On the Margins of Democracy
The EU's Legitimization of Authoritarianism in Egypt

Moaz Nasser Saber Abdelrahman

Thesis submitted for assessment with a view to obtaining the degree of Master of Arts in Transnational Governance of the European University Institute

Florence, 15 May 2022

European University Institute
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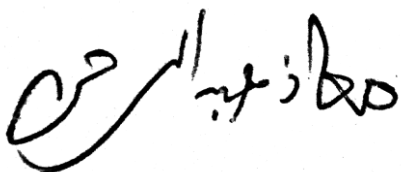
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To my father, Nasser Abdelrahman, in his prison cell since 30 September 2013, choosing to be free in prison than to legitimize a bloody coup

To +60,000 political prisoners in Egypt

To every soul we lost since the Jan 25th revolution until today

To the sacred streets of Egypt filled with our blood;

One day we will be free again

Acknowledgement:

Abstract:

The European Union's response to the Arab Spring and July 3rd military coup in Egypt contested the normative power of the EU in international politics. Meanwhile it is praised for being a transnational liberal institution that upholding the principles of democracy and respect human rights, the EU's reaction to the July 3rd military coup proves otherwise. After the January 25th revolution in Egypt, and during the democratic transition, the EU was able to speak its opinion about the state of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law in Egypt. However, since the July 3rd military coup, the EU's policy has been negligent to democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, and more focused on stability and cooperation. This thesis examines the EU's response to the democratic transition and military coup in Egypt, and how the EU was unable to engage its moral clauses when conducting relations with Sisi's Egypt.

Introduction:

*"We must **show humility** about the past. Europe **was not vocal**
enough in defending **human rights** and local **democratic forces** in
the region. Too many of us fell prey to the assumption that
authoritarian regimes were a guarantee of **stability** in the region"*

Stefan Fule,
European Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood
February 2011

In 1989, a student-led protest in Tiananmen Square in Beijing, China, calling for democracy and freedom of speech, was suppressed by the Chinese Communist Party, resulting in what is known as the "Tiananmen Square Massacre". The European Economic Community (EEC) reacted strongly against the People's Republic of China (PRC) crackdown on the protest, imposing an arms embargo on China (Taneja, 2010). This embargo marked the start a new set of normative policy from the EEC, later European Union (EU), defining its moral and ethical consideration of promoting democracy, rule of law, and human rights in its external relations.

Two decades later, and in the neighborhood of Europe, a series of events was to unfold to challenge the EU's morality in foreign policy, in what is known as the Arab Spring. Starting in Tunisia in December 2010, a street vendor, Mohamed Bouazizi, sat himself on fire after getting harassed by the municipality officials. In a country, and later a region, where corruption and authoritarianism dominated all aspects of life, his act of self-immolation sparked a wave of protests in Tunisia, followed by Egypt, Libya, Syria, Yemen, Bahrain, and Jordan, asking for better living conditions and a change in the governments' policies, later to ask for the deposition of these regimes in favor of a democratic future.

The beginning of the Arab Spring coincided with the formal establishment of the European External Action Services (EEAS), after the Treaty of Lisbon came into force, making a new beginning for the EU's diplomatic mission and foreign affairs. As the EEAS is mandated to represent the EU in its foreign relations, it also embodies the values of the EU and what it stands for, as described in the Treaty of Lisbon, which is the EU's commitment to promote democracy, human rights, and rule of law.

Before the establishment of the EEAS, the EU has since its inception had relations with the Mediterranean countries. This was formalized in stages, most notably the Euro-Mediterranean

Partnership, aka Barcelona Declaration, which established cooperation between the EU and the non-EU Mediterranean states in areas of security, economy, and culture. This later led to Association Agreements (AAs) with some of the states of the Barcelona Declaration, and one of these states is Egypt.

Egypt is considered an important partner of the EU in many areas due to its role in both the African Union and the Arab League, as well as its size and historical ties between the two sides. From the Egyptian side, the EU is an indispensable partner, as it is Egypt's largest trade partner with 29.7% of Egypt's trade, the majority of tourists in Egypt come from Europe (Abdel Ghafar, 2022), and Europe hosts the second largest Egyptian diaspora community (Pinfari, 2013). This partnership took many forms over the years, such as the EU-Egypt Association Agreement, the European Neighbourhood Policy Action Plan, and the EU-Egypt Partnership Priorities 2017-2020.

The importance of Egypt in understanding the EU's morality in foreign policy is based on the fact that Egypt went through a revolution, democratic transition, and a military coup. These three events presented challenges to the EU and Egypt. The EU had already invested in Mubarak's regime and the stability in the region before the revolution (Comelli, 2010), and it was afraid its position with the Egyptian authorities would be replaced by Russia or China by supporting the revolution. As the revolution gained more popularity and support, the EU opted for supporting the revolution and offer to help in promoting democracy and human rights. Once the July 3rd military coup took place, old practices of sidelining the EU's moral clauses were readopted in favor of stability and cooperation with the post-coup Abdelfattah El Sisi's regime.

With this in mind, the research question of this thesis is: "to what extent did the EU engage its moral clauses in its external action towards post-Arab Spring Egypt?" This question will help us understand the developments of the EU-Egypt relations, and the ability of the EU to abide by its own moral clauses. More broadly, this thesis addresses the place of morality in international relations.

As explained in the conceptualization section, I will not deal with the philosophical arguments about what is morality, what is moral, and how to live a moral life. For the sake of avoiