, as it mostly privileged European industry over that of the AMCs (Ghafar and Jacobs 2019, 3). With the

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[1] Western Sahara is a disputed territory north of Mauritania and south of Morocco. It was a Spanish colony up until 1975, and it is today occupied by Morocco which has made claim to the territory.

'War on Terror' after 2001, the EU ended up giving more support to authoritarian leaders in the region. It seems like the incumbent authoritarian leaders became a way to secure the borders from global terrorism and large migration flows.

In 2003, the European Security Strategy (ESS), laid out the new foreign policy approach of the Union, therewithin, the EU's relationship with its neighbors. This policy revealed the normative focus while striving for; "effective, economic, security and cultural cooperation in the framework of the Barcelona Process (ESS 2003, 10)". It also stated that the Union was to contend for the "spreading of good governance supporting social and political reform and dealing with corruptions and abuse of power, establishing the rule of law and protecting human rights (ESS 2003, 12)".

After years of discussing a new policy towards Eastern Europe and their Southern Neighbors, the EU initiated the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) in 2003, with the aim of creating a "ring of friendly, stable and prosperous countries around the European Union in order to guarantee stability along the outer borders of the EU (Wesselink and Boschma 2012, 6)". An important aspect of this policy was the Action Plans (APs), whose aim was to create a more bilateral approach with specific reform packages and demands for each country. Based on this observation, one can say that the ENP removed the multilateral approach that was present from the Barcelona Process. If the conditions presented in the APs were met, the EU would engage in closer economic deals and aid packages. However, the EU would not be sanctioning if conditions were not met (Ghafar and Jacobs 2019, 5)

The year 2008 saw another attempt at creating better relations with its southern neighbors through the Union for the Mediterranean (UFM). The aim of the Union was to promote stability and integration throughout the Mediterranean region. Today, it is a forum for discussing regional strategic issues, based on the principles of shared ownership, shared decision-making, and shared responsibility between the two shores of the Mediterranean, *mare nostrum*. Its main goal is to increase both North-South and South-South integration in the region, to support the countries' socioeconomic development and ensure stability. The institution, through its course of action, focuses on two main pillars: (1) fostering human development and (2) promoting sustainable development (UFM 2020). To this end, it identifies and supports regional projects and initiatives of different sizes following a consensual decision among the 43 countries.

Leading up to the Arab Uprisings, security measures became the most important thing on the EUs agenda. The growing concern in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) made democratization, human rights and the rule of law come second place to the objectives of the Union. Having good allies in the MENA region became increasingly important, and Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia, remained very important partners for the EU and the rest of the West. Ghafar and Jacobs (2019, 7) have stated that this seems like the result of politics of convenience for the EU. Then, in December 2010, crisis broke out in Tunisia after the self-immolation of a vegetable seller in Sidi Bouzid. A series of protests and demonstrations spread to other parts of the country which ended with the escape of authoritarian leader, Ben Ali, to Saudi Arabia. With it, Europe and the West had lost, what at the time, seemed like a leader and a partner that could secure stability in the most turbulent of times.

The months after the crisis broke out in Tunisia, the EU seemed somewhat uncoordinated in their response. Some EU politicians wanted to send military aid to Ben Ali, while others called it a much-needed democratization. The French foreign minister, Michèle Alliot Marie, offered to Ben Ali to send troops to help with the situation, while an Italian foreign ministry spokeswoman stated that 'Ben Ali probably did not realize that the country had been asking for help, and that history will give him credit for the economic development the country had seen (Pace 2014, 977)". It took several months until the EU could unite, and in March 2011, they officially showed their support for the democratic movements:

> "We believe that it is time for a qualitative step forward in the relations between the EU and its Southern neighbors. This new approach should be rooted unambiguously in a joint commitment to common values. The demand for political participation, dignity, freedom, and employment opportunities expressed in recent weeks can only be addressed through faster and more ambitious political and economic reforms. The EU is ready to support all its Southern neighbors who are able and willing to embark on such reforms through a "Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity […] Despite some commonalities, no country in the region is the same so we must react to specificities of each of them (EC 2011a, 2)".

These words are a turning point in the EU's approach to the region, or it is at least such, on paper; democracy seemingly became more important than stability. The EU needed a new vision, which came later that year, in the form of a new policy that was already in the works.

The Revised version of the European Neighborhood Policy became this new approach. The new framework built on the "3Ms"; (1) Money; (2) Markets; and (3) Mobility, which the

North African states would receive if they undertook genuine political reform in governance and human rights. This policy was in the driver's seat until 2015, when a newly revised version of the ENP, directed by the EEAS, refocused the policy by stating that: "Differentiation and greater mutual ownership will be the hallmark of the new ENP (EC 2015, 2)", while recognizing that not all partners aspire to EU rules and standards as well as reflecting the wishes of each country concerning the nature and focus of its partnership with the EU.

The uncertainty of North African relations was nonetheless not secured with the new changes. The political and economic reforms that the region underwent led to growing concerns about migration and terrorism. Islamist parties became victorious in many elections, both locally and nationally. The Global Strategy from 2016, which laid out new strategical objectives for foreign policy did somehow reflect this position. The EUGS removed the earlier normative strategy and replaced it with a more realist assessment. Ghafar and Jacobs (2019, 8) state that this new strategy has caused the EU to become; "more aware than ever of its limitations in promoting reforms in its neighborhood; hence the slow demise of the older, values-driven ENP framework".

II.IV Assessing the role of EU foreign policy in North Africa

This chapter has laid out the background of the EU as a foreign policy actor in North Africa. The very definition of the EU has shown itself to be a debate, and with it, EU foreign policy. What remains clear is that EU foreign policy is a result of a historical molding, which has been through many different phases and is still in development. The EU is attempting to find its place in world affairs, which has resulted in different outcomes regarding the EUs foreign policy towards North Africa. The foreign policy of today is supposed to be guided by a 'principled pragmatism', and the question therefore becomes what this will entail for the North African states.

III Theory

This chapter will map the scholarly debate revolving around the nature and impact of EU foreign policy. How do we conceptualize the EU's identity as an international actor? Since Henry Kissinger famously asked who he should call when he wanted to discuss international politics with 'Europe', there has been a large discussion that rests on the identity and structure of a specific EU foreign policy. The academic community has attempted to find a solution to this puzzle of the EU as a foreign policy actor, but it should be stated that even though there is much literature on the subject, there is not a consensus in the answer.

One of the most influential theories is the idea of a 'Normative Power Europe'(NPE), a term coined by political scientist Ian Manners. Manners is behind the article *Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?* which was published in the Journal of Common Market Studies in 2002. The normative power approach is a critical social theory which bases itself on the fact that the EU is a unique actor in world affairs because of its hybrid polity, historical context, and political-legal constitution. The norms and shared principles are part of the *acquis communautaire*, the EU's body of law, and they are diffused through different channels. This implies that the EU, instead of using traditional military power, has the power to shape conceptions of what is normal in world affairs. Manners' article is one of the most cited articles in EU studies and has received equal amounts of praise as it has critiques. In 2006, the Journal of European Public Policy directed a kind of power the EU is, a volume in which much of the space was dedicated to critiquing or supporting the idea of NPE. Departing from the NPE theory, this section will focus on this polarized debate hinging on the identity of EU foreign policy and its ability to influence international affairs.

First, the historical foundation of the theoretical framework is presented through visions of the EU as a civilizing or military power. Second, the theory of NPE is presented, departing from Manner's work. Third, different types of critiques and alternative explanations will be put forward. Finally, a summarizing section will discuss the implications for the theoretical framework of this thesis and the empirical expectations it can yield.

III.I Civilian Power Europe (CPE) or Military Power Europe (MPE)?

Realist, E.H Carr, wrote in *The Twenty Years Crisis, 1919 -1939*, about the possibility of making necessary changes happen, namely 'peaceful change', without it leading to war. When explaining power in international politics, he made the distinction between (1) military power; (2) economic power and; (3) power over opinion (Carr 2016 [1939], 97-130). The idea of a power that could shape conceptions and opinions was hence viewed as an important part of the power of states and was conceptualized as such. Nonetheless, Carr's distinction was not to be understood as an absolute one, as he found that they were all closely interdependent; since imagining a state possessing only one kind of power in isolation from the others is quite difficult (Carr 2016 [1939], 102). The idea of power over opinion sparked important questions regarding the role of different actors in world affairs. More to the point, what type of power could the EU represent?

François Duchêne suggested in 1972, that the old type of military power had to make way for the more progressive civilian power as a means of exerting power in international relations; something he clearly thought was the case for Europe, which he believed was long on economic power, but relatively short on armed force (Duchêne 1972, 19). As defined by Twitchett and Maull, there are three key features of a civilian power; (1) the importance of economic power as a way to achieve national goals; (2) the centrality of diplomatic co-operation to solve international problems; and (3) the eagerness to use legally-binding supranational institutions to achieve this international progress (Manners 2002, 236 - 237). Hedley Bull did not seem to agree with Duchêne and other scholars who focused on the idea of a CPE. Instead, it seemed that he was uncertain of the EUs role as an international player at all:

> "[…] "Europe" is not an actor in international affairs and does not seem likely to be one (Bull 1982, 151)".

Bull did not believe that the notion of a civilian power was of importance, and certainly not that Europe pertained such power. Rather he stated that Europe needed to develop a more political and strategic union, because without it, everything remained uncertain. He wrote that this idea of the 'Western European nations constituting a security community as a way of securing peace', simply was a mere idea of wishful thinking (Bull 1982, 163). The prospect of Europe having transformative power would only be possible if the military pressure was

already in place, therefore, he found CPE to be a contradiction in terms. Are military- and civilian powers mutually exclusive? In 1999, the EU started the process of acquiring a rapid reaction force (RRF) of 60 000 men, a process which sparked many different reactions (Longo 2010, 75). Would this trend towards military power cultivate a 'state-building' project and would it weaken the EU's distinct profile of having a civilian international identity? These questions that arose after the initiation of the RRF process are still questions searching to be answered. Hence, the original disagreements between Duchêne and Bull show the polarization of this debate during the early evolution of the EU as well as the basis for the continuing discussions of today's situation. This dispute in EU studies could therefore be said to represent the larger theoretical debate one sees in international relations theory, which mainly constitutes of the discussion between that of constructivist approaches on the one hand, and realist and rationalist accounts on the other.

III.II   Normative Power Europe

Ian Manners finds that the EU's role in global affairs is something unique (Manners 2002, 2006a, 2008, 2010, 2012). He argues that we should conceive the EU as a normative power that diffuses norms to actors it is dealing with, rather than applying power of empirical force. Manners is attempting to refocus analysis away from the empirical emphasis on the EU by displacing the state as the center of concern, and sees the EU as having the ability to shape conceptions in international relations of what is 'normal'. Because of its historical evolution, its hybrid polity and its constitutional configuration, the EU has a normatively different basis for its relations with the world. The role of the EU in international relations is therefore viewed as *sui generis*.

Based on the declarations, treaties and policies that the EU has developed over the last 50 years, one can identify its normative basis by five 'core norms'; (1) peace; (2) liberty; (3) rule of law; (4) human rights; and (5) democracy (Manners 2002, 242-243). These core norms are central in the writings of the *acquis communautaires* and *acquis politiques*. One can also identify four 'minor' norms that can be found in the constitutions and practices of the EU, even though they are less contested than the core norms; (1) social solidarity; (2) anti-discrimination; (3) sustainable development; and (4) good governance (Manners 2002, 243). These norms have become part of the EU over time and culminate the basis for the argument of the EU as a unique actor.

Nonetheless, one can accept the normative basis of the EU without agreeing to the fact that the EU is a normative actor having transformative power. Therefore, Manners (2002, 244-245) argues that EU influence stems from six factors through which the EU seeks to 'normalize' elements in the international arena. The first diffusion occurs by (1) *contagion* and is an unintentional diffusion of ideas from the EU to other political actors. Diffusion by (2) *information* is the second factor which implies specific strategic communications such as declaratory communications and new policy initiatives. The third means of diffusion is (3) *procedural* and entails the institutionalization of the relationship between the EU and a third party, as for example the process of EU enlargement. The fourth means of diffusion is by (4) *transference*, which is a type of diffusion that takes place when the EU trades, offers aid or technical assistance to third parties. This type of diffusion can be the result of a carrot-stick approach, where financial rewards lie in sight for the third party. The fifth type of diffusion is (5) *overt* and occurs as a result of the physical presence of the EU in a state or an organization. The final and sixth means of diffusion happens though a (6) *cultural filter,* which is based on the fact that international norms and political learning in third states lead to learning, adaptation or in some cases, the rejection of norms. In sum, the diffusion of EU norms can therefore happen through contagion, information, procedures, transference, overt presence or cultural filters (Manners 2002, 244-245). The support the EU has shown for the International Criminal Court and the abolition of the death penalty are examples to illustrate this process (Manners 2006b).

The NPE theory originated in 2002 and has been developed by Manners himself and by many others over the years. The theory of normative power can be seen as a type of resurrection of the idea of Europe as a civilizing power, but Manners emphasizes that the EU in itself 'changes the normality' of international relations, based on its normative foundation (Manners 2008, 45); it does not simply do this to support its own interests, but also binds itself to international law, whether it is in its interest or not (Diez 2013, 197, Diez and Manners 2007).

Numerous scholars state that this theory has been the most influential theory over the last decade in the field of European studies (Pace 2014, Lenz 2013, Wagner 2017, Del Sarto 2016), which the large number of references to 'Normative Power Europe' confirms. Nonetheless, as many as have praised this theory, others have remained quite critical to the idea of the EU's pre-requisite uniqueness as a normative transformative influencer. Hyde-Price (2006) argues that the EU is not a normative, but a realist power that is in pursuit of its own interests, by which the member states work collectively to secure and shape its external milieu

(Hyde-Price 2006, 222). Other critiques are that the EU might seem normative, but that it simply does so to secure its stability and economic interests (Pollack 2012, Seeberg 2009). The debate has in some ways become a dichotomy between the EU as either being 'norm-driven' or 'interests-driven'. Sharon Pardo (2015, xix) argues that NPE only can be upheld if norms and economic interests are being separated, because of the discursive practice of NPE. Therefore, the question arises whether it is at all possible to incorporate a theory that can bridge these two conceptions, and it is indeed, an alleged dichotomy. Thomas Diez (2013, 194) suggests that by applying the concept of hegemony to the debate, one can avoid the divide between interests and norms, which has resulted in these debates on EU foreign policy.

Moreover, it is important to remain aware of the paradox of this normative conception. It is argued that EU politicians and diplomats are not *au courant* of the dangers of post-colonial hegemony. A quote from the American political scientist, Richard Rosecrance, explains quite well the paradox of this conception.

> "It is perhaps a paradox to note that the continent which once ruled the world through the physical impositions of imperialism is now coming to set world standards in normative terms (Manners 2002, 238 [Rosecrance1998, 22])".

This paradox also leads to the question of whether military and normative powers are compatible. The debate revolving around EU military missions poses as an example here, as it has created a debate around the EU's ability to be a normative power while basing itself on military power. Are normative conceptions compatible with the use of force at all? Manners (2006b, 194) argues that Europe acquiring military capacity in itself is not enough to undermine the normative power of the EU. Nonetheless, militarization could result in the EU becoming more tempted to use short-term military responses, instead of the traditional long-term structure as its way to solve conflicts. Moreover, introducing military forces in certain settings, in which EU civilian staff have worked and are working, can undermine the peaceful normative power they entail and risk the actual impact in the minds of receiving populations. The mixing of military power and normative power therefore has its inconveniences, even if it might be tempting to think that the EU can 'have-its-cake-and-eat-it-too' (Manners 2006b, 182). There have been many studies that show the double standards of EU foreign policy in different cases and conflicts (Wagner 2017, 1408). This is based on the fact that *if* the EU is a normative power, why does it not intervene more when questions of human rights violations and ethnopolitical violence arise? Are there other interests that hide themselves behind such

external policy decisions? If so, what kind of interests are these? The arguments from NPE scholars could be that of specific *ad hoc* situations, which are not compatible with the rest of the EUs foreign identity. This, however, can sometimes come up short as an acceptable answer. These critiques have resulted in many authors underlining the need to understand NPE as an 'ideal type' actor (Forsberg 2011, 1199). Manners would reply that the way in which the EU acts in general is not the most important aspect to retain, but rather, he would remind us to not lose sight of the implications of the uniqueness of the EU.

> "The most important factor shaping the international role of the EU is not what it does or what it says, but what it is. Thus my presentation of the EU as a normative power has an ontological quality to it – that the EU can be conceptualized as a changer of norms in the international system; a positivist quantity to it – that the EU acts to change norms in the international system; and a normative quality to it – that the EU should act to extend its norms into the international system (Manners 2002, 252)."

For Manners, NPE is a statement of what the EU is believed to be, further creating a discourse into what the EU can and *should* be as well (Manners 2006a, 168). As a critical theorist, Manners takes issue with the forced dichotomizing of normative and value-neutral political science and he finds that this dichotomization of structural IR results in many questions being unanswered about the interrelationship of material and non-material forms of power (Manners 2015, 300). Applying an NPE approach, makes it, according to Manners; " […] possible to explain, understand and judge the EU in global politics (Manners 2013, 304)". Nonetheless, there are empirical problems that are difficult for any analyst to prescribe to, specifically because the EU often only is one of many possible factors that can explain change (Diez 2013, 198).

Helene Sjursen (2006) states that there is a need to identify criteria and assess standards to be able to qualify, substantiate or reject such claims put forward by NPE. The problem is that normative power lacks precision and is normatively based (Sjursen 2006, 236). Moreover, she states that one danger of the NPE debate, is the fact that the conception of the EU as normative, is quite similar to the EU definition of its own international role. Is there a danger of NPE becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy? If this is the case, are we mere contributors to this conception?

Normative Power Europe as a self-fulfilling 'force for good' prophecy

Michelle Pace discusses the idea of the EU as a 'force for good' in the world (Pace 2007, 2008, 2009). She finds that NPE is becoming a self-fulfilling prophesy, where EU politicians and diplomats see themselves as a 'force for good' in the world because of this normative debate, therefore reinforcing this image. Hence, what drives EU actors is their own self-representation of the EU as something positive; it becomes a process of forming a self-maintaining European epistemic foundation.

> "EU actors are part of, and their practices replicate an epistemic community. Policy-makers working in Brussels accept an optimistic version of the narrative of the EU as a 'force for good', which they continuously validate produce and reproduce (Pace 2008, 203)".

Pace states that conception can be problematic, and that researchers are a part of the problem. There is a need for academics to distance themselves from the very subjects of investigation and their self-descriptions. The 'force for good' perspective allows for an understanding of the way in which policymakers see themselves as a part of the process of policy making, and how they view the role of the EU in the world. Pace (2008, 204) shows that there are differences in the way Commissioners and Council officials portray and relate to the different impacts. Whereas Commissioners relate more to the connecting impact and regularly portray the EU as the best possible thing for world politics, Council officials are more likely to use compulsory impact by applying pressure on dialogue. It is therefore important to pay attention to these power dynamics.

Normative Power Europe through integration and association

The EU in border conflicts can be understood as a puzzle of integration and peace (Diez, Stetter, and Albert 2006), which in many ways is the very *raison d'être* of the EU, namely, peace through integration. However, this integration is only possible for those states that are within the geopolitical borders of Europe, so what happens to the bordering states that the EU deals with? Do border countries become more "democratic" just by being "associated" with the EU through trade, commerce, and cultural exchange? Diez, Stetter and Albert (2006, 236), argue that some association, even if this does not include a full integration with the hope of EU membership, can have an impact on border conflicts. However, they also state that there are

situations where the potential for integration and association can lead to an intensification of border conflicts. The Israel/Palestine conflict can be taken into an account here, as an example of the ambivalence of EU impact through association, specifically because of the way the different conflict parties view the EU (Yacobi and Newman 2008, 174). The presence of the EU has been important to establish a sustainable cooperation with the EMP, while the negative perceptions of the EU in Israel have decreased the already limited effect the EU could have in this conflict. In sum, the integration and association aspect can have both negative and positive effects.

Hiski Haukkala (2008) argues to the contrary, that the EU does not have the ability to influence when EU membership is not on the table. He states that the EU does not function well, from a normative point of view, when the promise of enlargement and participation in the decision-making process, is not included in the deal. After the 'Big Bang' of the Eastern enlargement to the EU, it seems that the project of a 'European Community' is reaching geographical limits, and because of this, the EU seems to have issues with the idea of ceasing to enlarge (Haukkala 2008, 1617). This becomes interesting when considering how the EU acts towards its neighbors, since they are outside of the geographical area, but still close enough to being forced into some sort of a relationship with the EU. The first external policies the EU adapted were towards the Eastern Neighbors, whom were not part of the Union originally, but that, nonetheless, always remained within the geographic scope of possible enlargement. It was always within the frame of opportunity for them to become members, which is also why the Eastern enlargement happened as 'quickly' as it did. With tangible carrots in sight, specifically membership, the Eastern neighbors adapted all the necessary *acquis*. The question that becomes important in this case, is however, how a neighborhood policy, which was based on the Eastern enlargement, works in a place where enlargement is not possible?

> "The paradox of the EU's own pan-European rhetoric is that its application of the Lukesian third dimension of power has resulted in its neighbours wanting the wrong thing: they want the full institutional membership in the Union when the EU would only want them to have the same norms and values that the Union promotes (Haukkala 2008, 1618)."

Based on these reflections, the ENP will not be able to achieve what it is meant for unless there are clear instructions and specificities that allow for an integration of some sort. What can the EU give in form of carrots when full integration simply is not possible? In the words of Haukkala: "It is the enlargement that is the key to the Union's normative power in Europe and

any neighborhood policy that fails to take this issue into account is doomed to be a sub-optimal one (Haukkala 2008, 1617)". Does the ENP towards the Southern Neighbors suffer from such a sub-optimality? Whether influence and association decrease with the lack of tangible carrots is therefore an important aspect to retain when analyzing the EU's policy towards North Africa. The Action Plans (APs) would be important, as they are the initiatives and bilateral agreements that the EU has with the AMCs. Do the current AP's offer sufficient association for them to be effective?

Normative Power Europe and External Perceptions

Henrik Larsen (2014) writes in *The EU as a Normative Power and the Research on External Perceptions: The Missing Link* that we must understand both external perceptions as well as the normative power aspect to have a full comprehensive picture. The analysis of the way in which other actors represent EU-sponsored norms can provide insights into the EU's potential to play the role of a normative power. What seems striking is the fact that; "references to NPE can be found in the literature on perceptions of the EU (but not the other way round) where it is stressed that the findings have relevance for the discussion about the EU as a normative power" (Larsen 2014, 898). Perceptions and narratives are important because they can serve as 'road maps' and 'focal points', indicating to external observers how to define a certain situation and how it can affect the decision-making processes of that set actor (Chaban, Miskimmon, and O'Loughlin 2019, 235). The understanding of this construction of the images of the 'Self' and the 'Other' will therefore be important to comprehend how the EU constructs its identity.

As argued by Müller (2019, 253), it is important to be aware of the fact that NPE is not just about the attraction of the EU's "normative model', but also; "the broader story through which this model is articulated and promoted". The importance of understanding the narratives that are being created around the EU's nature is of high importance, and within this conception the general designation of the EU's character comes to show. Sharon Pardo (2015) also highlights the importance of this dual conception:

> "Actorness is also critically dependent upon the expectations and constructions of other international actors. […] the relationship between internal coherence/constituency and perceptions of the EU's presence [is] of central importance (Pardo 2015, xvii)."

Whether third states that deal with the EU see the Union as a democracy promoter, protector of human rights and supporter of the rule of law is important for its ability to influence the same ideas. The external perceptions literature has up until this point focused largely on the economic power of the EU, which seems to be the side of the EU that has the most positive connotations to it. One side of the analysis represents EU policy, while the other is the perceived expectations of that same policy. If the EU is only able to have normative power when there are economic interests being used as carrots, is the EU even normative? The way in which third parties perceive the identity of the EU therefore become an important departure point for analysis.

In this way, the EU' ability to be a sucessful democracy promoter in third countries depends on a fit between internal and external perceptions. The way in which target countries view the EU's efforts in promoting democracy will heavily influence whether the policies will be sucessful or not (Mišík 2019, 38). This follows the same argument made by Gordon and Pardo (2015, 424), stating that normative power becomes powerless devoid of visibility. It is necessary to understand how the EU is viewed in the state where it seeks to 'normalize' affairs, and if there is a dissonance between the internal and external views of the role of the EU, the EU might end up being less influential.

It has been argued that the external perceptions literature has largely focused on a one-dimensional vision of the EU as a global power, and that there is a need to understand perceptions as highly "issue-specific, multilayered and differentiating (Chaban et al. 2013, 433)". The external perceptions literature, fronted by Chaban et al. (2019, 2013) and Larsen (2020, 2014), therefore point to the importance of geographical variation as a prerequisite for our understanding of the EU's foreign policy nature. They further argue that this side of EU studies has been under researched and that there is a need to understand this phenomenon better. Therefore, a focus on these geographical differences, also to understand the general designation of NPE, seems warranted.

As this study focuses on the Maghreb, it will be particularly important to consider how colonial lenses as well as other perspectives can impact the notion of NPE. In light of the Kissinger phone call, who would Morocco call when wanting to talk to Europe? Would it be the EU, or would it be France? These perceptions play an essential part in understanding how NPE is perceived. What do these countries see when they see the EU? Is it a normative power or is it merely an imperial power whom the countries in question have no other choice but to

listen to, making the EU a mechanism of control for former colonizers? This question requires an understanding of whether the EU can be understood as a power which hinders the ambitions and possibilities of former colonies, or if the EU, on the contrary, can be used as a tool for former colonies to develop.

III.III   EU foreign policy as imperial

Jan Zielonka (Zielonka 2008, 2013) discusses the imperial aspect of the EU, and its foreign policy. Specifically, he states that the language behind EU foreign policy in its neighborhoods resembles that of the 'civilizing missions' from the French imperial ages during the Enlightenment. Zielonka defines the EU as a modern empire, which even though it does not resemble the big predecessors of that of 19th century Russia or Britain, still shares many common characteristics with them. The EU resembles an empire based on its vast territory which has the ability to influence or manipulate the international agenda in various parts of the word, therewithin, its neighborhoods (Zielonka 2013, 36). The specificity of the modern empire is the civilizing missions, that are the tools the empire uses to convince the peripheries that the imperial policies carried by the empire are also good for the periphery, not only the imperial center. A civilizing mission can be viewed as successful when the metropolis and the periphery both view them as credible and desirable. To sum up, the EU could therefore be seen as using normative power through these civilizing missions to legitimize imperial policies in the neighborhoods, more specifically, as a 'normative power' that is 'civilizing' other parts of the world. A quote from Nicolas de Condorcet, who was one of the key figures of the French Enlightenment, shows the interesting parallels that can be drawn from the enlightenment philosophers and their civilizing missions:

> "[we have] a holy duty to help those peoples which, to civilize themselves, wait only to receive the means from us, to find brothers amongst Europeans and to become their friends and disciples (Zielonka 2013, 50)".

The language used by Nicolas de Condorcet in the 17th century reminds us to a certain extent of the idea of the European Neighborhood Policy and its mission of creating a 'ring of friends' amongst its neighbors. As Zielonka (2013, 50) so correctly has pointed out, it seems that the eastern neighborhoods have turned into 'friends', while it is still unknown what the southern

neighbors will become to Europe, and to the EU specifically. Again, the question arises of whom Morocco, Tunisia or Algeria will call when there is a need to talk to Europe.

EU foreign policy as Normative Empire Europe

Raffaella Del Sarto (2016) seemingly agrees with Zielonka's view of the EU as imperial, as he argues that we should define the EU as a 'Normative Empire Europe'. He finds that by using this conceptualization, we can best explain European foreign policy in a global as well as a regional perspective. Del Sarto takes issue with both the normative conception of the EU, as well as the constructivist-rationalist divide in IR-theory. The conceptualization of Europe as an empire, a vast, composite and ever-expanding entity with 'fuzzy' borders, bridges these divides (Del Sarto 2016, 215). The EU is indeed engaged in normative activity, but these activities are in large to serve as security for the European borders as well as its economic interests:

> "By conceptualizing the EU as an empire, we may conceive of the EU's exporting of rules and practices to neighboring states as the *modus operandi* of empires in pursuit of their own interests; this *modus operandi* also serves the construction of a normative identity (Del Sarto 2016, 216)."

Applying such a definition would eliminate the recurring problem of contradictions between the EU serving as normative in some cases, while appearing only interested in securing its political and economic interests at the same time. Del Sarto (2016, 228) argues that there are cases in which the norm-driven behavior is simply a utility-maximizing strategy in itself. EU policies can seem contradictory, such as the rhetorical commitment to human rights while advancing trade relations with authoritarian regimes, but according to Del Sarto, this simply reflects the interests of the European Empire.

EU foreign policy as neo-Kantian and Eurocentric

Ueli Staeger (2016, 981) also finds that the EU works as an imperial force, and takes it further by stating that this makes EU foreign policy a neo-Kantian, Eurocentric discourse that 'reinvigorates an outdated European moral paternalism'. Staeger argues that the EU indeed is attempting to be a post-imperial, non-colonial normative power, but that it simply does not achieve this goal, specifically in its EU-Africa relations. The current idea that European

normativity rests on claims of universality cannot withhold scrutiny from a decolonial point of view (Staeger 2016, 995). Staeger does not attempt to diminish the possible value of NPE as a force for good in world politics, but nonetheless, that it is possible Eurocentric construction would have to be reconsidered and understood. There is a need for scholars in EU studies to pay attention to Eurocentric knowledge and the way it is being produced.

EU foreign policy and decolonization theory

> "One doesn't leave one's own self behind as easily as all that (Kohn and McBride 2011, 55)". Alberto Memmi.

To discuss the EU as a foreign policy actor in North Africa without having discussed theory of decolonization and post colonialism seems rather problematic. Article 1(2) of the UN charter states that the UN and it's member states shall have : "respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace (UN 1973)". The guiding principle of self-determination is the foundation of the way the international system has been built after the war. Although it is a guiding principle, it has proved to be enduringly difficult to theorize (Stilz 2015, 2). The post-war period has been marked by many different territorial disputes and questions have arisen to what extent self-determination applies only to overseas dependencies or also to internal minorities. Moreover, whether democratic governance is a prerequisite for self-determination or if it is compatible with non-democratic entities, is another important aspect.

Kohn and McBride (2011) state that postcolonial perspectives are underrepresented in political science and that they can be used to enlighten many issues in contemporary politics. Looking at the political regimes and case studies in this thesis, it seems appropriate to keep in mind this perspective. *Postcolonialism* as a concept has been critiqued from many stances, and there is not one universally applied definition. This thesis will use the definition of Kohn and McBride (2011, 8), on postcolonialism as a branch which; "encompasses the critique of colonialism, the movements for national liberation and the ongoing struggles with the legacies of colonialism". Therefore, postcolonialism is not a linear critique of a colonial time which has ended, but rather a critique of the emergence of the new world which colonialism created.

Theory of decolonization also attempts to deconstruct the difficulties of revolutions and democratic development in postcolonial states. Frantz Fanon and Ho Chi Minh, both important

contributors to the study of postcolonialism, inherently distrusted state power itself (Kohn and McBride 2011, 56). Keeping in mind that revolutions are primarily concerned with a disruption of powers, these postcolonial theorists revealed a need for creating long-lasting political freedoms and not just a simple change of regime. Revolutions in postcolonial states therefore carried quite a complex relation to the concept of revolutions; a distrust of state power itself. The important question therefore becomes what this entails for states in which much of the political system has been created and based upon the systems of the colonial powers, such as in the three cases studied in this thesis. Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria, which were all under French rule and had most of their territorial borders defined by France.

III.IV   EU foreign policy as realist

Adrian Hyde-Price (2006) critiques the idea of NPE from a realist point of view. He finds that structural realist theory can explain the reasoning behind the actions of the member-states to cooperate in creating a common foreign and security policy (CFSP). By looking at the emergence of the bipolar landscape, he argues that it was the bipolar distribution of power that laid the foundation for European integration; following IP theory stating that bipolar systems are easier to co-operate within than multipolar ones. So, when the international system became bipolar after the Second World War, Europe found it easier to shape its environment and secure "milieu goals" by co-operating (Hyde-Price 2006, 224). The main argument is therefore that the EU works as a collective instrument, created by the member-states, to shape the external milieu by using both soft and hard power.

Mark A. Pollack (Pollack 2012) also critiques NPE for holding a naïve view of the EU, and that the EU is much more complex than presumed in this theory. Normative Power Europe, in Pollack´s words, would therefore be an ideal-type actor that illuminates some of the more admirable features of the EU as a global actor. Moreover, he states that it could be argued that the EU is 'posing' with a normative stand just to secure its political and economic interests, and that there are many different studies that show the paradoxes of that conception. This conception is also shared by Peter Seeberg (2009, 81) who categorizes the EU as a 'realist actor dressed in normative clothes'. So, even though the EU could be seen as 'normative' in some cases, it does not mean that it is, nor does it make it into a 'Normative Power Europe'.

It can be somewhat strange to see neorealist theory applied to the study of the EU, as structural realism is very preoccupied with hard power, state-centrism, problems of co-operation under anarchy and so forth. Many realist scholars seem to have avoided EU studies for these reasons, in addition to the fact that EU scholars tend to empathize closely with their research. However, even though structural realism cannot fully explain the CFSP, it can shed light on the 'systematic pressures' behind the member states of the EU in seeking international cooperation (Hyde-Price 2006, 219).

III.V EU foreign policy as a result of productive ambiguity

The EU is often critiqued for having a lack of coherence and consistency in its foreign policies (Noureddine 2016, Pace 2014), which the handling of Iraq in 2003 and Libya in 2011 are examples of. Is the idea of the EU as a normative power that has transformative impacts outside of its borders still plausible after the EU's handling of these conflicts? While many critical voices would answer 'yes' to this question, Ahrens (2018, 209) would say that this ambiguity in EU foreign policy is a driving force for the EU's ability to have a transformative agenda. She argues that the ambiguities that the social world entails is a fact, and that this ambiguity does not impinge the ability of the EU to have transformative powers, by stating that:

> "the EU's own ambiguous structure and the fact that it necessarily had to acquire tremendous expertise in negotiating opposing positions is conducive to its transformative agenda because by this means, the EU is much better able to consider, reflect and embrace the normative tensions and ambiguities that come with any sort of transformation (Ahrens 2018, 202)."

Ahrens therefore sees ambiguity as a specific potential for the EU to pursue a transformative agenda on the international stage. The structure of the EU is based on the parallel existence of both societal and classical state-centric structures, and these dimensions are constantly present. This means that there is dualism and undecidability in the very structures of the EU (Ahrens 2018, 201).

Moreover, there is the case of normative ambiguity, which is based on the belief that normative change and norms, in themselves, are inherently ambiguous. These two dimensions form the foundation of the EU's inherent ambiguity, making the EU an expert in dealing with opposing positions. Ahrens argues that this expertise is an asset in normative change that is

contested, and that it can prove beneficial because it enables the EU to embrace such contestation, which furthermore allows for greater legitimacy in processes of change (Ahrens 2018, 205-206). Instead of fleeing from the 'Flight from Ambiguity', Ahrens proposes that one should embrace and accept this duality, since it has the power to contribute to change. The complexity of issues in global affairs makes it difficult to expect definite and unambiguous answers, therefore, a certain 'sensitivity to contingency' is necessary.

III.VI   The idea of NPE – a contradiction in terms?

As reviewed in this chapter, the debate that hinges on the role of the EU in world affairs is an ample one, resting on many different assumptions and possible routes of explanation. The discussion began with the distinction of Europe as a holder of military power, civilian power and/or power over opinion. Bull (1982, 163) thought that the idea of Europe as a civilian power was a contradiction, because the civilian power of an actor always rests upon its military capacity. However, as previously discussed, the act of having military power in itself does not mean that holding normative power is impossible, but that it might be undermining its effect.

This division of powers culminated in the theory of the EU as a normative power that can shape conceptions of what is considered normal. According to NPE, the EU holds power over opinion specifically because of its unique historical creation, hybrid polity and political and legal foundation. This *sui generis* character enables the EU to have a unique ability to communicate in world affairs. The different critiques were then presented, fruitfully so, as to require a better understanding of NPE but also to understand its limitations.

The critiques have been multifaceted. First, the NPE perspective can become a self-fulfilling prophecy that is being reproduced by EU officials and academics, which implies great responsibility when undertaking research on the EU. Second, there is a need to better understand the external perceptions of the EU as an international actor, before fully understanding how the EU can influence third parties. Third, the EU's ability to have normative influence can depend on whether integration or association are plausible carrots for the EU to use in negotiations. Fourth, the ability to 'diffuse' norms might simply base itself upon the imperial element of the EU in its dealings with its neighbors. Fifth, the EU might simply pose as a normative power while striving to secure its proper interests as a realist actor disguised in normative clothes. Sixth, the EU's ability to have normative impact might also rest upon its

ambiguous structure, which in its construction allows it to have a better reflection around normative tensions. There are in other words, many different observations, and limitations one must be aware of when considering the validity of normative influence of the EU.

Based on the preceding sections, this thesis will consider the validity of the NPE perspective in the Maghreb. NPE will therefore be used as a point of departure, to "explain, understand and judge the EU in global politics (Manners 2013, 304)". However, some clarifications should be made. The thesis will not attempt to make a statement about what the EU *should* be or how it *should* act, instead it will focus on how the EU *is* indeed acting in its southern neighborhood. This thesis is therefore focusing on the exercise of power rather than a general understanding of the characteristics of the actor, since all actors could be said to have some sort of a normative foundation to their foreign policies (Larsen 2014, 898). The cases studied will be used to understand how the EU acts with its neighbors that do not have the possibility to fully integrate, but still are intimately close with the Union. As this thesis seeks to explain the role of the EU as a democracy promoter in the Maghreb, a comprehension of *ideational* as well as *material* types of power will be of importance. Therefore, instead of focusing on the wide normative space, this thesis will consider the EU's role, specifically in one geopolitical area.

IV Methodology

This study is a comparative historical analysis (CHA) of the EU as a foreign policy actor in three North African cases; (1) Morocco, (2) Algeria and (3) Tunisia. The aim is to understand how the EU acts, and is perceived, as a global actor in these states, and whether there are similarities or differences between the cases. The analysis is based upon data collected through documents and interviews. This chapter attempts to clarify these methodological choices and seeks to explain the reasoning behind the chosen form of data collection.

First, the comparative historical method is presented and discussed. Second, case studies are examined as well as the intentions behind the case selection. Third, the data that has been collected is then clarified. Finally, some concluding thoughts on reliability and validity are considered.

IV.I Comparative historical analysis

Applying a comparative historical approach serves to understand differences or similarities in EU approaches, and *how* and *whether* they have changed with time. Application of CHA allows for a juxtaposition of historical patterns across the Northern African cases, which serves to understand the roles of actors in space and time. Mahoney and Rueshemeyer (2003, 6) find that CHA; "is defined by a concern with causal analysis, an emphasis on processes over time, and the use of systematic and contextualized comparison". This approach is appealing because it can shed light on contemporary policies by placing contemporary issues in a historical context to elucidate cross-sectional differences. As EU foreign policy has been described as an ongoing puzzle, applying a case-based historical comparison that, specifically, will allow for an understanding of real-world puzzles does seem appropriate. Viewing the EU as a foreign policy actor through historical lenses in different cases will therefore allow for a better understanding of how the EU functions as a global actor today.

To the present-day, the works of Tocqueville, Marx, Durkheim and Weber remain some of the most cited works in political science, all of whom pursued CHA as a central mode of research (Mahoney and Rueschemeyer 2003, 3). In recent years there has also been a surge in literature focusing on comparative historical approaches (Mahoney 2004, 81).

> " [...] CHA has been robust because the best work in this tradition remains true
> to core features that link it to the classics and that continue to define CHA as an

approach – its focus on macroconfigurational explanation, its emphasis on deep case-based research, and its attention to process and the temporal dimensions of politics (Mahoney and Thelen 2015, 28)".

Moreover, Mahoney and Ruchmeyer (2003, 10-13) state that CHA has three specific characteristics that separate it from other historical methods, namely; (1) its concern with identifying causal configurations that produce major outcomes; (2) its comprehension of historical sequences and processes unfolding over time; and finally (3) its focus on specific case-knowledge, which allows for a higher level of conceptual and measurement validity than with large case studies. This is not to say that there are no challenges with this approach. Problems of unresolved epistemological issues and the tension between structuralism and culturalism are some examples (Mahoney and Rueschemeyer 2003, 5).

CHA is fundamentally concerned with identifying causal configurations, and puts causal arguments at the heart of analysis (Mahoney and Rueschemeyer 2003, 11). Achieving a good causal analysis requires selecting and testing specific causal propositions. However, studying ideational diffusion can be problematic. Making causal claims about the EU ideational diffusion is quite difficult, and one should therefore be careful with making harsh claims. Lenz (2013, 223) finds that because of these difficulties, one should judge the causal claims by their plausibility as "establishing 'real' causality is largely out of reach". EU influence occurs in many ways, and indirect influence is simply one of them.

Process tracing has become an important tool for identifying causal mechanisms in qualitative analysis over the last decades (Collier 2011, Mahoney and Thelen 2015). Collier (2011, 823) defines process tracing as "the systematic examination of diagnostic evidence selected and analyzed in light of research questions and hypotheses posed by the investigator". This application of pattern making is often used by researchers who study few cases, as to avoid problems of spurious correlations (Mahoney and Rueschemeyer 2003, 363). However, the recurring problems of most methods, such as missing variables and measurement errors, are also challenges faced within this method.

Periodization

Ira Katznelson (2003, 271) describes the importance of applying a periodization on temporal projects and that they should, implicitly or explicitly, rest on assumptions about structurally

inscribed historical dynamics. The periodization allows for an understanding of how the EU as a global actor functions in the political landscape of that set time, keeping in mind critical junctures and specific events. Using periodization will also make it easier to cross-examine the cases.

The temporal aspects are divided into three periods; (1) *Pre-Arab* Uprisings from 1992 – 2010; (2) *The Arab Awakening* 2011 – 2014; and (3) *Post-Arab Uprisings and Migration Crisis* from 2015 until today. Period I is characterized by the EU supporting incumbent authoritarian leaders in North Africa (Ghafar 2019, Jaidane 2019, Pace 2014, 2009). Period II marked a shift with the Arab Awakening taking place, and the EU seemingly shifts its approach towards the region. Finally, period III is marked by the aftereffects of the Arab Uprisings, with economic difficulties and the migration crisis hitting Europe.

	Period I 1992 – 2010	**Period II** 2011 – 2014	**Period III** 2015 - 2021
	Pre-Arab Uprisings	***The Arab Awakening***	***Post Arab Uprisings and Migration Crisis***
Temporal aspects	The end of the cold war and the 9/11 attacks.	Democratic awakening – the belief in change and ideals.	Economic difficulties. The migration wave hits Europe.

Table 1: Historical Periodization

IV.II Case studies

Case studies are a methodological design that allows for an in-depth and detailed examination of one or multiple cases. Researching multiple cases makes it possible to examine similarities and differences between cases by seeking to understand variation. Even though case studies have a long tradition in comparative politics, there is no golden standard of application. Consequently, there are many ways to define the case study. John Gerring (2004, 342) states that a case study is best understood as an "intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a larger class of (similar) units". Robert Yin (2014, 16), on the other hand, argues that a case study "investigates a contemporary phenomenon in its real-world context." The

definitions are many, and the comprehension of what a case is varies, therefore, clarifications are in order.

As the thesis question revolves around an understanding of the EU's role as a global actor in third states, there are many factors that must be taken into account. The attention to detail is essential in this analysis, and a case study therefore seems appropriate. This will require an in-depth understanding of the historical foundations of each case. George and Bennet (2005, 5) state that a case study is; "a detailed examination of an aspect of a historical episode to develop or test historical explanations that may be generalizable to other events". It is, however, important to be aware of the '*may'*, as one should be careful to generalize based on a few number of cases. This adds on to a recurring issue in research, namely, the trade-off between parsimony and generality (Kellstedt and Whitten 2018, 20).

The difference in the number of cases has been discussed as an important factor when putting statistical methods up against case studies. Even though it could be argued that case studies are all kinds of studies that include cases in research, understanding case studies as 'small-n' studies has been the principled definition over the last few years. Whereas large-N is defined as statical methods, case studies have been characterized as small-n. George and Bennet (2005, 39) argue that the belief from the "bigger is better" culture, which implies that statistical methods are always preferable when there is sufficient data, is not valuable; each method can answer and justify different questions. Nonetheless, it is important to retain that even if one can find casual connections within a case or between a few cases, it does not mean that it can inform about the causal effect across the population (Fearon and Laitin 2008, 756). Awareness of the generalizability of each study is a must. However, it should be stated that this thesis does not seek to create universalized knowledge that is generalizable to everything in time and space. Rather, it aims to yield meaningful advice concerning contemporary politics and possibilities.

Where formal models and statistical methods are weak, case studies tend to be strong. George and Bennet argue that case studies have four strong advantages. First (1), they have the ability to contribute with conceptual validity by finding indicators that can represent the theoretical concept in the best possible way. Contextual factors are very important when studying variables that most political scientists are interested in, namely democracy and power. Attention to detail and context in a case study minimizes the chance of 'conceptual stretching', which is risky in statistical methods. Second (2), case studies have strong procedures for

fostering new hypotheses. During the examination of outlier- or deviant cases and field work, there is always the possibility of identifying new variables and hypotheses. Third (3), case studies explore causal mechanisms. The detailed examination within cases allows for an inductive observation of the conditions under which a causal mechanism is operating. Finally (4), the case study has the capacity to assess complex causal relations by considering interaction effects and path-dependency. Nonetheless, the generalizations produced by case studies tend to be narrower and more contingent than statistical methods. Middle-range theories as such can be of great value. However, others might find that theories should be more generalizable, even if this in some cases might mean that they are more vague or prone to counterexamples (George and Bennett 2005, 93).

There are limitations to the case studies method. It is important to be aware of the typical trade-offs that can occur between parsimony and richness and between wanting to achieve high internal validity and seeking broad generalizations (George and Bennett 2005, 95). This study combines within-case analysis and cross-case comparison, as there has been a growing consensus that this type of study has the strongest means to draw inferences (George and Bennett 2005, 39).

Case selection

For a successful application of case studies, it is imperative to clarify and argue the justification of the selection process. Case studies have many strengths, as seen in the section above, but can also be misused and misrepresented. Bogaards (2019, 71) finds that most empirical research on democratization applying case studies, use the method implicitly, rather than explicitly. This is problematic because it makes it difficult to evaluate the different contributions to the literature. It also reflects the problem of definitions and conceptualizations (Gerring 2004, Bogaards 2019, George and Bennet 2005). Hence, the section below will clarify the reasoning behind choosing Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia as the cases selected in this study.

The cases have been selected by a most-similar sample, based on their somewhat similar background and characteristics. The EU has an established relation with their Eastern and Southern neighbors through the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP). Most of the MENA region is accounted for as Southern Neighbors. The EU's relationship with its Eastern Neighbors has been researched extensively due to their integration process. Southern Neighbors are, however, not integrable. Moreover, the countries of the Maghreb tend to

become somewhat lost when discussing the MENA-region. There is a need to better understand the role of the EU in North Africa.

Out of the all the North African countries, Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco could be argued to be the most similar cases with different outcomes. All three cases share many of the same historical, linguistic, and cultural similarities as well as their colonial history. However, the three cases exhibit different outcomes along the theoretical and periodical frame of interest. They have seen different democratic developments after their independence, and the EU has been present as an actor since the very beginning. The three countries have their peculiarities but share a common foundation, and together, they make up the Maghreb.

The Maghreb

> "All these countries, and in particular Tunisia, are very dependent on the EU economy so that the persistent weakness in the latter has continued to limit their capacity to recover (Arroyo 2015, 1)".

The thesis will focus on how the EU functions as a foreign policy actor in the Maghreb, namely because of this specific and complex relationship that Europe shares with the region, attempting to unpuzzle Arroyo's quote. Firstly, (1) the geographical situation renders these Northern African states important to the EU. The Arab Mediterranean Countries (AMCs) represent the southern gate to Europe across the Mediterranean, which poses many different security problems. Securing stability in the region has always been of big importance for the EU, trying to avoid large migration flows amongst others. Secondly, (2) the Maghreb shares a long and complex colonial history with Europe, which has resulted in cultural and linguistic influence flows between the actors. Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria have been under French, Spanish, and Portuguese rule during different points in time. This is an important aspect, because France and Spain are both big players in the EU, which in turn underlines the importance of understanding how these two states take part in the development of the EU foreign policy towards the region. These shared colonial, cultural, religious as well as linguistical similarities make up the three cases.

In its purest form, the most-similar method, is based on the selection of cases similar in all the measured independent variables, except from the independent variable of interest (Seawright and Gerring 2008, 304). However, in an imperfect world, having three states that are perfectly identical in background is simply not possible. Knowledge of the area allows

nonetheless for an understanding of these three cases as the most similar with difference in outcomes, compared to the rest of the region. When compared to the rest of North Africa, these three cases are the most similar in background conditions. There is variation in outcomes between the three cases of the sample, but when the totality of the sample is compared to the rest of the AMC's the outcomes become more similar. Notably, the democratization process could be said to be more successful in the Maghreb, than the rest of the AMCs.

It should also be stated that the two remaining North African states, Libya, and Egypt, do not take part in the study because they have different historical and cultural foundations. Libya and Egypt were under Italian and British rule and one can therefore avoid variation of colonial inheritances. Focusing on Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria makes it possible to study the cases in detail and consider the many complexities of their relationships with the EU. This sample of three cases with similar backgrounds but with variation in outcome will allow for a possibility of the generation of hypotheses about causality and possible causes of the outcomes that vary (Gerring 2011, 52).

> «Reference to history is doubly important in the case of the Maghreb since the precise nature and impact of the historical heritage remains an important part of contemporary political debate in the region and frequently goes a long way to explaining current political alignments, disputes or practices (Willis 2014, 9).»

Selection bias

Selection bias can sometimes occur from the selection process made by the investigator and is seen as a reappearing problem in qualitative research (Collier and Mahoney 1996, Geddes 2003). The selection bias problem is a recurring critique of case studies but also against statistical methods. Whereas statistical researchers cannot select cases on the dependent variable, it might be appropriate for some purposes in case studies. Case study researchers can select cases based on outcomes, to help identify conditions and potential casual paths to that outcome, and it can thereafter be tested up against other cases where variation is observed on the dependent variable.

The researcher's foreknowledge is also discussed as a problem, as the researcher might have cognitive bias in favor of a certain hypothesis. However, without any kind of foreknowledge, one would not be able to choose cases based on the most-similar or most-different method. Moreover, by being aware of one's owns cultural lenses one can attempt to avoid these biases. The cultural filters through which each of us sees the world can become

problematic if the researcher herself has not reflected upon her own (Aase and Fossåskaret 2007, 111). It could be argued that these conceptions are even more important when studying EU foreign policy, as it is a field that has been critiqued for researchers being too close to their research, engaging in the construction of a specific meta-narrative of the EU as an 'ideal power' (Cebeci 2012, Pace 2008). Parallelly, it is important to be aware of the lenses through which one as a European study European-Arab relations; attempting to avoid the pitfall of Eurocentric approaches (Bauer 2015, Staeger 2016).

IV.III   Data collection

The study will be founded upon both primary and secondary sources with data collected through document analysis and interviews with functionaries in the region. The primary sources are official documents stemming from the actors themselves and the interviews, whereas the secondary sources will be the already existing academic literature used to enlighten the cases (Thagaard 2013, 58). Being able to collect data and providing the study with its proper primary sources, have been important to enlighten parts of the thesis that would not have been possible otherwise. In addition, the extensive searches for literature have given deep insight into former studies and has made it possible to form a thesis based upon the works of others.

Applying a triangulation therefore serves to get a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. The interviews help understand the evolution of the role of the EU in retrospect, while the primary documents will help enlighten the case from its own time. The documents serve to understand the historical context, while the interviews will awake personal reflections and experiences around these events. This combination can provide an interesting and nuanced empirical analysis of the evolution of these political processes (Tjora 2017, 190).

Document analysis

Document analysis has a long tradition in qualitative research, which implies the analysis of documents that have not been written for the purpose of the proposed research project (Thagaard 2013, 59, Tjora 2017, 182). An analysis relying solely on secondary sources can be equally problematic as one simply focusing on primary sources since researchers that have

already analyzed certain sources might have revealed specific aspects of that source, aspects that the researcher herself would not be able to do. By using diverse sources in a study one is able to reveal the different sides of a problem, and therefore piece together a more complete picture of the phenomenon (Gerring 2017, 174).

The analysis of pre-existing documents can illuminate a certain case or phenomenon from a specific point of time or place (Tjora 2017, 183). This implies that the documents are written within a context that the researcher must be aware of and recognize. Therefore, one should attempt to understand the context in which each document is formed. There is always the potential for sources to be biased. When selecting documents and analyzing them, the researcher should carefully judge how this can impact the conclusions made, even though judgements about sources rarely are definite (Gerring 2017, 177). Moreover, selecting academic works that are peer reviewed can ease this burden (Bårnes and Løkse 2011, 38).

The challenge with each document analysis is to come to an agreement with the amount of documents to use in the analysis. As in the words of Jean Paul Sartre, there is always the choice, but that one should know that by not making a choice, a choice is indeed being made (Bårnes and Løkse 2011, 15). A proper literature review helps with such a quest.

The words: 'EU', 'foreign policy', 'Maghreb', 'North-Africa', 'MENA', 'Arab Spring/Uprisings' were used as key search words when attempting to find sources on Oria through various institutions and google scholar. The key words were also searched for in Spanish and French. There were various sources in French and Spanish, but most of the relative sources were written in English, also by researchers from these countries. Departing from these searches, the early literature review revealed both central and more peripheric sources that needed attention. The collection of documents began with the most recently published peer-reviewed articles on the EU as a foreign actor. Thereafter, the references used in each piece were then reviewed to find new relevant sources (Thagaard 2013, 60). This document analysis rests primarily on official documents of EU institutions and peer reviewed academic articles, whereas some newspaper articles are referred to, to discuss very recent events that have impact for the analysis.

Interviews

Interviews can contribute with important information about how the EU is perceived and understood, both from within – and an outside perspective. Interviews make it possible to understand and study the opinions and experiences connected to the role of the EU in the countries in question. These opinions and experiences allow for an understanding of the world viewed from the place of the informant (Tjora 2017, 114, Rubin and Rubin 2012, 4). Interviews can be an essential part of understanding a political phenomenon and can shed light on aspects that the researcher could not have been aware of otherwise. Moreover, the possibility of identifying causal mechanisms that are not evident in other forms of data, can also be enlightened by interviews (Mosley 2013, 5). By holding interviews to gather data on the informal behaviors that lead to certain outcomes, and the informants understandings of these outcomes can be a central mean of producing innovative political science research (Mosley 2013, 8).

Semi structured interviews are the most commonly used within qualitative research (Thagaard 2013, 98, Tjora 2017, 113); used to get specific information about a certain topic (Rubin and Rubin 2012, 31). By holding semi-structured interviews, the researcher is able to get specific information from the informant, but it also allows the informant to speak somewhat freely (Thagaard 2013, 98). The informant is therefore able to contribute with information that the researcher herself might not have thought to ask about. In addition, the structural aspect of the interview makes it possible to compare results across the sample.

A key aspect for having success with semi-structured interviews is maintaining a balanced interview situation where the informant feels comfortable enough to share information, and for the researcher to be able to establish structure (Tjora 2017, 119). There needs to be trust and confidence between the informant and the researcher, and understanding the social context is therefore pertinent. The researcher has the responsibility to create a comfortable and relaxed situation where the informant feels empowered to share. Moreover, the interview should not be too long as to exhaust the informants. The informants have therefore been told in advance that the interviews can be expected to last about thirty to sixty minutes. By recording the interviews, the researcher can be more interactive with the interviewee and focus on the task at hand without stressing about losing information (Tjora 2017, 166). The study has been accepted by the Norwegian Center for Research and the data stored safely in UiB's secure system (UiB Safe).

The informants have been selected by a non-random sample; carefully considered for participation. The interviewees have been chosen purposively because of the standing within their community, be that either academic, bureaucratic, or political. Because of their expertise, the informants have also been valuable to find new literature on the subject (Gerring 2011, 51).

Overview of informants

	Background	*Interview form*	*Interview date*
I	Former French diplomat in Morocco	Telephone (French)	11.03.21
II	Spanish migration expert in the region	Video conference (Spanish)	16.03.21
III	Spanish diplomat in Tunisia	Video conference (Spanish)	21.03.21
IV	Algerian political scientist	Video conference (English)	25.03.21
V	Moroccan NGO leader	Video conference (English)	26.03.21
VI	Former minister of Tunisia	Video conference (French)	31.03.21
VII	Spanish academic expert on the Maghreb	Video conference (Spanish)	08.04.21
VIII	Moroccan academic expert on EU-Algerian affairs	Video conference (Spanish)	05.05.21

Table 2 Overview of informants

However, difficulties around networks and access can be a problem when sampling, specifically when field work is not possible. Gaining access to and finding the knowledgeable individuals one is looking for can be complicated. Thanks to a persistent network, interviews were possible. Moreover, the snow-ball effect was used, by asking each of the informants if they knew of others who could fit the profile and who would be interested in participating in the project. The danger of the snowball effect can be that it might lead to a sampling bias of interviews, where the interviewees represent the same sides of the topic. To avoid this, having different points of departure has been important.

Interview guides are pertinent to creating structured interviews (Tjora 2017, 153). The interview has been divided into three sections; introduction; main theme and concluding remarks. The main questions have been made clear in the interview guide, followed by the most valuable follow-up questions. The interviewer should always be ready to follow up questions, because it is namely in these types of questions one can aim to find the more detailed

and nuanced information (Thagaard 2013, 101). Rubin and Rubin (2012, 124) propose an interview structure which resembles the main branches of a tree, where the main branches each correspond to a part of the research question. The goal is therefore to get detailed information on each branch, which together make up the whole of the research question. There must be clear coherence between the branches, and it can be of help to illuminate these in the interview if it does not seem clear in the interview guide.

Conducting interviews also has its methodological difficulties, and the epistemological discussion between a positivist and interpretivist orientation of the discipline remains problematic (Mosley 2013, 10). This thesis will treat the interviews as a means of generating knowledge and attempt to identify causal processes that generate outcomes. Regardless of epistemological background, as an interviewer it is important to understand that one's individual traits can affect the interview process. Being aware of these "interviewer effects" is important for both the analysis and the interpretation of the data (Mosley 2013, 12). Moreover, there are difficulties such as language barriers and cultural lenses that must be taken into account when interviewing informants and analyzing data across nationalities and cultures (Aase and Fossåskaret 2007, 111). The cultural language in itself can also be problematic. Staying updated about the situation of the interviewee, before, during and after the interview is a must to avoid ethical difficulties and simply to remain professional.

IV.IV   Reliability and validity

Every research design must be evaluated for consistency and accuracy; it is important that the study correctly measures what it is supposed to do. As this thesis seeks to yield meaningful advice on the EU's role as a foreign policy actor, both for academia and for policy makers, it is important that the study is reliable and valid (Walt 2005).

Reliability usually refers to the idea of the precision of a measurement and the confidence one can place upon this measurement (Mosley 2013, 24). Properly capturing the information received in the interviews will be made easier when there is an effective way to record the data of the interviews. All the interviews are recorded, and notes are taken during the interview to avoid losing precision. This is important because it makes it possible to address uncertainties about translation. Moreover, there is always the problem of different scholars getting different answers in interview situations (Mosley 2013, 25). Even though it might be

impossible to ever remove this problem of reliability, as a researcher, one can attempt to compare results across the same scope.

Empirical research has as the ultimate objective to *accurately* test a theory or argument, an accuracy which rests on *validity* (Gerring 2011, 81). The validity of a study implies to what extent the study *actually* measures what it is attempting to measure. The notion of validity is not only referring to the findings of a study but can also refer to the research design and the technique by which data is being collected. This suggests that the whole process and all the phases of the research are all subject to the same requirements of accuracy and validity. Moreover, one should be aware of the two levels of precision, *internal validity* and *external validity* (Gerring 2011, 84). Internal validity is based on the ability to draw the correct conclusions of causal inference from the chosen sample, while external validity refers to whether these causal inferences can be generalized to other phenomena. A study can therefore be internally valid, and still lack external validity.

The internal validity of this study is hence based on whether the findings are precise and correct for the cases chosen. Reflecting on problems that might arise in regard to this, one should be aware that the internal validity might be threatened by the way documents are collected as there are dangers of excluding important materials that could not be reached. The risk of lacking important information is always a problem in such studies, and could be argued even more so in this thesis, since there will be documents from the foreign ministries and diplomatic agreements that will not be possible to reach. Moreover, even though the interviews are conducted in French, Spanish, and English; French or Spanish, being the first languages to some interviewees, it is important to note that the lack of Arabic is problematic, as it also is the maternal language of some informants.

Regarding external validity, this thesis aims to provide information on EU foreign policy, and then specifically how EU foreign policy impacts the neighbors that are outside the scope of a comprehensive EU integration. Even though the thesis studies *only* three cases, it can still bear fruitful results that could help understand the role of the EU as a foreign affairs actor in a global aspect. It should also be noted that the issue of external validity is not provable by definition, which implies that it rests at the level of assumption, since all empirical knowledge to an extent is uncertain (Gerring 2011, 83). This understanding implies that the findings, if reliable, can give advice and inspiration for future studies that can test upcoming assumptions.

V Empirical Analysis

In this chapter the cases of Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria are analyzed in a historical comparative perspective. The relationship between the EU as a foreign policy actor and democracy promoter will be investigated in each case and then compared in an analytical discussion in the following chapter. Starting from West to East, Morocco will be the first case presented, then Algeria and finally Tunisia.

Each case is analyzed by periods. The first period, (1) *Pre-Arab Uprisings* from 1992 – 2010, is marked by a change in the international system. The cold war is over, and the bipolar world order is transforming into a more unipolar world. Human rights, democratic development and international cooperation become increasingly important. The second period, (2) *The Arab Awakening* from 2011 – 2014, begins with the intifada[2] taking place in Tunisia in December of 2010. The movement spreads quickly around the Arab world, leading to large protests in most of the AMCs. The period therefore studies the reaction of the EU, both considering the rhetorical responses as well as the policy responses towards the events. Period three, (3) *Post-Arab Uprisings* from 2015 until 2021, is characterized by the after effects of the Arab Uprisings. The large protests have led to instability in many of the AMCs, where some have been more successful in their democratic transition than others. There is a high rise in the number of migrants attempting to make their way over the Mediterranean, which becomes the epicenter of the crisis.

The analysis will attempt to see the role of the EU through periodical historical lenses. By analyzing the cases periodically, a systemized comparison will naturally take place in the analytical discussion presented in chapter VI.

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[2] Tunisians themselves refer to the uprisings in 2010 as the intifada, which in Arabic means a legitimate resistance movement revolting against oppression. English speakers often refer to it as the Jasmin Revolution.

V.I The Moroccan Case

The Strait of Gibraltar divides Europe and Africa, with only 13 kilometers separating the Kingdom of Morocco and Spain. Morocco's geopolitical status makes it a very important partner for Europe. Morocco has been viewed as one of the Arab countries that is closest to the West, as an *'havire de paix',* an island of peace and stability, in a region of uncertainty (Vermeren 2016, 3). Some have even gone as far as naming Morocco a "European model student" following Europe's goal of securing a stable political system in the region (Fakir 2019, 53).

Nonetheless, Morocco has seen troubling times of colonization by the Arabs and the Europeans up until its independence in 1954. The Arab Uprisings also saw its day in Morocco in 2011, even though the protests were of smaller degree than in other AMC's. King Mohammed VI attempted to avoid further protests and responded to the protest movements with the promise of constitutional reform. The reforms promised a stronger parliamentary power and governmental power, ostensibly offering a more adequate balance with the monarchy (Ghafar and Jacobs 2019, 7). After the elections in 2011, which gave power to the Islamist fraction of the Parliament, the monarchy has slowly tightened its grip on the political situation yet again (Fakir 2019, 54).

The trade picture of Moroccan – EU relations is quite similar to that of the other countries of the Maghreb. The largest trading partner of Morocco is the EU, which accounted for 59.4% of its trade in 2017 (EC 2020d). Out of all the exports of Morocco, 64.6% went to the EU, while 56.5% of Morocco's imports came from the EU. In the year 2000 the two actors signed an Association Agreement which created a Free Trade Area by providing tariff-free two-way trade of industrial products combined with a liberalization. Morocco therefore shares heavy ties with the EU, and the periods will investigate this relationship more profoundly.

Period I – Pre-Arab Uprising

The strong relationship between the West and Morocco can be traced back to 1777, when the Kingdom of Morocco became the first country to recognize the independence of the United States. By 1912, Morocco was divided into Spanish and French protectorates, with the famous international zone in Tangiers. Morocco has kept a strong relationship with its former colonizers, and with the US, a fact that became important when choosing sides during the Cold

War. However, with the end of the Cold War came the hope of a new international order, in which international cooperation was to become a key factor. The first diplomatic ties with the EU appear as early as 1969, when a trade agreement came into force. However, the first legally binding policy takes place in 1995 with the Barcelona Process (EC 2013, 8).

The Barcelona Process inaugurated the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMPI) in 1995. EMPI was based on Association Agreements (AA) between the EU and the country in question. Morocco and the EU signed such an association agreement, which put emphasis on expanding bilateral agreements for cooperation on social and political issues, as well as migration and security. The AA with Morocco was signed in 2000 and is the foundation upon which the whole relationship between the EU and Morocco is built.

King Hassan II, the father of current King Mohammad VI, drove a highly repressive regime in Morocco between 1961 and 1999. The years under King Hassan II became known as the Years of Led, under which there were brutal human rights violations and political oppression (Fakir 2019, 55). The US and Europe attempted to apply diplomatic and financial pressure on Morocco to move away from these policies, and Europe was eager when King Mohammed VI succeeded to the throne in 1999; with the hopes that he would reform the country from the authoritarian conservatism of his father (Abdelmoumni 2013, 123). The first five years of his reign, the famous family reform, *Mudawana*, came into place, which expanded rights for women and children. He also established a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which was supposed to investigate any human rights violations the state had made. In addition, he focused on bettering the cooperation between the EU and Morocco, on political issues, cultural understandings and trade liberation (Fakir 2019, 56).

When the ESS came in 2003, with the following ENP, focusing on democratic principles and development, it took EU-Moroccan relations further, with Action Plans (AP) on how to pursue these objectives, culminating in a new privileged partnership. A few years later, in 2008, Morocco received an 'Advanced Status' from the EU. According to a working document from the EU-Moroccan Association Council, the status was supposed to:

> "translate into a reinforcement of political cooperation between Morocco and the EU in order to better take into consideration their respective strategic priorities, and into a progressive integration of Morocco in the EU's common market, in particular with an appropriate financial support commensurate with the scope and the ambition of this new development (Martín 2009, 239)".

The advanced status therefore promised a greater integration into the common market and was supposed to make Morocco feel like a special partner and added to such a perception that it was. The EU stated that Morocco was getting this status because it had made important reforms over the years, after implementing the ENP. Morocco had in this way contributed to prosperity, shared security, and shared values for the EU.

Period II – The Arab Awakening

The Arab Awakening spread to Morocco after Ben Ali escaped from Tunisia, and the protests started manifesting in Cairo. On 20th of February 2011, several hundred thousand people protested in different villages and cities, occupied by the Moroccan Association for Human Rights (Abdelmoumni 2013, 131). The movement was largely launched by the young generation and social media was an important factor for the spreading of these ideas. The protest movement was overall united without specific party division, but after a while differences arose between the Islamists and the Modernists. The Islamists wanted a stronger civil State with democratic rights, limited mandates, and popular sovereignty. On the other side, the modernists were afraid that the Islamist model had too much Iranian theocratical influence, seeking to use democracy to gain power, and thereafter changing the functioning principles (Nordenson 2018, 173). These lines are still important divides in Moroccan politics.

In general, the protesters came from all spheres of society, keeping in mind that many Moroccans wanted to change the political reality, but not forcibly to a radical extent. Most of the movement was not against the monarchy per se; but more specifically against the power it held over political institutions. Based on what happened in Tunisia and Cairo, King Mohammad VI, advised by the French and the Moroccan Intelligence Services, decided to tolerate the protests and give it some time before negotiating (Abdelmoumni 2013, 134). The King communicated that there would be constitutional change with new elections taking place that same year (MohammadVII 2011). The constitutional change entailed giving more power to the prime minister, and allowing the party that achieved the largest amounts of votes the right to form government (Nordenson 2018, 173). The moderate Islamist Party, *Parti Justice et Développment,* PJD [Progress and Justice Party], won the most seats and formed government. They are still in power today.

Even though the revised ENP of 2011 had been in the making for a few years, it did become the EU's response to the events in the neighborhood. The new ENP - A New Response to a Changing Neighborhood (EC 2011b) focalized on the need for more nascent democratic and reform processes, by referring to Morocco's constitutional reform. Stronger support for civil society organization and more social cooperation were also important factors in addition to the security dimensions (Fakir 2019, 56). After the agreement on the advanced status of Morocco in EU relations, there was a need for a new Association Agreement (AA). In 2013 the EU and Morocco signed a new AP, with the intent to implement this new relationship (2013-2017), which reflected the special partnership between the two actors (EC 2013, 4). The importance of this relationship was also echoed in the European Neighborhood Instrument (ENI) aid and loan packages towards Morocco, which during the period of 2014-2020 received around €1.3 to €1.6 billion (EC 2021b).

Period III – Post Arab Uprising

After the promises of King Mohammad VI in 2011, the situation in Morocco calmed down. However, because of larger problems in the region as well as other domestic issues within Morocco, the aftermath also had large impacts on Moroccan society. The PDJ was reelected in 2016, after having held power since 2011. All the same, the coalition government has been rather weak, formed of many palace allies, which has restricted the influence of the government on the monarchy. The freedom of expression and of the press, has slowly been reduced (Fakir 2019, 57). Protests have occurred, yet again, because of this and because of the economic strain that the country is going through, especially in its rural areas. These domestic issues in Morocco, as well as the more serious problems with its neighbors forced the EU, yet again to review their position.

The revised 2015 ENP framework put emphasis on the need for more proactive solutions to the growing problems of stability in the region. The instability led to large migration flows towards Europe and the growth of terrorism and extremism. For Europe, the large migration flows, and the lack of energy sources became problematic. This was reflected in the reviewed ENP, where political stabilization became the main political priority (EC 2015, 2)", in which Morocco has been the most important partner.

In the aftermath of the Arab Uprising, Morocco has been vital for the EU in supporting stability at their borders by stopping migration. In 2018 and 2019, Morocco prevented 135 000

migrants from crossing the borders, 38 000 have been rescued at sea and 300 people-smuggling networks have been dismantled (Moran 2019). Whereas Tunisia and Algeria have been going through political changes of system, Morocco has been standing more at ease. The large focus on anti-terrorism campaigns has been very important in the dismantling of multiple terrorism cells in Europe.

Morocco and the EU started negotiations for a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) in 2013, but an agreement has yet to be reached. The overall goal of the DCFTA is to facilitate Morocco's transition into the single market, but there seem to be disagreement between the actors as to how fast this transition is to be. The advanced status has been argued to be a status for optics, rather than actual ties (Martín 2009). Henceforth, even though there seems to be a privileged partnership between the actors, there might be uncertainty about what that actually entails from each side, signalizing a lack of common understanding.

Morocco has over recent years opened its diplomatic ties, attempting to make itself less dependent on the EU. There has been a focus on creating a larger diplomatic environment and network while maintaining close ties to the US. The success of Morocco was made clear, when Donald Trump tweeted that he would support Morocco in the Western Sahara conflict[3] in December 2020 (Huddleston, Ghoorhoo, and Sardon 2021). The U.S has been an important partner for Morocco in this conflict, but they never took sides. Needless to say, Trump's tweet came as a surprise to most people that have worked in the region. As MENA-expert, Eugene Rogan, so well has pointed out; even though the Arabs have been colonized and controlled by others during most of their history, they have always been very good at taking advantage of the different political climates (Rogan and Nyquist 2011, 15). It could seem that Donald Trump became another pawn in Morocco's claim to the Western Sahara.

Morocco has also started looking South of the Sahel for more possibilities (Dworkin 2020). Morocco's rejoining of the African Union (AU) in 2017 was a very important foreign

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[3] Shortly explained the Western Sahara is the disputed territory of the former Spanish colony, Spanish Sahara. In 1973, the Polisario was founded to fight against its Spanish oppressors. The UN demanded that the Sahrawis (the local population) were to decide their future in a referendum. However, Morocco marched with 350 000 civilian and military personnel, into the territory in 1975. The UN condemned the march. A week later, Francisco Franco signed the Madrid Accords, while lying on his death bed, giving administrative responsibility of the area to Morocco and Mauritania. The accords have not been deemed valid by the UN, which means that today, Spain still carries the administrative responsibility for the territory. In 1988, the parties both signed the 'Settlement Plan', stating that Morocco was to hold a referendum. However, the referendum has not taken place, hence the conflict.

policy achievement for the country. Morocco left the AU in 1984, when the Union admitted the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) as a member state. SADR is the proclaimed part of Western Sahara that belongs to the Polisario movement. The dispute over Western Sahara might be the most serious problem that the region is facing, specifically because of the increased tensions it has created between Algeria and Morocco. Algeria supports the Polisario and the Sahrawis, hosting refugee camps and the headquarters of the Polisario. The other Arab countries have also supported the Sahrawis wish for freedom, which posed a big problem for Morocco in the African Union and the Arab League; the unresolvedness has created major problems for Morocco's foreign policy (Zoubir and Benabdallah-Gambier 2004, 49). It therefore seems that Morocco is seeking to make international contacts and allies to secure its position on the Western Sahara issue, as the EU has been rather ambiguous on this issue (Grande-Gascón and Ruiz-Seisdedos 2017, Fernández-Molina 2017).

Even though the Moroccan Kingdom has started looking South for more opportunities, this has, until now, not lessened the economic dependency that the EU represents in Moroccan relations (Teevan 2019a, b). The latest agreement in place between Morocco and the EU was reached in the Association Council in the end of 2019, focusing on the need to find common ground in expectations (Lenzu 2019), with the objective of giving new 'impetus' to the strategic, multidimensional privileged EU-Morocco relationship (EU 2020b).

Morocco

	Period I Pre-Arab Uprisings 1992 – 2010	Period II The Arab Awakening 2011 – 2014	Period III Post-Arab Uprisings and Migration Crisis 2015 - 2020
EU-Moroccan development	1995: Barcelona Process 2000: Association Agreement 2003: European Neighborhood Policy 2008: Advanced status	2011: Revised ENP 2013: DCFTA negotiations 2013: Mobility Partnership	2015: Revised ENP 2015: New AP 2019: Declaration giving new 'impetus' to the Advanced Status
Temporal aspects	The end of the cold war marking the beginning of a new world order. The 9/11 attacks in 2001.	Democratic awakening in the AMCs – the belief in change and ideals.	Economic and political difficulties in the AMC's. The migration wave hits Europe.

Table 3 Periodization Morocco

V.II The Algerian Case

Algeria, the largest country by area in Africa and the Arab world, is a pivotal energy and security partner for the EU, being amongst Europe's top three gas suppliers (Ghanem 2019, 17). Out of the three cases presented in this study, Algeria is the country in which the Arab Uprisings seemed the least threatening to the regime, which survived the uprisings without too many difficulties. However, it could have been the calm before the storm which occurred in 2019 when the people awakened in protest after president Bouteflika decided to run for another term, having held power over the last twenty years.

Algeria's relationship with Europe is complex, specifically because of the heavy history that Algeria shares with France. In I870, Algeria became an official part of France, and by the 1920s over 800 000 French citizens settled in the area (Nordenson 2018, 58). Even though Morocco and Tunisia were French colonies as well, only Algeria became a settlement colony, with all the political administration that entailed. In comparison to the independence processes in Tunisia and Morocco, the Algerian War for independence became very bloody, lasting from the first insurrections in 1954 until the final formal independence in 1962. The eight-year long brutal war left Algerian and French relations with an 'intensely emotional and complex relationship' (Willis 2014, 294). The French administrative structure of Algeria, and the one million French citizens living in Algeria at the time, did however ensure that all ties were not broken.

The first connection between Algeria and the EU dates to 1969 when the EEC signed a cooperation agreement with the country. In 1976, a broader cooperation that included finance and trade came into place (Ghanem 2019, 20). The EU is, equally as in the case of Morocco and Tunisia, the largest trading partner for Algeria, accounting for 50.3% of all international trade (EC 2020c). In 2019, 67% of all exports went to the EU, whereas the EU represented 44% of all Algerian imports. Due to the decrease in oil-prices between 2015-2016, the Algerian economy took quite a hit, resulting in a decrease in EU-Algeria trade by 13.3%. When considering Algerian goods imported by the EU, it becomes clear that 95.7% were that of fuel and mining products. The ties between the EU and Algeria are therefore based on strong economic dependency and that of a complex historical and political relationship.

Period I – Pre-Arab Uprising

Algeria experienced large difficulties during the 1990s, with a civil war raging in the country. After Islamists won the elections in 1992, the army decided to take control of the state. The regime fought against the Islamists over many years, a war that would cost the lives of a 100 000 Algerians (Nordenson 2018, 118). Even though Algeria suffered from serious domestic problems, they were still participating on the international stage. They became a part of the Barcelona Process in 1995, but it took years of negotiation before there was a legal foundation of EU-Algerian relations.

In 2005, the Association Agreement (AA) was reached and entered into force, which is the key legal basis of EU-Algeria relations (EC 2021a). The objective was to consolidate the economic, political and cultural bonds between the two actors, while focusing on securing human rights and democratic development (EC 2005). Another important aspect was for the EU to support the diversification of the Algerian economy, based on the heavy reliance that Algeria had on gas and petroleum. The AA did however receive critique for being unbalanced and not actually aiding Algeria in its need to diversify (Ghanem 2019, 22). Algeria's halt in wanting to sign the association agreement therefore had its reasoning.

In 2008, the AA was deepened on the basis of the ENP framework. However, Algeria did not want to sign the ENP Action Plan, which laid out specific points on what democratic reforms Algeria was to undergo. Even though the AP was not reached, the EU did decide to make a specific agreement on energy with Algeria, which came into force in 2013, showing the importance that Algeria represents as an energy source partner for the EU.

Period II – The Arab Awakening

In January 2011, the Arab Awakening spread to Algeria. The protests were largely driven by the same factors as those seen in Tunisia, striving for better human rights, democratic development, ending corruption and oppression. Even though Algeria has had large gas and petroleum resources, the ruling elite had not been able to secure jobs and economic development for the country (Nordenson 2018, 183). The 73-year-old President Abdelaziz Bouteflika had been in power since 1999 and the youth wanted change. However, the protests in Algeria died out quite quickly, mostly because the regime did not harshly oppose the protests, which ended without strong involvement from the state. Fresh in the memory of the

Algerians could have been the civil war during the 90s, with a wish to avoid a similar situation. In addition, the regime did make some changes, such as lowering the price on basic necessities in addition to lifting the 19 year-long state of emergency (Nordenson 2018, 183). A new Constitution came into force in 2016, which amongst others, limited the president's ability to run for more than two terms.

The EU's response to the Arab Awakening in Algeria was based on the same communications the EU had towards the other countries in the Maghreb in February 2011. The EU did set up different types of programs for the coming period, the most important program being the Youth-Employment Support Program which was supposed to help the younger generation to participate in society and encourage the implementation of a National youth Policy (Ghanem 2019, 21). The Support for Partnership, Reforms and Inclusive Growth (SPRING) was another project, aimed at supporting democratic reform, amounting to €20 million. An important democratic factor was the observer mission, sent by the EU to oversee the 2012 elections, which was the first time an observational unit had been sent to Algeria. There were continuous attempts over the years of 2012-2014 to reach an agreement on a new AP, but it took until 2017, when the "Partnership Priority Agreement", came into place (EC 2017a).

Period III – Post Arab Uprising

As a response to the AMC's wish for democratic reform, the EU initiated the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), which was designed to aid civil society's push for political reforms. The EIDHR in Algeria received around €8 million from 2015-2020 but was critiqued for leaving the finance to the ruling elite. This left civil society organizations dependent on what came to be 'perceived' as state funding, even though it came from EU funds. The attempt to support civil society organizations did not seem to have effect. In 2012 a law on association was passed by the Algerian government, which generated further restrictions, resulting in a drop in the number of civil society organizations in Algeria by about 40% (Ghanem 2019, 31).

The EU - Algeria Association Council adopted new policies to enhance political and economic cooperation through the 'Partnership Priorities Agreement' in 2017. Diversification

of the economy and participatory democracy were yet again important words on the agenda (EC 2017a). The agreement was nonetheless heavily critiqued:

> "Rather than mitigating the imbalance, some directives in the Association Agreement increased it. […]. Even if this arrangement seemed favorable to Algeria, it was not going to stimulate its imports, for two key reasons; first, the EU granted that privilege to several other countries, and hence, duty-free access to the EU marked became a standard, and second, this agreement would have boosted Algerian imports only if they were truly competitive in quality and price, which is not the case (Ghanem 2019, 23)".

In March 2019, the sitting president, Abdelaziz Bouteflika announced that he would run for a fifth term, having held power for 19 years, even though the 2016 Constitution limited the presidential terms to two. The announcement sparked large discontentment within the population, which ended up protesting every Friday for almost a year. Hundreds of thousands went to the streets, if not millions, to raise their demands. The protesters became known as the *Hirak movement* (Joffé 2020, 163). Bouteflika responded to the protests, stating he would not run for another term. However, this was not sufficient for the Hirak. The protests became more similar to the larger protests in 2011, demanding a radical change of Algerian politics as a whole, by creating measures to prevent cronyism, obscurantism and corruption.

After the protests and the denouncement of Bouteflika's intention to run, an interim government came into place until new elections could be held on December 12th, when the new President, Abdelmajid Tebboune was elected with 58% of the votes (Joffé 2020, 160). Moreover, the coverage of the 2019/2020 protests was very silent on the international scene, even though Algeria was the actual birthplace of the Arab Uprisings in 1980 (Joffé 2020, 159). In addition, the covid-19 pandemic complicated matters further (EC 2020b, 17), as it also has for all of the cases.

In regards to the EU's reaction to these new protests, Spokeswoman for the European Commission, Maja Kocjancic, stated in March 2019, that the rights to freedom of expression and assembly were enshrined in the Algerian Constitution, and that the EU expected these rights to be respected (Le Figaro 2019). In November 2019, the European Parliament (EP), passed a resolution supporting the protestors and the need for democratic regime change (EP 2019). However, the leaders of the Hirak movement as well the interim regime announced they did not need nor want the support of the EP, and that it, on the other hand, showed strong European arrogance by 'ruling on the current political process' in their country (Ghanmi

2019). Even though the EP passed a resolution, and the spokeswoman for the Commission addressed parts of the issue, the EU has not made an official statement on the current situation.

Algeria

	Period I Pre-Arab Uprisings **1992 – 2010**	Period II The Arab Awakening **2011 – 2014**	Period III Post-Arab Uprisings and Migration Crisis **2015 - 2020**
EU- Algeria development	1995: Barcelona Process 2005: Association Agreement	2013: Strategic Partnership on energy	2017: new "Partnership Priorities" in the EU-Algeria Association Council *2019: Hirak movement*
Temporal aspects	The end of the cold war marking the beginning of a new world order. The 9/11 attacks in 2001.	Democratic awakening in the AMCs – the belief in change and ideals.	Economic and political difficulties in the AMC's. The migration wave hits Europe.

Table 4 Periodization Algeria

V.III   The Tunisian Case

The small country of Tunisia, with its 11 million inhabitants, has become somewhat of a laboratory subject for democratization after the intifada and the following constitution of 2014; making Tunisia one of the, if not *the* most democratic country in the Arab World (Aziz 2018, 7). Tunisian 'exceptionalism' is not completely new. In 1956, President Habib Bourguiba initiated family reform, which gave women rights that were unspoken for in any other Muslim country at the time. The golden era of the Phoenicians with Carthage as the most important city in the Mediterranean still stands as a proud moment in history for Tunisians, a fact they often like to use in negotiations with Europe. Following, in the VII century, the Arabs took over the country and established Tunis as the capital known today.

The first Tunisian constitution came into place in 1861, formed by the liberal ottoman beys. However, Tunisia could not escape the French colonization which took place twenty years later, in 1881, making the country a French protectorate (Nordenson 2018, 59). In 1956, as a part of the larger French decolonization, Tunisia became independent. The first president, Habib Bourguiba, launched a modernization campaign, giving Tunisian women and men equal civil and juridical rights. Even though Bourguiba became an Arab leader of 'exception', he ended up proclaiming himself president for life in 1975 (Aziz 2018, 8). Over the next decade, Bourguiba's health declined, and wars of succession were on the rise. Prime minister, Ben Ali, carried out a peaceful *coup d'état* in 1987 and held power up until the Intifada in 2011, when he was forced to escape the country. Over the last ten years, Tunisia has attempted a comprehensive democratization process whilst fighting terrorist attacks, Islamism, and economic difficulties.

Tunisia has a long-standing relationship with Europe, having been one of the more progressive states out of the AMCs, even during the authoritarian years of Bourguiba and Ben Ali. The latter having been defined as 'Europe's preferred dictator' (Cherif 2019, 88). In 1957, the first year after Tunisian independence, the first treaty was signed with the EEC. In this deal Tunisia was reserved 'special treatment' in the trading of goods. The agreement was secured by France, as way to secure their postcolonial legacy (Cherif 2019, 88). The first Association Agreement (AA) came into place in 1969, well before any of the other Maghreb countries. Tunisia also took part in the Barcelona Process with the result of a new AA, signed in 1995 (EU 1998) on which all EU-Tunisian relations are built.

The EU is Tunisia's most important trade partner, accounting for 69.7% of all Tunisian exports while the EU represented 52.1% of all Tunisian imports (EC 2020e). There is a deep dependency on exporting to the EU from the Tunisian perspective. In addition, Tunisia receives EU funding through the European Neighborhood Instrument (ENI), which during the period from 2017 until 2020, accumulated over €1.1 billion (EU 2020d). Coupled with the large flows of foreign direct investments from Europe, the dependency on the EU from the Tunisian perspective is quite clear.

Period I – Pre-Arab Uprising

The idea of Tunisian exceptionalism has been significant in its relationship with the EU. In many agreements, Tunisia has been the first out of the AMCs to sign (Jaidane 2019, 137). With the Barcelona Process, Tunisia and the EU agreed on a new AA, which would end up being the guiding document for all EU-Tunisian relations (EU 1998). The most important aspect of the agreement was that Tunisian products would enter the European market tariff-free and that European products would have the same advantage in the Tunisian market. The ultimate goal of creating a DCFTA between the two actors by 2010 has however, not been successful. In the same manner as its Maghrebien neighbors, Tunisia has suffered from an unequal trade picture with the EU. In large, Tunisian products are agricultural products, but because of the protectionist specificities the EU's Common Agricultural Policy, Tunisian products cannot compete with European ones. In the words of Youssef Cherif (2019, 89): "Tunisia opened its borders to Europe, but Europe did not reciprocate". Tunisia also attempted many calls for the EU to open its borders to facilitate human mobility, something the EU never agreed to.

'Europe's preferred dictator', Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali, had a very close relationship with France all throughout this period. It was a relationship in which France was willing to support Ben Ali because of his importance in securing stability and fighting terrorism, even though he led an oppressive regime (Wood 2002, 108). Tunisia's exceptionalism started deteriorating with Ben Ali leading the state, and even though he had close ties with Europe, he started to refuse the democratic reforms that were parts of the AAs. In 2008, the EU decided to freeze the reinforced partnership negotiations that were happening with Tunisia. Even though there were some problems in EU-Tunisian relations, the incremental role of Ben Ali as a 'safe' dictator, being able to make business flow and secure European borders, therefore seemed of higher importance than promoting democracy (Powel 2009, 207).

Period II – The Arab Awakening

17th of December 2010, the 26-year-old vegetable seller Mohamed Bouazizi lit himself on fire in front of the administrative building of his hometown, Sidi Bouzid. Bouazizi felt he had been unjustly treated by the authorities, a corrupt and authoritarian rule that felt difficult to overcome (Nordenson 2018, 19). Few might have been able to imagine the enormous repercussions of this event. Tunisians wanted justice for Bouazizi and real change in the Tunisian political system. The authoritarian hand of Ben Ali had increased over many years, creating room for himself to sit as president for life. The protests augmented in size quite quickly with Ben Ali escaping the country 14th of January 2011. The Tunisian uprisings were successful, and the symbolism of that success became very important, spreading quickly to most of the other Arab countries.

The rapid fall of Ben Ali's regime was a surprise, and specifically so, for Europe, clarified by the uncoordinated response. Tunisia was already an important partner for Europe and became even more so after the Arab Uprisings. The European HR of the time, Catherine Ashton, visited Tunisia as early as February 2011 to show support. Europe and the rest of the world watched with awe as the first democratically elected government, *the Troika government*, started laying out the foundation of the new Constitution, which came into place in 2014.

The 2011 "Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean (EC 2011a)", as well as the new revised ENP (EC 2011b) became the two guiding documents for the new relationship with Tunisia. Democracy promotion was of high importance in these documents, since the path to democracy seemed more achievable in Tunisia, than in the other countries of the region, the EU focused heavily on aiding Tunisia in this process. In 2012, Tunisia obtained a 'Privileged Partner' status in the new AP, within the ENP framework (EEAS 2012).

> "The EU is determined to make a long-term commitment alongside the Tunisian democratic transition […]. Support for the Tunisian transition constitutes, in fact, a historic opportunity for the European Union to respond in a substantial, effective and positive way to the challenges posed both to Tunisia and by the "Arab Spring", in

accordance with the reorientation of the neighborhood policy decided in 2011 (EEAS 2012, 3) ». [4]

The shift in EU rhetoric was clear with the reference to the 2011 'Prosperity' document as well as the revised ENP. The meaning behind this new status was to engage Tunisia in negotiations for a DCFTA with the EU as well, but which similarly as for its neighbors, have not reached agreement.

Period III – Post Arab Uprising

The period after the Arab Uprisings has seen an intensified relationship between the EU and Tunisia. The 2012 'Privileged Partnership' agreement set out an ambitious plan for the implementation of this 'new' partnership, showing the EU's willingness to invest in the transition and attempt to aid in the consolidation of democracy. The political dialogue since then has seen many high-level political exchanges (EC 2017b).

In 2014, the Mobility Partnership provided a framework for cooperation on migration , with the goal to; "facilitate the movement of people between the EU and Tunisia and to promote a common and responsible management of existing migratory flows, including by simplifying procedures for granting visas (EC 2014)". Between 2015 and 2019, 4100 Tunisian students or university staff moved to Europe, while 1900 European counterparts moved to Tunisia (EU 2020d). The mobility agreements can be seen as an example of the of the 'carrot' – 'stick' approach implemented in the ENP, showing this agreement as a result of the transitions that Tunisia had been making.

In 2016, the EU and Tunisia sent out a joint communication on "Strengthened EU support for Tunisia". The emphasis was put on the strategic importance of supporting Tunisia's transition, attempting to tailor policy towards the country, to avoid a general policy towards the southern neighborhoods. The conclusion being that Tunisia would benefit from a more involved EU in the short and medium term (EC 2016, 14).

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[4] Original quote : « L'UE est déterminée à s'engager sur le long terme à côté de la transition démocratique tunisienne, [...] L'appui à la transition tunisienne constitue, en effet, une opportunité historique pour l'Union européenne afin de répondre de manière substantielle, efficace et positive aux défis posés tant à la Tunisie que par le « Printemps arabe », conformément à la réorientation de la politique de voisinage décidée en 2011 ».

The years after the Arab Uprisings saw a rise in terrorist attacks in Europe, which could be traced back to Tunisian nationals or Europeans with Tunisian origins. The Nice and Berlin attacks in 2016 were both carried out by Tunisians (Dworkin and Malki 2018, 16). Tunisia experienced multiple terrorist attacks within its own borders as well, struggling with a large number of radicalized youths. The augmentation of these security threats frightened Europe, keeping in mind that Tunisia was in a fragile state, in democratic transition. Simultaneously, debates started growing in Europe about the compatibility of Islam and democracy, which resulted in the growth of right-wing populism. The new European populist parties have declared their interests in EU foreign policy, and specifically so, towards the Southern Neighborhoods (Rivera Escartin 2020).

In 2018, the 'Strategic Priorities 2018-2020' document was adopted (Council 2018) with the objective of institutionalizing and strengthening EU support for Tunisia again. The document laid out specificities on democracy and human rights, which includes the 'reinforcement of the institution of parliament', 'the establishment of the Constitutional Court' and 'reform of the judicial system, an approximation to international standards including those of the Council of Europe'(Council 2018, 5). Security is also an incremental part of the plan, with the outlining of certain aspects pertaining to migration and terrorist-threats.

Tunisia

	Period I Pre-Arab Uprisings **1992 – 2010**	Period II The Arab Awakening **2011 – 2014**	Period III Post-Arab Uprisings and Migration Crisis **2015 - 2020**
EU-Tunisian development	1995: The Barcelona Process 1995: Association Agreement 2003: European Neighborhood Policy	2011: Revised ENP 2014: Mobility Partnership	2015: Revised ENP 2015: DCFTA negotiations 2016: 'Strengthened EU Support for Tunisia'. 2018: Adoption of Strategic Priorities
Temporal aspects	The end of the cold war marking the beginning of a new world order. The 9/11 attacks in 2001.	Democratic awakening in the AMCs – the belief in change and ideals.	Economic and political difficulties in the AMC's. The migration wave hits Europe.

Table 5 Periodization Tunisia

V.IV   Summary of empirical analysis

The empirical analysis of the three cases; Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia, has shown that the EU has different policies towards the countries of the Maghreb. Tunisia and Morocco have had a more present relationship with the EU than Algeria. Algeria finalized its Association Agreement with the EU ten years after Tunisia, and five years after Morocco.

During Period I: Pre-Arab Uprisings (1992-2010), after the fall of the Berlin wall, the Barcelona Process set out to treat equally the countries of the Southern Neighborhood. The French initiated idea, lost traction and was set back because of differences between the Maghreb countries. The second half of Period I sees the effects of the War on Terror with an increased focus on security. The ENP had as a goal to include and create a better relationship with the southern neighborhoods. The first ENP did however, continue to focus on the idea of the southern Mediterranean as one unit, without much differentiation in policy. Period I also shows that there is a clear rhetoric on supporting human rights and promoting democracy. There is, nonetheless, a lack of evidence to support the rhetoric. There was continuous trade and cooperation with authoritarian leaders, equally with King Hassan II and Mohammad VI in Morocco, with Ben Ali in Tunisia and with Bouteflika in Algeria.

Period II: The Arab Awakening (2011-2014) is clearly affected by the events unfolding in the south. The EU struggles to give a coordinated response until some months later. The EU then responds with a revised ENP and Prosperity Plan, aimed at focusing more on the specificities of each country. The revised ENP created Action Plans for each country, with different goals and conditionalities connected to each one. The critiques are however multifaceted, showing that the differentiation is not specific enough. The rhetoric in EU documents focus to a larger extent than before, on democracy and human rights, and clarify that the EU seeks to aid the countries in their transition. All three states did make changes to their political system after the Arab Awakening, but to different extents. Whereas Tunisia had a revolution and institutionalized democracy with a new constitution, Morocco and Algeria made some smaller changes to the power dynamics between institutions.

Period III: Post-Arab-Uprisings (2015-2021) witnesses both the short-term, as well as the long-term effects, that the Arab Awakening had, and continues to have, on the Maghreb and how they extend towards Europe. The migration crisis forced the EU to reconsider the rhetoric towards the region, agreeing on a new Global Strategy which focused much more on the security threats facing the region and the need to secure stability at the borders. This,

however, has not been the specific rhetoric in the documents towards each country, which have still focused largely on democracy promotion as a guiding principle.

The following table shows the development in EU foreign policy towards the Maghreb. It summarizes the individual policies towards each country as well as the larger lines of EU foreign policy towards the region, with the rhetorical orientation in parenthesis.

EU policy towards the Maghreb

Development	Period I *Pre-Arab Uprisings* *1992 – 2010*	Period II *The Arab Awakening* *2011 – 2014*	Period III *Post-Arab Uprisings* *2015 - 2021*
General EU foreign policy	**2003: ESS** (*democratically orientated*) **2003: ENP** (*democratically orientated*)	**2011: Revised ENP** (*differentiation*) **2011: Prosperity Plan** (*democratically orientated*)	**2015: Revised ENP** (*strategically orientated*) **2016: The Global Strategy** (*strategically orientated*)
EU-Moroccan development	1995: Barcelona Process 2000: Association Agreement 2008: Advanced status	2013: DCFTA negotiations 2013: Mobility Partnership	2015: New AP 2019: Declaration giving new 'impetus' to the Advanced Status
EU- Algeria development	1995: Barcelona Process 2005: Association Agreement	2013: Strategic Partnership on energy	2017: new "Partnership Priorities" in the EU-Algeria Association Council
EU- Tunisian development	1995: The Barcelona Process 1995: Association Agreement	2014: Mobility Partnership	2015: DCFTA negotiations 2016: 'Strengthened EU Support for Tunisia'. 2018: Adoption of Strategic Priorities
Temporal aspects	**The end of the cold war marking the beginning of a new world order. The 9/11 attacks in 2001.**	**Democratic awakening in the AMCs – the belief in change and ideals.**	**Economic and political difficulties in the AMC's. The migration wave hits Europe. The covid-19 pandemic.**

Table 6: Summary of EU Policy towards the Maghreb

VI Analytical discussion

The preceding chapter has given an empirical analysis of the Moroccan, Algerian and Tunisian case. This chapter will provide an analytical discussion, attempting to address how the EU functions as a foreign policy actor in the region and whether the EU can be understood as a promoter of democracy based on the preceding case studies as well as the interviews. The discussion will therefore attempt to respond to the following thesis question: *How does the nature of the EU as a foreign policy actor affect its ability to promote democracy in the Maghreb?*

The analytical discussion will be divided in two sections. First the analysis will be discussed within the diachronic division of periods, which will help to illuminate important temporal aspects on whether the EU's role can be said to have changed before, during and after the Arab Awakening. The second part of the analysis is synchronic and investigates the paradoxes of importance that have arisen in the periodic document analysis and in the interviews.

VI.I Periodical analysis

The cases studied have shown that each case has complex ties with the EU, underlining the complexity of the research question. The following section will attempt to enlighten this question by addressing to what extent the EU's role can have said to have changed over time. The cases are considered comparatively and in a regional perspective. The diachronically structured analysis is reviewed by the three periods as seen in the individual case presentations: (1) Pre-Arab Uprisings 1992 – 2010; (2) The Arab Awakening 2011-2014; and (3) Post-Arab Uprisings 2015-2021. The objective is therefore to understand the EU as a contemporary actor in the Maghreb by viewing it through historical lenses.

Period I – Pre-Arab Uprising 1992 – 2010

As chapter II showed, the EU had ties and agreements with the Maghreb before the institutionalized foreign policy came into place. The EU slowly built up its reputation as a global actor and decided after the cold war to institutionalize this role with the Maastricht treaty in 1992, of which democratic principles were key, keeping in line with the temporal aspects of

the time. 25 years after the Barcelona Process in 1995, the objective of creating a proper Union, has still not been achieved. Romeo (1998, 21) asked in 1998 whether the Barcelona Process could be an adequate solution to the "real and perceived security problems these countries" posed for Europe. She found then it was limited, lacking long-term commitment and political vision, as it did not understand or approach the underlying socio-economic problems that were present in the Maghreb. She concluded that the policy might be counter-productive; "threating to create a truly unsafe Mediterranean for Europe (Romeo 1998, 34)".

The UfM was also a concept that was supposed to promote democratic change in the states of the Mediterranean, a project many will say have failed, or at least not reached the goals it set out to achieve (Emara 2012, 38, Bauer 2015, 37).This rhetoric of creating 'a ring of friends' continued in the first ENP of 2003. Informants II and VI spoke to the fact that Spain had much more in common with the Mediterranean states, than for example Sweden or Finland, keeping in mind that Spain as a periphery of the European Union, is forced to maintain a good relationship with their southern neighbors, regardless of the EU. Hence, the idea of a common Mediterranean identity to unite these breaches, seems to have been the goal of Sarkozy when initiating the UfM.

Another aspect, regarding the role of certain member states, can be found in the UfM as well. The fact that the UfM was a French initiated project, seems to have made it difficult for Algeria to participate from the beginning, attempting to avoid the French involvement on domestic and international politics. The strict and complicated relationship that France shares with the region should not be taken lightly and must be seen in connection with the general ties to the EU. The importance of certain member-states driving the foreign policy of the EU seemed to be rather evident during the first period, as the French role was prominent in the EU's affairs towards the Maghreb. As most of the informants pointed out, France has been a leading source in the external policies towards the region, even though period III seems to see a shift in that direction, with other member states taking more space.

The popular discontentment and fear of the Islamist threat was early applied by Le Pen in France during the 90s, and the movement has seen large growth ever since. These concerns reached a peak with the terrorist attack on the twin towers in 2001, with George W. Bush declaring the War on Terror: as the Islamist threat became truly problematic for the West. The focus on stability and security became more augmented than ever before, and the tight relationship the US shared with Europe came to be shown in European rhetoric as well (Willis

2014, 322). The EU as a unity did not really change rhetoric, as it continued to focus on building democracy and securing the rule of law, but a shift in practice, and particularly so from France, became more evident:

> "The shift came to an abrupt end with the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York. French foreign-policy priorities demanded that every effort be made to combat Al Qaeda, the Taliban and terrorism worldwide. Support from Ben Ali and other "moderate" Arab governments was considered crucial (Wood 2002, 93)

The security-stability nexus was therefore very important in this period, even though the general rhetoric towards the Maghreb did not change.

The year 2004 did, however, mark a shift in the way the EU handled its foreign policy; the EU was at a point, in which it could not enlarge anymore (Ivan, Nuþ, and Mera 2013, 105). The eastern neighbors had now been incorporated, leaving further geographical expansion more difficult. This might have created some sort of vacuum of uncertainty about how the EU would conduct its foreign policy, which up until this point had largely focused on enlargement. If enlargement was the ultimate goal, how could the EU attempt to enlarge outside its geographical scope? Even though article 49 of the TEU states that any country can apply to the EU, it has become clear that there are geographical, if not more political and cultural conditions to this claim, exemplified in the case of Turkey.

The ENP from 2003 did place many of the objectives on the Eastern as well as the Southern neighbors, and became a way to secure borders, first by incorporating most of the Eastern neighbors and then by attempting a similar solution in the south. Regardless, it is evident that the policy is affected by the 2003 ESS, focusing on the importance of democratic development as a way to secure stability; promoting democratic development and prosperity with the attempt to share everything but institution. The cooperation on democracy in this period was however primarily based on the logic of bargaining, rather than attempting substantive exchanges (van Hüllen 2019, 880). The negotiations, which primarily took place in the Association Agreement Councils, focused largely on a superficial harmony of each actors' normative premises. If the EU was a normative actor, it seems that it would be in these types of negotiations where the 'normative power' would be used. Wood (2002, 108) argued in 2002 that: "While the EU, rhetorically, argues that economic growth and development provide the means to combat political instability, its actions have been mediocre at best".

Period II – The Arab Awakening 2011 - 2014

From the day in which Mohammad Bouazizi lit himself on fire in Sidi Bouzid, December 2011, the message spread extremely fast. The uncoordinated response from the EU in the beginning became evident in the difference of opinion between the two larger member states, France and Germany. Whereas Germany was quick to support the changes, the French foreign minister offered to send troops to Tunisia. After months of radio silence, the EU could unite, and in March 2011, they officially showed their support for the democratic movements stating that the EU was aware of the mistakes of the past, ready to make a "qualitative step forward" in the relations with their partners. The Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity was declared a paradigm shift by EU policy makers themselves, with admissions about the diverse policy goals as being largely incompatible, therewithin the perceived contradiction between values and security (Teti 2012, 267).

> "The EU is ready to support all its Southern neighbors who are able and willing to embark on such reforms through a "Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity [...] Despite some commonalities, no country in the region is the same so we must react to specificities of each of them (EC 2011a, 2)".

The fact that the ENP had already been in the making, ready to be released in 2011 might explain why most of the informants stated that there has been no supposed change in EU foreign policy before and after the Uprisings (Del Sarto 2016, Pace 2014, Tömmel 2013, Mouhib 2014). When releasing the new ENP in 2011 the EU wrote that the "Recent events and the results of the review have shown that EU support to political reforms in neighbouring countries has met with limited results (EC 2011b, 1)". In that sense, the EU already knew and proclaimed again that the policies that had been in the works up until 2011 had not been successful. The words of the president of the Council at the time, Herman Van Rompuy, stating that: "Without Europe, there would still have been an Arab Spring, but without us there will be no Arab summer (Van Rompuy 2011)!", indicate that the EU firmly believed in itself as a transformative power, vital for the success of the Arab Awakening. The new ENP stated that the EU was to:

> "provide greater support to partners engaged in building *deep democracy* – the kind that lasts because the right to vote is accompanied by rights to exercise free speech, form competing political parties, receive impartial justice from independent judges, security from accountable police and army forces, access to a competent and non-corrupt civil service — and other civil and human rights

that many Europeans take for granted, such as the freedom of thought, conscience and religion (EC 2011b, 1)".

Ten years after the Arab Uprisings, the search for deep democracy continues, even though the HR of the time stated that the EU as not to going be a "passive spectator", but that it needed to "support wholeheartedly the wish of the people in our neighborhood to enjoy the same freedoms that we take as our right (EC 2011a, 2)".

There is in other words a clear argument to support the fact that the EU itself wanted to make a change. In that sense one can ask why the new revised ENP came out as quickly, already carrying many of the elements that were already in place before the Arab Uprisings. The recasting of the past EMP, aiming to enhance political dialogue and EU funding, did not go beyond other the typical relations with third states (Bremberg 2016, 434). The early policies therefore also lacked an indication of change, even though the rhetoric was in place.

Period III – Post Arab Uprising 2015 - 2021

The Arab Awakening led to an increase in migration towards the European continent, many of whom came from the Maghreb, but also by transition. The migration threat has had different implications for the Maghreb countries, and this period highlights the different needs that the EU has with each of the countries. Morocco has been instrumental as a security partner for the EU in this aspect, more so than Tunisia and Algeria. Tunisia never played such an incremental role in the hindering of migration, while Algeria has been more important in the general fight against terror. Algeria's experience fighting against the terrorist threat during the 90s, had given them expertise that was important for the EU and the neighboring countries. On the other hand, Tunisia seems to have been more of an experimental project of the unification of Islam and democracy, and the EU has cooperated close together with Tunisia during period III on supporting democratic transition. The Arab Uprisings therefore become a way to test the EU's commitment to democracy promotion, specifically so, after the EU themselves had stated that they had failed in their commitment to democracy before the Arab Uprisings.

Reviewing the cases over these three periods, before, during and after the Arab Uprisings, point to the fact that there have been some subtle changes in policy towards the Maghreb; but that also, regardless of policy, the EU has continued to focus on democracy promotion and the protection of human rights as important values in their rhetoric arguments

up until 2016, when the Global Strategy came about (Mihalache 2016). This indication shows a change from a more normative-based rhetoric towards a more 'security-based rhetoric, followed by an ENP change, which in this case follows the rhetoric to a larger extent (Blockmans 2017, 140). The importance of populist parties in European government, focusing on migration control and border control, has been discussed as important reasons for this change, as they are contributing to the increased debate on the Islamist threat (Rivera Escartin 2020). Another rhetoric change was from the difference in wording. After the Arab Uprisings the EU started applying the word 'partner', instead of 'neighbors', which did illuminate the importance of the two-way dialogue.

This slow downgrading of the democratic dialogue does seem to pose problems for the NPE perspective, if one agrees that the force for good theory is based on academics and EU-officials confidence in their own ability to function as role models. Over the three periods, it has become clear that the normative ambitions for this new world order have been waning and loosing ambition (Lehne 2020). The return of realpolitik amongst EU officials therefore seems to show that there is a lack of faith in the EU's ability to be sui generis. In the case that the EU does not believe that it has the power to change the conception of normal anymore, then it is not strange that third actors do not think it either. The way Pace (2007) argues on the replication of the epistemic community, validating and reproducing the force for good identity in between policy makers, will therefore be dependent on if the EU officials actually believe in it. Therefore, what seems to be the return of realpolitik in the EUs foreign policy towards the Maghreb does question this belief. It is difficult to see how the EU can be a normative power if it does not believe in its own ambitions; the self-maintaining epistemic foundation therefore seems to have difficulties maintaining itself.

VI.II Synchronic analysis

In this second section, the discussion will be structured by different paradoxes that have come to light during the periodical analysis and the interviews. The following paradoxes will be analyzed; (I) *The oxymoron of a principled pragmatism;* (II) The paradox of *'Deep democracy';*(III) *Too close yet too far away – A pan-European paradox?;* (IV) *The paradox of 'Productive Ambiguity;* (V) *Africa's last colony - The paradox of the Western Sahara Conflict*; (VI) *The French Paradox – A war of collective memories?;* and (VII) *The paradox of external perceptions – The missing link?* Each paradox is guided by reflections from the informants and discussed within the theoretical framework.

I. *The oxymoron of a principled pragmatism*

> "The EU wants to block the migrants before they come to Europe, for that they need the cooperation of Moroccan authorities, and sometimes it breaches law and human rights. But the European Union close their eyes and sometimes they contribute to this financially and giving logistics and information about it. In this issue, we see that the EU is not a promoter of democracy, but on the contrary, contributes to human rights repressions (Informant V)".

The review of policy and practice of the EU's role as a foreign policy actor in the Maghreb shows that there is a gap between rhetoric and practice. One could argue that it seems that the EU is coming to understand its own limitations, or distinction, with the notion of 'principled pragmatism' of the new Global Strategy. The application of such a term makes it difficult to evaluate the foreign policy of the EU, and more specifically, whether a pragmatic realpolitik will take precedence over the values enshrined in the TEU, that being freedom, democracy, and the rule of law.

When Manners wrote his first article on Normative Power Europe (NPE) in 2002, the EU was in the process of writing the European Security Strategy (ESS), which clearly focused on human rights and the promotion of democracy in its neighborhoods, as a way of securing stability. Nonetheless, during that time, as has been shown in the periodic analysis, the EU was supporting authoritarian leaders in the region. In one way, it could therefore be argued that the gap between rhetoric and practice was larger then, than today, because the strategy was clearly normatively orientated. Today, however, it seems there is less room for critiquing the

'principled pragmatism' orientation, as the term itself is an oxymoron. If one believes that it is possible to be both pragmatic and principled at the same time, supporting democracy and human rights while supporting authoritarian tendencies, well then there is not much to be critiqued. However, the EU still portrays itself as a democracy promoter and protector of human rights very clearly. This oxymoron is illustrated in the guiding quote from informant V, namely that, even though the EU is giving many funds to help civil society and to support democratic development, the protection of borders seems to have become more important.

The discussion of pragmatism and principles is also reflected in the dilemma of values and interests. As has been argued, there seems to be an internal battle of interests and values within the EU, and to attempt a conclusion on whether it is as simple as saying that there is a dilemma of values and interests would entail that one firstly, would have to agree upon what values and interests mean (Roccu and Voltolini 2018, 4), speaking to the dangers of this dichotomized variable. However, the EU, within itself and as a foreign policy actor is simply not coherent. The dissonance between the actors creates a misunderstanding in concepts and the concepts therefore become a part of this dichotomic variable, ending in a dilemma between "values and interests".

> "For years, we have propped up dictorial regimes, paying lip service to the need for them to democratize when what we were actually interested in was the stability they guaranteed against the Islamist threat (Borrell 2016)".

Josep Borrell, who was to become the HR in 2019, stated in 2016 very clearly how he viewed the EU in the Maghreb, indicating that the EU itself was unsure of what its interests in the region actually represented. The internal battle of interest and values therefore depicts rather clearly how it exports itself to foreign policy.

However, there have been clear signals from both the ESS and the Global Strategy that democracy still is an important guiding principle. The EU clearly depicts itself as an actor that is going to protect human rights and support democratic transition. Regardless of whether the promotion of democracy and human rights are in the interests of the EU or in its values, or both, it is undeniable that the EU is defining itself by these values. Therefore, the dissonance between rhetoric and practice, makes it complicated to argue for the normative position.

If the EU was a normative actor, who had 'learned' from its mistakes during the Arab Uprisings, it does seem rather contradictory that nothing has been said about the revoking of powers in Morocco, as well as the Hirak in Algeria. It almost seems that one can reverse the question by asking to what extent Morocco is asserting power over the EU. As stated by the Moroccan informants, the EU is very careful in its dealings with Morocco, and so much so that it at times looks away. Immigration and terrorism are, reversibly, sticks that Morocco can use against the EU.

The recent incident of ten thousand immigrants that were able to make their way to the Spanish Ceuta, because of a 'mysterious disappearance' of the Moroccan border police (Euronews 2021), really comes to show the power of Morocco in securing Europe's borders. This incident is the tip of the iceberg, of a much larger problem, as information from the High Commissioner for Refugees shows that the number of refugees that are coming into the Canary Islands have skyrocketed over the last three years (UNHCR 2021). The immigrants are coming from safely controlled Western Sahara, which is firmly controlled by Moroccan border police. In Ceuta, Morocco opens its canals for one day, and the political chaos is present, not in Spain, but in the EU, as Ceuta is a 'European border'. This chaos was all initiated by the Western Sahara conflict, which will be discussed as a paradox in itself. Regardless, Morocco's show of force to the EU, was *sans ambiguïté*, without ambiguity (Bobin 2021).

This point is further illustrated by the French ambassador who allegedly said that: "Morocco is a mistress with whom we sleep every night, of whom we are not particularly in love, but we must defend. In other words, we turn a blind eye (Fakir 2019, 70)". This quote could be transferable to the EU as well, in regard to the migration situation. FRONTEX (Frontières Extérieurs), is the European Coast Guard and Border Control program, and their mandate is to protect the European borders. Frontex's budget has increased every year, together with a rise of critiques by multiple NGOs, for restricting asylum-seekers rights to apply for protection (Aas and Gundhus 2015, 1). The lack of transparency has also been a common critique. In Morocco, Frontex is said to collaborate well with local authorities. On the other hand, the EU has asked Tunisia and Algeria to function as external borders in the same way as with Morocco, but as indicated by Informant VII, Tunisia flatly refused. Frontex is also in itself quite a paradoxical agent, as has been pointed out by Aas and Gundhus (2015, 14), by 'policing humanitarian borderlands'. Moreover, is even the policing nature of Frontex identifiable with NPE? As Manners argued in a later article on NPE (Manners 2006b), that militarizing capacities, or even the CFSP in itself, can be a threat to the EU's distinctiveness.

Revisiting the arguments of Pollack (2012), Seeberg (2009) and Hyde-Price (2006), hence underscoring the realist argument, is that the EU cannot be a normative power when there is such a dissonance between the discourses and outcomes of policies. If one agrees that there is a need to practice what you preach, the argument is difficult to disagree with, but of course, it's even more so, when the variance between rhetoric and practice impact the way in which the EU is perceived, which further impacts the way in which the EU can diffuse its normative base.

The issue of migration also shows the short-term versus long term commitment to finding durable solutions from the EU's side. If the nucleus of the EUs problematic relationship with the Maghreb is based on the fear of the Islamist threat, therewithin the fact that policies have been bargained on, because of migration issues – well then it seems rather strange that a 'mobility-agreement' came into place so late in all the countries. The issue of migration is not limited to Morocco, Tunisia, or Algeria. It's a 'block-issue', and it must be handled as such if the EU seeks to gain control over the southern borders. The young population of the Maghreb countries continues to grow. Not gaining jobs and not being able to go abroad for new opportunities, might pose an ever-larger security threat than any other. The youth of the region can therefore serve to be its biggest liability, or its greatest asset (Ghafar 2019, 181). There is no short-term solution to the migration problems of the Maghreb, and the demographic situation is, quite logically, not negotiable. Regardless of the funds sent by the EU to the youth ministries of the Maghreb countries, it alone will not solve the problems of radicalized youth. Many EU countries are in need of qualified labor and creating a mobility agreement that allows both actors to gain therefore seems to be a more durable solution. However, it seems that the perceived threat of Islamism and the dangers of migratory problems are guiding the EU's policy on migration (Geddes and Hadj-Abdou 2018), thereby avoiding the actual problem.

HR Borrell stated in 2016 that the way in which the EU had handled the Arab Uprisings had been a failure. Therefore, the response, or lack thereof, to the Hirak movement in Algeria in 2019, seems rather daunting. The EU got, from what is perceived by many Arabs as a 'second chance' with the Hirak movement, and still there was no response. It does make one question in which way the EU's response the Arab Uprisings was a failure; was the problem that the EU should have spoken out earlier, or that they should have kept silent? The same could be said for the RIF protests in Morocco and the violence that broke out between the Polisario and Morocco. When parliamentary powers were revoked in Morocco, the EU kept

silent, and in practice authoritarianism is now more firmly embedded in the country, than it was before the Arab Uprisings (Youngs and Balfour 2015).

What seems problematic is the fact that HR Borrell has stated that the EU had to learn, but what is it actually that needed to be learned? The Algerians are protesting against the political elites, for true democracy, and the recurring peaceful protests keep underscoring this. If supporting deep democracy is the basis of the EU's normative power, it seems rather strange that they are not supporting the current process in Algeria.

This behavior, which continuously seems to contradict between rhetoric and practice is more adaptable to being a utility-maximizing strategy than a basis of normative power. The rhetorical commitments to human rights and democracy, while at the same time advancing trade relations with the authoritarian leaders of the Maghreb, therefore ascribes more to an empire approach, seeking to maximize its strategy in its foreign affairs. It would not be sufficient to state that this is a simple 'ad-hoc' situation, as could be argued by NPE, since it's been shown through all periods that the EU has had many opportunities to adapt its stance. This evolution of the EU as being an imperial actor does make one think about how one of the first founders of the EU, Jean Monnet, warned as early as in 1963, about the dangers of becoming a 19th century power.

> "People, more often outside the European Community than within, are tempted to see the European Community as a potential nineteenth-century state with all the overtones this implies. But we are not in the nineteenth century, and the Europeans have built up the European Community precisely in order to find a way out of the conflicts to which the nineteenth-century philosophy gave rise (Monnet 1963, 210)".

The pursuit of becoming a great power, which the utility-maximizing strategy implies, limits the EU's normative stance, and even risks its existence. Manners (2006b, 195) argued that such a pursuit, specifically a 'militarizing process', only could happen in a 'critically reflexive context' (for example in accordance with the UN), which is clearly not the case in the Maghreb. The oxymoron of principled pragmatism, therefore, seems rather fitting for the EU's dilemma in the south.

II.   *The paradox of 'Deep Democracy'*

> "Thinking about what happened in Algeria in 2019, it's like the EU hasn't learned any lessons from what happened during the Arab Spring. We are protesting against the political elite, so how can Macron congratulate them and say that France respects this? (Informant IV)".

The most iconic slogan of the Arab Awakening '*al-shaab yurib isqat al-nizam*', the people seek the fall of the regime, is of interest to understand. Emphasis on the word *al-nizam*, which in Arabic means 'regime' or 'system' (Nordenson 2018, 76). The protesters did not want to simply overthrow the authoritarian leaders, but to change the whole system. The periodic analysis has clearly shown that the role of the EU before the Arab Uprisings was based on supporting these regimes; hence the paradox of 'deep democracy', after having aided authoritarian leaders. Following decolonization theory, it should be remembered that postcolonialists have focused particularly on the system, not just the leaders. The objective of the Arab Uprisings and the Hirak movements of 2019, have not been to simply remove Ben Ali or Bouteflika, but to change a system that is inherently corrupt, and lacking in trust.

Europe has drawn lines over Africa and the Arab World since the Berlin conference up until after the second world war; lines that have had no linguistic or cultural legitimacy. When considering the Maghreb, it should be remembered that the systems they are 'fighting against', are indeed based on a European, and particularly so, French model. What does it entail when the system that one is fighting against, is a system built by colonizers, and more importantly, how is it democratically sustainable to impose European systems, once again upon these countries as a way of democratization? How can these states attempt to liberate themselves from a system that is not working, if it is happening again by Eurocentric means? European ruling has not helped them before, so it is comprehendible that they do not wish to be forced into the same spiral again. Thereby, perceiving the EU's imposition of systems, as a way to "enforce subordination and exploitation (Kohn and McBride 2011, 5)", as could be argued by the decolonization theorists.

Informant IV's referral to the EU's divided response to the Arab Uprisings also shows how the external perceptions perspective, combined with the actual policies, aid in our understanding of the EU as a democracy promoter. Informant IV referred to the speech of the French interior minister, which proposed to send troops to help Ben Ali in Tunisia. The first reactions, combined with the policy reactions which came after do not support the idea of creating deep democracy. EU policies have been focused on supporting civil society in all three states, but the funds have still gone through the ruling political elite to be further distributed to nonstate actors (Ghanem 2019, 32). It does therefore seem like a paradox, one in which democracy can be promoted, but only through the political elite, which is exactly what the people seek to remove.

Applying such a pathway for democratic development indicate that the EU might be treating democracy promotion by myopia. The EU's ability to influence is present, but for democracy promotion to be effective, there is a need for an understanding of the culture and the society of the place where one is attempting to push these reforms. The religious and cultural aspects are very important and do question to what extent EU norms in themselves are universal, or if it is the way in which they are promoted, which make them complicated. This is illustrated by Wolff (2018), who found that the EU's way of framing religion in the Southern neighborhood, is prone to selectively engage with certain actors, who 'fit the bill' of being 'sufficiently moderately Islamist'. This, however, can be more problematic in the long term, as it can eventually lead to resentment amongst the populations, generating further insecurities and polarization. Colombo, Soler i lecha, and Otte (2019, 22) have also found that the EU lacks a detailed 'map' of knowledge about "societal dynamics" in the region. In addition, the neo-colonial lenses are specifically important in this context, as norms coming from the West are often viewed with suspicion, as 'alien values' (Zielonka 2013, 48). The increasingly diverse rhetoric, of the 'Self' and the 'Other', therefore problematizes even more this dialogue.

However, it does seem rather unlikely, keeping in mind the different mindsets, religions, and societies, that a democratic system in the Maghreb would look similar to the one in Europe. The local adaption of policies is crucial, and therefore implies that the EU would gain more from really adapting its policies in its attempt to diffuse norms, rather than focusing specifically on the pathway of carrots and sticks. Manners fourth means of diffusion revolves around transference, which can include the carrot-stick approach, meaning in this case that financial rewards lie in sight for the third party. Nonetheless, an important reflection that arises from these questions revolves around the EU's ability to remain a normative power, by solely focusing on this type of diffusion. Is not the whole idea of the EU as a normative power, that it should be able to diffuse ideas based on its unique character which was funded on democratic principles? This argument is further illustrated by the empirical evidence which shows that Morocco's ruling elite has been using the EU as a survival strategy, and that the EU simply has responded to the small democratic advances, rather than actually influencing it (Catalano and Graziano 2016, 380). This does question whether a normative diffusion is even happening in the first place.

The very nature of Manners idea about the EU being unique *by itself,* keeps becoming difficult to defend. This idea could be the particular reason as to why Manners wanted to clarify that it was important not to focus on the militarization of the EU; namely because it would

confuse and undermine the EU's normative 'uniqueness' (Manners 2006b, 182). The same argument could be used towards the policing nature of Frontex, which specifically focuses on securing short-term solutions on migration. This could be said to have been Manner's fear exactly, when he wrote about the military power in a new reconsideration of NPE in 2006. Manners (2006b, 194) argued that the EU acquiring more military capability could tempt it to use short-term military responses instead of its "traditional reliance on long-term structural conflict prevention and transformation". As seen in the periodic analysis it is specifically short-term solutions that have been the norm. However, this also poses the question of how the focus on short term solutions impacts European interests and values in the long term. What will the secondary effects be, for European security, when the EU continues to support authoritarian regimes in the long term? Is it not a false dilemma separating values and interest, when in the long term, democratic societies are more likely to achieve socioeconomical development, while authoritarian regimes tend to harbor instability? Moreover, was that not exactly what the Arab Uprisings had 'taught' the EU? The idea of forced change therefore seems to be going against the unique base of the EU, whether it be the carrot-stick approach, the policing migration politics, or the possible sanctioning.

Sanctioning in general, has been found to be both based on double standards as well as inconsistencies, as the CFSPs foundation gives the member states the opportunity to influence the decision process on sanctions (Del Biondo 2015, Youngs 2020). Manners (2002, 242) rejects the notion of the EU's normative power being backed by force, that be it economic or political. The idea of implementing a European 'deep democratic' system therefore seems to have difficulties if it, in the end is backed by force alone; and more specifically, when there are inconsistencies about what the term 'deep democracy' really means. The final idea therefore implies whether a 'European democratic model' is the only one which can serve to be a stabilizer in its neighborhood?

> "We have not seen any efforts from EU policy to help fulfill the dreams of a connected Maghreb. On the contrary, the European Union has tried and will try to always keep this division between these countries, because treating each one alone is easier that treating a political, cultural and economic block on the southern shore of the Mediterranean (Informant V)".

It's no secret that there is a large economic dependency between the Maghreb countries and the EU, which in itself is not problematic. However, if the EU uses this dependency as a way to regain control, which the Association Agreements (AA) do indicate, then it seems the

EU does not want to have a stronger neighbor, but rather that they compete between themselves to lower prices. Generally, products from the Maghreb cannot compete with European products. The impact of the agricultural sector in the Maghreb countries is extreme, and the agricultural policies therefore have quite a direct impact, making Tunisia, Morocco, and Algeria fight to reduce prices, while the EU is protected. This idea of *divide et impera*, seems to be very in line with the empire argument, seeking to increase and regain control of its peripheries, also at the expense of the normative base. The intent on promoting deep democracy, therefore seems to run into various problems, therewithin, the clash with other interests, be it economic or security. However, as Zielonka (2013, 37) satirically, but interestingly has pointed out; "would the promotion of 'shallow democracy' be better?"

III.   *Too close yet too far away – A pan-European paradox?*

> "Some Europeans today, they say that the Union is a Christian Club, so they cannot integrate Turkey. It's a big country. 80 or 90 million Muslim people joining Europe is a big issue (Informant V)".

The proximity of the Maghreb to Europe seems to be both a blessing and a curse, reminding oneself that North Africa already suffers from being a region which finds itself in a limbo of identity, that being either Berber, Kabyle, Arab and, or African. The geopolitical location of the Maghreb places it in a particularly interesting situation for Europe. Even though they are close and are named the 'most important partners' in discourses, how 'close' are they really, and how close can they become before it is 'close enough'? The TEU state that any European country can apply for membership, while the 'Copenhagen criteria' puts forward certain financial and democratic criteria. If one agrees with (Haukkala 2008, 1603) that the open-ended nature of the EU's view on membership is a key factor for the EU's ability to promote legitimacy and normativity, then not allowing Turkey to join becomes an interesting comparison, as it has given Morocco ideas on how to work on their relationship with the EU, outside of the scope.

Neither Morocco, Tunisia or Algeria is within the 'European' continent and therefore they do not have the opportunity to be fully integrated. The EU has responded with the ENP as an attempt to create as close of a relationship with its neighbors as possible. The Advanced Status given to Morocco in 2008, was probably an attempt to achieve a 'higher status' outside

of the ENP. However, both informant II, V and VIII pointed out that the Advanced Status was more of a perception, a relativity, rather than giving Morocco an actual advantage, as has also been argued by Martín (2009, 244). It could be argued that the EU is reaching limits in its integration with the country. This comes to light when considering Morocco's search for new partners, both across the Atlantic and towards sub-Sahara Africa. The incident with Donald Trump recognizing Morocco's claim over the Western Sahara, has shown Morocco's ability to play the political landscape. The EU might not have the same amount of 'carrots' to dangle in front of Morocco anymore, for them to undergo reforms and adapt to the *acquis commaunaitres*. *Procedural diffusion*, or institutional integration, therefore, seems to be a channel of diffusion that has been maxed out. This idea of the EU reaching limits in its relationships, when there is no motivation for the North African countries, does pose problems for the EU's current democracy promotion strategy. The Union is losing leverage, indicating that it has been particularly dependent on the element of integration and conditionality, which has influenced the EU's power in the region; and hence, not the general idea of normative convergence.

It could be argued that Morocco at best, has pushed the pause-button on their democratic transition and at worst, that they have retracted. In the 'integration game', the EU seems to be losing its advantage over Morocco, which is creating stronger relationships with China and the US each day. Even if integration is not possible, Diez (2006) argues that the EU can have 'associative power' on normative accounts, which could also be valuable as transformative power. However, when reviewing the Maghreb, and particularly the case of Morocco, it seems that the association element has had little impact after the migration flows started in 2015.

Even though the EU is attempting to bring its neighbors into its ever-closer union, it does not seem to work that well in the case of Morocco. On the other hand, Tunisia, has seen the creation of a closer and stronger bond with the EU regarding democracy promotion, which is shown in the EU's funding and aid-packages ever since the intifada. Compared to Morocco, Tunisia does not play such a vital role in securing stability and does not have the same ability to pressure the EU. Tunisia, currently being in a democratic building process, is more dependent on the aid the EU gives. It is interesting to consider to what extent the EU would be willing to support such a "laboratory project", if it was Morocco or Algeria. Nonetheless, it is evident that Tunisia is acquiring the *aquis commauntaires* because they are dependent on the aid coming from the EU, hence, moving towards a more democratic structure.

The ability of each country to reversibly pressure the EU seems to be of high importance, and more so, than the aspect of association itself. In addition, it seems rather clear, after the treatment of Turkey, that the EU has used its pan-European rhetoric as a way of attempting an ever-closer union between the EU and its neighbors, but that in the end, the neighbors, and particularly Morocco have come to understand that the rhetoric is simply that, a rhetoric. The normative power of the EU therefore seems to be more dependent on the case's ability to fight back, than anything else. The EU's demands to the Maghreb, asking them to function as outer borders do prescribe to the ideas of 'fuzzy borders', as explained within the Normative Empire Europe theory. The borders are becoming fuzzy, but as it seems, solely when it comes to immigration. There is no wish from the EU for the borders to be moved for any other purpose, which implies that the EU is willing to apply its 'pan-European' idea simply by way of fussy borders when it comes to migration, as an empire would do.

In contradiction to a pan-European idea, it rather seems that the EU has constructed an idea of the 'Self' versus the 'Other', as argued by the external perception's literature, indicating that the EU, in an attempt to create its own identity, is attempting to 'distinguish' itself from the outside world (Diez 2005, 614). In this way, what was supposedly an idea of pan Europeanism, has rather received a very physical border, namely the Mediterranean, distinguishing very clearly the 'us' and 'them'. If the EU has constructed the idea of NPE in this way, then it can also be drawn back to Pace's (2007) argument on the EU reinforcing an image of itself as a 'force for good'. The idea of the EU constructing itself in such an image does also indicate that its uniqueness might not be all that, as the US has also created itself in such an image of the 'Self' versus the 'Other'. In this way, the reconstruction of the EU in its own image fits into the description put forward by Bicchi (2006, 299), stating that the EU is promoting its own "highly successful model of Western integration", showcasing a sort of 'our size fits all' attitude.

IV.   *The paradox of 'Productive Ambiguity'*

> "The European Union is taking more and more space politically. But we cannot say that
> it has already managed to overtake certain countries roles, which are historically linked

to the Maghreb and elsewhere. We have the impression that there is a kind of double game (Informant VI)[5]".

The EU's handling of the Arab Uprisings became a kind of window display, where it suddenly became clear that the EU had difficulties coordinating a response in a coherent and cooperated way; France had one opinion, and Germany another. The lack of clarity in the response also showed that the normative base values of 'democracy' and 'human rights' portrayed problems of definition within the EU's member states as well. Is the support for human rights and democracy only valuable within the union or should the same be accounted for outside? Should it only count when the EU is dealing with neighbors that are of strategic importance, or is it universal? It has been argued that this ambiguity between normative and functional dimensions has made the EU into a political system which is resistant to crisis (Costa and Brack 2014, 247). However, the years after the Arab Uprisings have been quite turbulent for the EU, and to what extent the EU is actually resistant to these crises because of the ambiguity is difficult to say.

If policies and roles are not coherent, the confusion created might influence the actual impact that the policy can have. The EU's normative base hinges on different ways of diffusion, and when the pathways are disrupted by a lack of coherency, the policies can be limited by themselves. Pace (2009, 49) finds that EU actions in the region limit any potential for normative impact, because there is a clear lack of coherence; the policies are lacking defined visions. This also makes one consider the importance of coherence in foreign policy. Must foreign policy be coherent for it to be effective? Informant VII pointed out that seeking EU funding was such a complex process that civil society organizations had problems with the application process. Not unexpectedly, the need for flexibility in the Maghreb countries is very important. Informant VII further pointed out that the EU was not able to adapt itself to the culture and the day-to-day situation. This argument therefore implies that the difficulties, and inconsistency of both internal as well as external relations impact these decisions. Hence, the inconsistency makes it more difficult to promote norms and democracy, and further limits the EU's power as a normative actor.

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[5] All quotes originally stated in Spanish or French have been translated by the author.

This incoherence in the Maghreb, comes to show the very problematic foundation of the CFSP, as argued by Keukeleire and Delreux (2014, 158), showing that article 24 (2) of the Lisbon Treaty, which states the EU shall "conduct, define and implement a common foreign and security policy (EU 2007, 27)", indicates that political solidarity is not self-evident, but must be developed. Each member state therefore has their own interests and will still act upon these; the term 'common foreign policy' is therefore misleading. However misleading the term may be, one's understanding of this argument will again depend on the definition of what sort of interests are in play, giving credibility to the reader or author in drawing one's own conclusions (Larsen 2020, 970). Nonetheless, if one follows the argument of Keukeleire and Delreux, namely, that the foundation of the CFSP is indeed weak, it clearly comes to show in the Maghreb region, where the interests that are at play are so multifaceted, to such an extent that it is very difficult for the countries in question to understand who is indeed representing whom.

> "There are the countries which have a common history and a certain advantage over other countries. In the Maghreb, it is essentially France, Italy and to a lesser extent Spain. But I find that the Germans are catching up in an extraordinary way in the Maghreb (Informant VI)".

Whether the EU as a unit has larger influence than each member state separately is an essential question to understand when one is discussing perceptions of the EU as a foreign actor. Most informants indicated that the EU does not have the power as a unit, which it could have. Now, whether this is because of the actions of each member country within the region or because of the EU's general ambiguity, is hard to evaluate. Nonetheless, it remains clear that the interests of the member-states can cause confusion, and hence disrupt the diffusion channels. If rhetoric and policy of one member state is directly transferable to the perceptions of the union as a whole, it will be very problematic for the EU's ability to act. Such an assumption would indicate that the EU cannot be a sui generis actor with a specific historical foundation if the members state's rhetoric and external perceptions are directly transferable.

The close historical relationship that France shares with the region also makes French resources in the region a plus for the EU in its promotional work. However, it does seem that utilizing mostly French sources can cause further confusion on whether the funding or the rhetoric is coming from France or from the EU. It is apparent that France does not want to lose its standing in the region, however, there is a strong need for the EU to stand in unity, making

it obvious that the sending missions are representing Brussels, and not Paris. Thinking about Manners fifth pathway, *overt diffusion*, which occurs from the physical presence of the EU in a state or organization, it should be remembered that this argument becomes increasingly more important. If overt diffusion is an important way to spread norms, well then it should be clear with who one is speaking.

Even though it is easy and understandable for this confusion to happen, it does seem that the EU's politics of silence in certain situations is aiding the idea of separating the member states personal politics with the Union. In early 2021, Morocco broke diplomatic ties with Germany, and the EU has said absolutely nothing to that regard (Cembrero 2021). The same could be said for an incident between Spain and Morocco, recurring over a small islet outside of Ceuta, called Perejil, in 2003. During this crisis the EU did not say anything, specifically because France said no, and supported Morocco instead of Spain (Jordán 2018, 946). There are in other words games also being played between the different European states, to gain insight and control with the Maghreb countries on their own. This also highlights an argument put forward by Aggestam and Johansson (2017, 1217), arguing that there is a leadership paradox in EU foreign policy by showing that the member states and the EEAS are unsure about their roles in the policy process.

The fast entrance of Germany as an actor in the Maghreb further underscores this argument, by showing that there might be an increase in competition between the member states. If one thinks about EU foreign policy through a neo-realist perspective (Hyde-Price 2006), it is possible to understand that the states, in the increased multipolar world order find the need to secure their own interests on a larger scale. The uniqueness of the EU's structure might therefore not be so unique, but rather a result of external factors. The temporal aspects of the periods do indicate how the changes in EU policy fits together with the overall external factors of each period.

Another aspect of ambiguity and imperialism should be mentioned. Interestingly, the critique of the EU as being imperialist, is something which it of course negates strongly; on the other hand, the EU is not negating being put in the place of the *imperialized*, in a context where America is 'putting America first', and China is gaining more and more power on the world stage (Morgan 2020, 1425). Particularly the French are scared of this 'vassalisation', happening to the continent entirely, further indicating the paradoxical situation of imperialism with the

EU, being the continent which colonized; and now, in French eyes, is becoming a continent imperialized by the 'great powers'.

Manners argued many times that the EU could not seek to be a 'great power', as this was the whole concept which differentiated it from the others. However, in the increased multipolar world order, the EU seems to be attempting to do exactly that, by playing more into the politics controlled by *realpolitik*. Attempting to be a 'rationalist foreign policy actor', when in fact the EU with its 27 member states and a multitude of institutions challenge the very idea of *rational*, does not really aspire to its uniqueness. This contradiction, could therefore make the EU run into larger problems, diminishing its actual impact and opportunity to influence. In this sense, one can agree that the foundations of NPE do provide an "indispensable tool to build and consolidate the necessary consensus among member states (Pänke 2019, 117)", in a world with increased competition.

Another paradox of the EU's ambiguity in its foreign policy towards the region becomes quite clear in a quote from informant VII:

> "If the main interest of the European Union is to maintain stability and the status quo, the policy is coherent. But if the interest of the European Union is to promote political and social changes, it's not coherent (Informant VII)"

In other words, Europe must decide, taking the discussion back into the importance of interests and values. Whether the foreign policy of the Union is coherent or not depends on how one defines the EU's interests. This further implies that the EU probably will 'keep on' being incoherent, as the new Global Strategy is based specifically on this paradox of 'principled pragmatism'. Hence, there is a double game when discussing coherency, as it is based on both the fight between values and interests, as well as the values and interests of each member state in the formation of foreign policy. There is no doubt that the process of forming foreign policy in the EU is a difficult task, thinking about all the institutions and the member states which are to be included in such a process. However, it has during the analysis become apparent that the general ambiguity is hurting the EU's ability to influence democracy in its neighborhood, rather than being a 'productive ambiguity'. An interesting thought connected to this can be found in the expressions of informants VI and IV, who indicated that there are more positive views towards the EU as a unity, than France. This idea therefore shows that there is much to be achieved if roles are rethought and remodeled, as will be discussed under the external perception's paradox.

V.   *Africa's last colony - The paradox of the Western Sahara Conflict*

"The EU has no role in this conflict. It was the United States that reached the agreement on the recognition of Western Sahara as part of Morocco in exchange for Morocco's recognition of Israel. The European Union has said absolutely nothing about it (Informant VII)".

The Western Sahara conflict has been the source of many of the issues pertaining to the problems between the EU and the Maghreb, and it could be argued that the conflict has become some sort of a solidification of the EU's ambivalent role in the region (Fernández-Molina 2017 , Fernández-Molina and Ojeda-García 2020).

The Western Sahara conflict is particularly interesting because it goes back to the question of self-determination, often referred to as Africa's last colony. The democratic foundation of being able to decide upon one's own future is self-evident. In addition, the humanitarian aspect of the conflict is clear, as there are human rights violations taking place in the occupied territory (Ranheim 2016, 31). The European Parliament (EP) has been quite vocal about the humanitarian issues in the region, while the Council has been silent (Grande-Gascón and Ruiz-Seisdedos 2017, 79). The incoherency between the institutions has made it difficult to understand the role of the EU in this conflict and underscores the fact that some institutions can be perceived and understood as more 'normative' than others.

The EU's difficulties with forming clear policy towards the conflict (Benabdallah 2009), has become even more evident over the last years, where the EU has shifted between including the Western Sahara in agreements with Morocco. The EU-Morocco fisheries partnership agreement is a particular example, where the EU has been critiqued for breaking international law, with the inclusion of the Western Saharan territory. The European Court of Justice (ECJ) deemed the fisheries agreement as breaking with international law in 2016, and since then, the agreement has not included the Western Sahara. As might be expected, this ruling upset Morocco, but to such an extent that the state decided to suspend diplomatic contact with the EU Delegation in Rabat. In 2019, the EP, allowed again for the inclusion of the Western Sahara in the agreement, and during 2021, the ECJ is considering the legality of the trade agreement yet again. This extreme ambivalence is worth explaining in detail because it comes to show an affair which clearly breaks with international law and human rights. This

should be alarming for an institution that calls itself protector of these values. If anything, this portrays that the EU is moving with the landscape of *realpolitik*, keeping silent when it is not to their benefit.

It is apparent that the Western Sahara conflict, with its local, regional, and global dimensions, has a big impact on EU-Maghreb relations. The EU's handling of this conflict has sparked large confusion about the EU's actual commitment to supporting international law and human rights. In addition, there are specific difficulties regarding whom holds the power within the EU when the EP and the ECJ say no, and the Council says yes. These inconsistencies in the protection of human rights and self-determination, also within the EU, do make one question the universality of the normative base, which is based specifically upon that: democracy and human rights. The external affairs process in the EU is, in other words, a highly political process, in which democracy and human rights seem to be losing the fight.

Of course, it should be stated, as has been argued by Wagner (2017, 1401), that 'peace' also is one of the main norms of the EU, showing that the core-norms, such as 'democracy' and 'peace', which are equally valued, can end up being put up against each other. Again, in such a way where the support for democracy and human rights come in second, because the securing of 'peace' is more important. Peace and stability are not, however, two sides of the same coin, and particularly not when one is thinking in short term solutions. The last thing the EU would want, is the re-sparking of the violent conflict between Morocco and the Polisario. However, the silent treatment from the EU seems to have had little impact in that aspect, as violent battles were taken up again at the end of 2020, 32 years after they had put their weapons down for the 'Settlement Plan' (Asala 2020).

Informant V pointed out the interests of Spain in the conflict, which feels responsibility for the situation, but also in protecting its own small territories on the African continent: "Spain also has interests in the unity of Morocco, because they know that once the Western Sahara is united, Morocco will turn to Ceuta and Melilla (Informant V)". Spain has a responsibility to resolve the conflict, but at the same time it can be problematic for them, based on the exact same arguments as put forward on the self-determination of the Western Sahara. The small Spanish 'city-territories' of Melilla and Ceuta, lay on 'Moroccan territory', and have mostly been overshadowed in discussions, named by some as Europe's dirty little secrets (Davies 2010). If the Western Sahara is to be free, why should the same not apply to Ceuta and Melilla? The decolonization aspect of this debate is evident, as one is asking for the decolonization of

an area which has been recuperated by another North African state, while one at the same time is avoiding the problem in one's own territory, which is partly based on the same premises.

The Western Sahara conflict composes an apparent break between the rhetoric and practice of the EU. If human rights and democracy are base values of the Union, why is there no actual support for the UN's settlement plan? More importantly, if the EU does not allow countries into negotiations, which are involved in territorial disputes, then it also seems rather strange to keep dealing with Morocco to such an extent, without putting forth any demands. Or does the clause on territorial disputes only apply when becoming a member? Do the important values only matter when it is within the Union, and moreover, is all responsibility gone when crossing European borders? It is discernible that the Western Sahara conflict is not being dealt with in the way it could have been. The trade dependency the EU holds over Morocco is clear, but it seems that instead of using this power to discuss the Western Sahara conflict, it is being used to help avoid immigration over *mare nostrum*.

The interconnectedness of the Western Sahara, and how it affects the EU in many ways, also came to show in April 2021, a few months after the Polisario had taken up arms against Morocco again. The Polisario leader was taken to Spain to receive treatment for covid-19 (Landauro and Faus 2021), which could be seen as a favor to Algeria. It created a break in Spanish-Moroccan relations. However, it was not until May 2021, when Morocco 'let' thousands of migrants cross over to Ceuta, that the EU decided to speak up. Borders had now been breached, and as an EU official stated, "Ceuta is Europe, this border is a European border and what is happening there is not Madrid's problem, it is the problem of all (Euronews 2021)". Everything which is related to the Western Sahara is immensely sensitive to Europe. Why has the EU not attempted to solve the conflict between Morocco and Algeria if stability is most important? The breach of international law and human rights in Africa's last colony – an occupied territory striving for self-determination, is indisputable. The Western Sahara therefore becomes the very epicenter in the conflict of the European dilemma in the Maghreb.

VI.   *The French paradox – A war of collective memories?*

"France played a very negative role during the uprisings in Tunisia, remembering the words of the French interior minister, saying to Ben Ali that they could send police forces… People have a very negative experience with that (Informant IV)".

The French colonial rule in the Maghreb can hardly be said to have been a popular rule. The war of memories, *la guerre de mémoires*, is still vividly being fought from both sides of the Mediterranean, and specifically so in Algeria. Information and 'hidden' memories are coming to light every so often, the most recent being about the French government ordering killings of French citizens during the Algerian War (Follorou 2020). As seen during the periodic analysis, the way France acts, has been important for the EU's perceived role in the region. Bilateral relations between France and the Maghreb countries are very strong. The question, however, is whether a point comes in which the relationship with France is more important than the one with the EU, and whether the French connection has a clear impact on the way the EU is perceived.

It is easy for the EU to use the French network in the region, naturally, because of its well-established structure. Because of Frances's colonial history in the region, there are of course negative considerations as well as positive attributes this can bring forth. However, there are disagreements on how much of contemporary politics that can be explained by colonial heritage. Most would agree that contemporary politics cannot be explained by colonial heritage alone (Nordenson 2018, 75), but that at the same time, one must be aware of the impact such a presence has left behind. As discussed within the cases, France's role as a colonizer was different in each country, resulting in different presences. However, in all three states, France has been a firm defender of the system, safeguarding its own interests throughout all three periods, adhering to the typical realist stance. The issue becomes when France also impacts, with this stance, the European position.

The *guerre froide*, cold war, between France and Morocco in 2014-15, after the French ambassador's alleged comment about Morocco being a "French mistress", also impacted EU-Moroccan relations. Informant I shared an interesting anecdote about Hollands's visit during the crisis, stating that; "It rarely rains in Rabat, but the day when President Hollande came to visit, the rain was extreme, nobody said anything, but all thought it, the tension was very present". It is clear that because of the strong connections France has with these countries, and the fact that France's networks are being used, implies that when something goes wrong with French-Maghreb relations, it will likely have some impact on the relationship that the EU shares with the region. The resentment due to colonization is still very significant, and the French debacle really pointed that out. Morocco froze all diplomatic and judicial cooperation, which included cooperation with security and intelligence sharing, of which France is a very

important actor in Europe. Of course, these kinds of cuts have impact on multilateral relations as well.

Mohamed Charfi, former educational minister under Ben Ali, has stated that Bourguiba: "critiqued colonial France, and [that] he admired the France of human rights (Aziz 2018, 177)[6]". The idea that France was not only a country to be critiqued because of its colonial history, but also a country to be admired, based on its views on human rights is an interesting thought. This paradox of colonial history and human rights is very important when considering 'Europe' as the continent and the EU as the institution. During the decolonization process, Bourguiba knew that Tunisia had to cooperate with France for them to continue to grow. Algeria however, because of the Algerian war and the harsh colonization, decided to break many ties with France. Algeria, however, is probably the country which also shares the most with France, namely, because of the political and societal infrastructure that was 'left behind'.

> "The EU should react and take position on what's happening in the country. I think the fact that there are bilateral relations make it more difficult. Why? Because Algerians are very sensitive to France and it's role (Informant IV)".

The Algerian case, showcases particularly, how France's complex and controversial relationship with the country can transfer the negative perceptions to the EU, as has been pointed out by (Çelenk 2009, 184). If the democracy promotion by the EU is being 'diffused' primarily from French diplomats, because of their already existing networks, it can make it more confusing. Moreover, it might be problematic to take democratic advice, if it is perceived as coming from a country that colonized them until only 60 years ago. The war of collective memories with France is still ongoing, and if this perspective transplants itself onto the EU, be it by coercive isomorphism or others, it will be very problematic for the EU to function as a 'new type of structure'. This historical and colonial role has not been properly thought out by the NPE perspective, as it is conspicuous that democracy and human rights promotion can run in into difficulties when it is being communicated from a continent which once ruled the world by its imperialism.

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[6] Original quote : « Il critiquait la France colonial et il admirait la France des droits de l'homme (Aziz 2018, 177)».

Even though there is not enough understanding of the imperial lens in the NPE framework, Manners (2006b, 183) has illuminated the need to be aware of the EU becoming like the 19th century powers, but then focusing on militarization; however, it also serves as an important thought when considering France's role within the EU; being reminded of Macrons call for a European Army in 2018 (Herszenhorn 2018). France, as a leading power within the EU is undeniable, and of course even more so after Brexit. Arguably, it will therefore be even more important to be aware of France's role in the perceived nature of the EU. This is further illustrated by the lack of success of the UfM's initiation, partly because it was perceived as a French initiated idea.

The French paradox of military power and colonial baggage further illuminates the need for coherency. The fact that the EU is viewed by the informants in this study as being less influential as a unit, than by some member countries, does make it even more important to pertain a more consistent role. For a better understanding from both sides, the EU would gain in assuming a larger role as a unit and making statements that are more clearly coming from the EU, and not by a direct line from France. No EU country can advance or promote democracy alone, and the perceived role of France does indicate that there might be opportunities that are being missed out on. The ambiguity and incoherency in the way the EU is perceived therefore seems to limit its ability to influence. This line of argument poses an important question on the foundation of NPE, which indicates that the ambiguous structure of the EU and its very historical foundation is what makes it unique. If the EU in the Maghreb is mostly perceived as France, and not as a distinct actor, well then it questions the very foundation of NPE's uniqueness argument.

VII.   *The paradox of external perceptions – The missing link?*

> "In all honesty, our perception here is that the European Union plays a fundamental role in promoting democracy around the world […]. Sure, there are privileged relationships with some countries that are close, culturally maybe, but the European Union is not a country, it's not a single country, it's not a country that colonized you. There are psychological barriers that do not exist with the European Union as a whole (Informant VI)".

If actorness critically depends on expectations and constructions of other international actors and moreover the way in which internal constituency functions with external perception (Pardo 2015, Larsen 2014), then the role of the EU in the Maghreb can tell us a lot about how actorness

can be infused with historical connotations. The complexity of the Maghreb's relationship with France and earlier colonizers lays foundations for the countries perceptions and understandings of the EU, which can result in both positive as well as negative perceptions, as illustrated in the quote from informant VI.

What happens when the way that the EU is 'diffusing' norms, through Manners channels, is viewed as a method to regain neo-colonial control? Does the goal justify the means, at all costs? As argued in the external perceptions literature, the EU's promotion of norms is limited when it is viewed through neo-colonial lenses (Larsen 2014, 905). Both informant V and VIII discussed the ways in which democracy was promoted in the Maghreb, attempting to promote certain aspects of democracy in a society without understanding it's culture. It is evident that there is a need to better understand the actual societies and adapt policies thereafter. Even though the EU has stated multiple times that policies will be tailored to the country, it does not seem to include a deep understanding of the society in the first place. If the EU is perceived as focusing on human rights and democracy as a means to regain political control in an area, this will of course limit the way in which the EU can diffuse norms, especially when what is perceived as 'universal' by the EU, might not be perceived universal by the country in which it attempts to diffuse these norms.

If normative power rests, not only on coercion, but also particularly on the perceived legitimacy of the EU (Haukkala 2008, 1603), then it is an absolute necessity for the EU to maintain control over its own 'branding'. The EU has released many surveys during the last years, which show data on the perceptions that citizens, in the Southern Neighborhood, have of the EU. The overall results in the Maghreb have seen a general decline in positivity towards the EU, and reached an all-time low in 2020, since the beginning of the polls in 2012 (EU 2020a, 6). In 2020, only 46% of the Maghreb stated that the EU conjures a positive image for them. Moreover, 35% are more likely to say that they feel well informed about the EU, a number which has sunk by 9% since 2019. About 35% say they are aware that the EU is giving financial help to their country and that the EU has an embassy in their country. On the other hand, the majority of the respondents in the Maghreb, with 59%, say that their country has a good relationship with the EU, even though it has declined by 4% since 2012. These results show that there is a lack of understanding of what the EU does, and that there is a general decline in the way the EU is perceived since the Arab Awakening.

In this context, it is interesting to view opinions of the EU in Tunisia particularly, as it is the country in which the EU has been the most involved in the development. In general, Tunisian perceptions have also been in slow decline over the last few years (EU 2020c, Stantec 2019). However, when considering the EU's role in the transition, Nouira and Redissi (2018, 14) found that Tunisian stakeholders supported the EU having a role in the transition, but that they did not perceive the EU as having a decisive role in it. The interviewees in their study found EU support to be 'insufficient' and 'limited', and as acting out of self-interest. The EU is therefore perceived as supporting the transition and being an important partner, but one that, nonetheless, does not make a difference. The conclusion of this segment would therefore indicate that the statement made by former Council President, Van Rompuy (2011), about there not being an Arab Summer without the EU, is not anywhere near to being perceived as true, in the one country where it actually could be argued to have been an important player in democratic transition.

Larsen (2014) argued that a regional normative power would be a more appropriate conceptualization, thinking specifically about the eastern neighbors where membership is possible. A line can, however, be drawn to the south, which has very specific economic ties with the EU. The importance of the economic relationships that the EU shares with these countries might make the domestic elites more open to viewing the EU as normative, simply because the economic ties are so important. In comparison, the middle and lower classes might view the EU more positively, simply because of the need for visas. Informant IV indicated the EU is primarily thought of in Algeria with regards to visas. There are, in other words, many variables to be thought about when one is considering external perceptions, as they can be based on a lot of different foundations. However, if it all is overshadowed by neocolonial lenses then the EU still has some work to do to get rid of this stamp.

In general, as stated by most of the informants, the lack of initiative both before and after the Arab Uprisings as well as after the Hirak movement, specifically the fact that France said they would send forces to help Ben Ali, still reside as bad memories for most Maghrebiens. This indicates the importance of the rhetoric versus practice gap, in the perception of the EU as a foreign policy actor. The external perception of the EU is therefore inherently linked to the EU's ability to act as a normative power, which further illustrates the need to understand NPE in a geographic context for it to be valid. The specificities of the EU's historical ties and the way it is acting, in the Maghreb, makes a specific case for NPE. This is to say that the

conclusion of the EU as a foreign policy actor might be perceived very differently somewhere else, further indicating its ability to promote democracy.

In other words, there seems to be a missing link in our understanding of NPE, when external perceptions are not taken into account. The analysis here shows that even though one can have a general understanding of the EU as a normative power, impressions and perceptions will not be the same everywhere, questioning universal influence based on uniqueness. In North Africa, the perception of the EU as a democracy promoter is influenced by the way in which the colonial heritage is understood. In relation to the Kissinger phone call, all of the informants stated that the respective country, be it Morocco, Tunisia or Algeria, would eventually call France, instead of the EU. Such an assumption does indicate that there are colonial ties which are still vivid, combined with the large power France holds within the EU. How can then, the EU be a unique foreign policy actor, if it is being overshadowed by some member states?

It does seem quite problematic to say that the EU, first and foremost, is a normative power if the outside world does not attribute it such a role. If the world's attribution to this concept is a precondition for the EU to be a special normative power, then it must attribute accordingly, which there seems to be very different opinions about. Even though most of the informants said that there was a negative view of the way the EU had been acting before and after the Arab Uprisings, the quote from Informant VI does share some enlightening information that can be useful in the understanding of the EU as a foreign policy actor.

Zielonka's view of EU foreign policy being imperial poses an interesting comparison when discussing internal and external perceptions. On the one side it is important to understand the EU as a gathering of 27 different historical foundations, in which some have a heavy history of colonization, a fact which is undeniable. On the other hand, this combination also means that the EU has the choice to adapt its democracy promotion by applying the means which seem the most effective, being aware of this history. It is particularly important to be informed of the colonial lenses in the case of the Maghreb, enforcing a stronger relationship with other member states than France and Spain. Taking an advantage of and making sure that the advocators and negotiators from the EU, are indeed perceived as EU diplomats, could give a different impression; be it Germans, Belgians, or Swedes, as they do not carry the same baggage as other member states in the region.

The EU's foundation is of course created by its member states, but the EU as an institution and unit, if perceived as such, does not share that story. As indicated by the quote from informant VI in this section, the EU is not a single country that colonized. Therefore, the institution, per se, does not carry the same reputation. This notion implies that the EU has the ability to be something new, a new type of actor, which has not colonized, which does not carry that baggage, and which therefore can take over a more *sui generis* role in the Maghreb. The particularity of the Maghreb is of importance here, since the region has no other choice but to work with Europe and is absolutely dependent on it. In a region where some member states did not have a heavy colonial history, the view of the EU might therefore be different, in both ways. A history of colonialization might also reversibly give impetus to the importance of seeing the EU as a non-colonizer and institution.

This understanding means that the EU has the chance to be a unique type of actor, which has been so heavily argued by NPE (Manners 2002), if it is able to assume a more coherent role as well as being more adapted to the local, cultural, political and historical realities. Nonetheless, it does seem rather clear that for this role to function, and to have influence, there is a need for a clearer understanding of the EU as a unit. The role of certain member states must be kept in mind when attempting to diffuse norms in the area. Without coherency, it will be difficult to assume such a role.

Another important aspect comes to show in the fit between internal perceptions within the EU, and the external perceptions of the EU from the Maghreb. As seen in the empirical and periodic analysis it became evident that the 'Islamist threat' to Europe, has been one of the most important pushes for the populist growth, and the increased focus on security (Rivera Escartin 2020). The interconnectedness of the European fear of the Islamist threat, combined with the distrust in the European apparatus of democratization, might make it more difficult to have actual, dialogical exchanges. The argument comes back to the idea of mare nostrum, as 'our ocean', the one that once united, which now separates; going from being a meeting place of civilizations into a place where civilizations crash. The embroilment of ideas, in which the security threat is not forcibly immigration, but rather the fear of it (Kinnvall, Manners, and Mitzen 2018), seems to reinforce the perceptions of the other side of the Mediterranean, from both sides. This clash of perception is, therefore, inherently a problem, created from fear and anxiety within the EU, which is again affecting the way in which it functions as a security actor, further affecting its ability to be a promoter of human rights and democracy in its neighborhoods.

VI.III   Concluding remarks on analysis

The first part of the analysis investigated the EU's role as a foreign policy actor in Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria in a comparative perspective. The periodic analysis allowed for an understanding of how the EU has acted before, during and after the Arab Uprisings, showing that there was a continuous rhetoric on protecting human rights and promoting democracy in the neighborhoods until 2016. With the Global Strategy there was a rhetorical change towards the stability-security nexus, focusing on the securing of interests and stability, while at same time continuing with the promotion of norms. The periodic analysis also showed that even though there was a clear rhetoric towards promoting democracy, it has come in second, both during the first, second and third period. The small shift in rhetoric in 2016 does seem to be appropriate for the EU's actual presence in the Maghreb but created a pathway towards some important paradoxes when discussing the EU as a normative power.

The synchronic analysis focused on seven important paradoxes that had surged in the periodic analysis. First, (I) *The oxymoron of a principled pragmatism,* discussed the new rhetoric of the EU, showing that 'principled pragmatism', might be a term which accurately describes, not only the current role the EU plays in the south, but the one it has been playing throughout all three periods. The EU seems torn between values and interests, which is shown in the large gap between rhetoric and practice. However, the dilemma of values and interests might be a 'false one', which makes it easier to support short-term solutions instead of long-term ones. This large gap of rhetoric also impacts the external perceptions of the EU in this area, leaving people with a sense of not understanding the EU's role as a global actor, further impacting its ability to diffuse norms.

The second paradox, (II) *The paradox of 'Deep democracy',* discussed the EU's lack of real engagement with the region and how the perceptions of the Eurocentric way in which democracy is promoted, can make the promotion less influential. The idea of *divide and impera*, was also debated, showing that the EU's change towards a more country specific policy, also can be problematic, as it is perceived as being a way to hinder true development in the region. It therefore questions the way in which democracy is perceived by the EU and within its member states, asking to what extent the EU is actually willing to support democracy in the first place.

The geopolitical difficulties of the Maghreb region in its relations with the EU was analyzed in the third paradox, (III) *Too close yet too far away – a pan-European paradox?* questioning the impact of association and proximity of the EU's normative power. Throughout the periods, the Maghreb region has been promised more association if reforms have been caried out, but it seems that the EU is coming to an ending with its 'carrots', reaching limits in its approach. This is exemplified in the Advanced Statuses being more of perceptions, in addition to the Barcelona Process, which is far from being realized. The proximity and particular context of the Maghreb therefore seems both to be both a blessing and a curse.

In the fourth paradox, (IV) *The paradox of 'Productive Ambiguity,* it was argued that the EU's lack of coherency is problematic for its ability to impact the Maghreb. The incoherency is multifaceted, by the way of policies and member states. Because of its complex history with some member countries, the EU's lack of clarity seems to confuse actors in the region, questioning the EU's power as a unit, which in turn questions the very foundation of the uniqueness argument.

The ambiguous role of the EU becomes very clear in the conflict over Africa's last colony, as discussed in paradox (V) *Africa's last colony - The paradox of the Western Sahara Conflict,* which is illustrated in the EU's lack of control and impact. Human rights violations and the breach of international law seem not to have been important enough for the EU to push it on Morocco's agenda, and more importantly, for the EU not to trade with occupied territory. The Western Sahara could be the very crystallization of the EU's role in the region, in which there are institutional differences within the Union on how to view the conflict, particularly between the Council and the EP, causing further confusion. The latest development, of Morocco's show of force during the Ceuta events in May 2021, illustrates even further how this stalemate conflict keeps causing large problems.

The importance of colonial heritage becomes evident in (VI) *The French Paradox – a war of collective memories?* with the complex relationship the Maghreb shares with its former colonizer. There are both positive and negative connections to France, but that regardless of connotation, are so strong that the EU seems to come in second. The general negative perceptions of France's role, especially during the Arab Uprisings and the Hirak Movement, is another indication of how this relationship impacts multilateral relations. The incoherency in communication has also shown to be important for the EU's normative power, as it is evident that democracy and human rights promotion can run into difficulties when communicated from

a country which once ruled the world through its imperialism. The neocolonial lenses are therefore of high importance.

The last paradox, (VII) *The paradox of external perceptions – the missing link?* shows the interconnectedness of all the previous paradoxes. The EU's ability to diffuse norms depends on many variables, but which particularly depends upon the geographic specificity. In the Maghreb, it is becoming evident that the EU does have the ability to be sui generis, both because of, and in relation to the role of its former colonizers. Even though France, Spain and Italy are seen through neocolonial lenses, the EU as an institution does not seem to be perceived as such if it is communicated through the right channels. The paradox of the French role in the region therefore illuminates the external perceptions perceptive. The EU can be an important actor in the region, if it can mend its gap between rhetoric and practice, as well as creating a more coherent role as a unit. The creation of the EU as the 'Self', and the rest as the 'Other' reinforces this debate, however, as seen, the 'Self' and the 'Other' might be equally important for the survival of NPE as it is for the Empire.

Revisiting the introduction quote in this thesis from HR Borrell on the fact that Europeans must relearn the language of power, and deal with the world as it is and not as they wish it to be, serves as an interesting concluding remark. After the analysis, both periodic and synchronic, it does not seem that Europeans must *relearn it*, rather it seems that they have known how to apply it along all the three periods in the Maghreb.

VII Conclusion – a crystallization of the European dilemma?

The EU is not repainting its own image as, *avant-garde,* anymore; to the contrary, it seems to be losing belief in itself as *sui generis* in this multipolar world. By *relearning* the language of power, the EU moves away from its ability to play the role as the unique actor it has the requisites to be. Because in the end, there are no other post-national structures that come close to the power the EU holds in world affairs today.

Incoherence and problems of conceptualization of interests and values are problems that limit the EU's ability to be this normative power in the Maghreb. The EU´s dilemma on how to be a new democratic structure in a world which seemingly forces it to play a game of power politics is crystallized in the Maghreb. The solidification of this dilemma becomes clear when analyzing what remains of the EU's ambitious project of creating a common and peaceful Mediterranean; when today, what is left of this idea, are simply the skeletons of an imagined process. The lack of success after the Arab Awakening is highly illustrated by the results, or lack thereof, of the 'democratic developments' that the Maghreb countries have seen until today; results which can only be considered as rudimentary. The conditions which provoked the Arab Awakening are by no means resolved, and if these circumstances are not dealt with, they will continue to spark even more turbulence in the neighborhood in the long term.

In what can seem as an addiction to short-term solutions in the region, the EU has only kept the status-quo and will continue to do so as long as there is this 'false dilemma' of values and interests, thinking that the only way to secure borders is for it to do so at the expense of democracy promotion and human rights. The regimes in the Maghreb seem to understand that the EU finds itself within this dilemma, taking advantage of exactly that. For the authoritarian leaders in the region this impasse implies that they are truly valuable, and that the EU seems to be willing to go to extreme lengths to protect the European 'Self' against the 'Other'.

The identity of the EU can be understood as unique, but only if it can play such a role. The difference between the EU's own words, and what it actually does, only reaffirms the perceived identity of EU democracy promotion as a paradox in itself. The EU's new 'principled pragmatism' simply confirms Bull's thought from 1982, namely that the civil power seems to be a contradiction in terms. The same could be said for Normative Power Europe, if it cannot

bridge its gap between rhetoric and practice, and its perceived dilemma between values and interests.

Main findings

One of the first findings is that the EU's role in the Maghreb seems to be a struggle between the focus on stability versus democracy promotion, in such a way that one seemingly dominates at the expense of the other. The EU cannot find a balance between the stability nexus and the normative nexus, and therefore keeps contributing to the idea that the the two are not compatible. Cooperating with authoritarian governments has been put before the need to truly engage with the Maghrebi societies. The lack of full commitment seems to result in short term solutions, and specifically so, on the spending of funds towards solving the migration crisis.

The EU's problem of balance becomes most clear in the dissonance between rhetorical discourse and policy outcomes. In this study it is shown by the lack of early support for the Arab Uprisings – and yet again, with the lack of support for the Hirak Movement in 2019. The absence of actual support for the Saharawi cause, and the self-determination of the Western Sahara becomes a clear example of this differentiation. The EU had stated time and time again that they had made mistakes in their approach towards the region, but a lack of real change in policy makes the statement more fictional, rather than a true wish for change. The wish of course, might be there. However, democracy promotion seems to drive the EU's foreign policy, only when there is no clear conflict with its security interests.

A novel finding focuses on the combination of external perceptions to understand NPE in the Maghreb. The member states who carry colonial baggage can be damaging to the EU where there is a lack of coherence. However, when and if the EU is perceived as a unit, it seems the Union can be something unique and new in the Maghreb, rather than a façade for certain member states. It can therefore seem that some historical connections to certain countries, like France, affect the way in which the EU is perceived – in a positive way. The EU as a unit has not been a colonizer – and the EU's foundation seems to put a 'buffer' on the colonial conception. The EU can therefore be sui generis if it can distinguish itself clearer from the policies of the EU member states.

Strengths and weaknesses of the study

This study yields meaningful advice on how the EU functions as a foreign policy actor in its closest neighborhood to the south. This study, by applying a comparative model allows for an understanding of the variation which is seen in the different cases within the Maghreb, and moreover, it can state something about the Maghreb as a whole. As in all research on international relations, it is very difficult to rule out all other factors, and there might be other variables that can contribute and explain the thesis question, which have not been considered in this thesis.

The methodological difficulties with the NPE framework are valid critiques to this study as to any other study which applies NPE as theoretical framework. Nonetheless, by focusing on ideational as well as material factors, the thesis says something about the way the EU is indeed acting and being perceived - and how this can affect its ability to function as a democracy promoter by normative means. The findings in this thesis do show that there is a need for geographical sensitivity when discussing the NPE framework, and that it is apparent that the normative power framework must be understood within context, for it to be properly applied, questioning NPE's very universal foundation.

Implications for future research

As this thesis has found, and studied qualitatively, that the role of the EU as a democracy promoter, seems to vary on geographical sensitivities, it would be of interest to further investigate on a larger scale. The Maghreb is in a peculiar position, very close to the EU, yet too far away, a position which has implications for all its dealings with the EU. A larger comparative study, with the inclusion of other AMC's would be very valuable, to understand how the member countries perceived identities can affect the way in which the EU promotes democracy. Specifically, it would be interesting to understand the implications of the collective memories of the colonial history, and how this impact the EU's dealings in detail.

As an attempt to minimize the gap between theory and policy, this thesis points to specific implications that EU policy has in the region, and how these policies are being influenced by the external perceptions perspective. An important point for policy makers would involve how the lack of cultural and local adaptability, specifically impact the way in which democracy promotion functions in the region. Another point would be the power of the idea of the 'force for good' perspective and the upholding of the sui generis character.

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Do you want to participate in the research project

"*Assessing the role of the EU in the Maghreb – a Crystallization of the European Dilemma?*"

This is a question for you to participate in a research project where the purpose is to investigate the EU's role as a foreign policy actor and democracy promoter in North Africa. In this letter, we give you information about the goals of the project and what participation in this project will mean for you.

Purpose
The purpose of this project is to gain an in-depth insight into the effects of the EU as a democracy promoter in Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. The interview will be part of my master's thesis at the Department of Comparative Politics at the University of Bergen, and aims to answer the following research questions:

How does the nature of the EU as a foreign policy actor affect its ability to promote democracy in the Maghreb?

Who is responsible for the research project?
The University of Bergen is responsible for the project.

Why are you asked to participate?
You are receiving this inquiry due to your knowledge about Morocco, Algeria or Tunisia in relation with the EU. The criteria on which the selection of candidates is based, is therefore the specific professional competence you possess, which either revolves around how you as a national official or European official working in either Morocco, Algeria or Tunisia view interaction with the EU. About 10 people will be interviewed.

What does it mean for you to participate?
Participation in this project will involve participation in an interview that will last around 30 minutes. The interviews will be semi-structured, which gives the opportunity to speak relatively freely about your experiences. The interview will include questions about how you see the EU's role in the region and how it has developed over time. This involves questions about the EU's reactions to the Arab Uprisings and whether EU foreign policy could be said to have changed. If so, how these changes affect the Maghreb. The interview will record audio and notes will be taken throughout the interview.

It is voluntary to participate.
It is voluntary to participate in the project. If you choose to participate, you can withdraw your consent at any time without giving any reason. All information about you will then be

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[7] Both the interview invitations as well as the interview guides have been translated to Spanish and French by the author. The project has been accepted by NSD and data stored safely on UiB's own secure servers.

anonymized. There will not be any negative consequences for you if you do not want to participate or if you later choose to withdraw.

Your privacy – how we store and use your information
We will only use the information about you for the purposes we have described in this letter. We treat the information confidentially and in accordance with the privacy regulations.
- In addition to me, Maia Gartland Hoff, as a master's student, my supervisor at the Department of Comparative Politics, Kjetil Evjen, will have access to your information.
- Names and information will be stored separately, and the informant will be anonymized in the assignment text to prevent informants from being recognized. The data material is stored in a password-protected folder on my computer.
- When completed, the master's thesis will be available through the University of Bergen's open digital research archive (BORA).

What happens to your information when we end the research project?
The project is scheduled to end on 02.07.2021. Personal information, audio recordings and transcripts will be deleted no later than six month later, 02.01.2022.

Your rights
As long as you can be identified in the data material, you have the right to:
- access the personal information registered to you,
- have personal information about you corrected,
- have personal information about you deleted,
- obtain a copy of your personal information (data portability), and
- send a complaint to the *Ombudsman* or the *Data Inspectorate* about the processing of your personal data.

What entitles us to process personal information about you?
We process information about you based on your consent. On behalf of the University of Bergen, the NSD - Norwegian Center for Research Data AS (Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS) has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project is in accordance with the privacy regulations.

Where can I find out more?
If you have questions about the study, or want to exercise your rights, please contact:
- Student: Maia Gartland Hoff at the Department of Comparative Politics, University of Bergen. E-mail: ▮▮▮▮▮▮ and telephone; ▮▮▮▮▮▮
- Thesis advisor: Kjetil Evjen at the Department of Comparative Politics, University of Bergen. E-mail: ▮▮▮▮▮▮ and telephone; ▮▮▮▮▮▮
- Our privacy representative: ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ .

If you have questions related to NSD's assessment of the project, you can contact:
- NSD - Norwegian Center for Research Data AS, by email (personverntjenester@nsd.no) or telephone: 55 58 21 17.

Best regards
Maia Gartland Hoff

Project responsible
Thesis Advisor   Student
Kjetil Evjen   Maia Gartland Hoff

Declaration of Consent

I declare that I have received and understood the information given to me about the project *Assessing the role of the EU in North Africa – a crystallization of the European Dilemma?* I declare that I have had the opportunity to ask questions. I agree:

- ☐ to be interviewed
- ☐ to the fact that information about me is published so that I can be recognized. This will only apply if the informant wishes to provide information that goes beyond the intended objective of the interview, and the informant will be informed and given the opportunity to reserve the use.
- ☐ to the fact that my personal information is stored after the end of the project, until no later than 02.01.2022

I agree with the fact that my information will be processed until the project is completed, approx. 02.07.2021

(Signed by project participant, date)

Interview guide for officials in the Maghreb

Part I – Introduction

This study uses interviews to gain information about the perspectives of officials and academics that have worked in the Maghreb. As an informant your information will be anonymized. You have the right to withdraw at any moment during the interview.

I. Can you describe your previous/current working experiences? How have they been or are related to the Maghreb?

Part II – General questions on the EU as a foreign policy actor

I. How would you characterize the EU as an actor in world affairs?
  - Do you see the EU as a 'democracy promoter'? Why/why not?

II. Do you find that the role of the EU as a foreign policy actor has changed over time?
  - If so, in what way?

III. What role would you assign the member states in the forming of EU foreign policy?
  - Do you find that some actors have larger influence than other?

Part III - Specific questions towards EU policy in North Africa

I. How would you explain the relationship between the EU and the Maghreb countries?
  - Do you find that EU foreign policy in North Africa accurately prescribes to the EU's overall goals in world affairs?
    i. Why/why not?

II. How would you describe the EU's reaction to the Arab Uprisings?

- Has EU foreign policy changed from before and after?
- If there have been changes, what kind of changes are we talking about?

III. Do you find that the EU has a coherent policy towards the Maghreb?

- In your experience, how would you describe the communication between the EU and the different states?
- Would you say that the EU, as a unit, has larger influence in the Maghreb than the member states?
    i. Why/why not?

IV. Would you say that the EU has a positive effect on democratic development the Maghreb?

- Why/ why not?

Part IV – Closing

I. How do you see the EU as global actor in the future?
II. Is there any addition information that you would like to add?
III. Would it be possible to contact you if there are any follow-up questions?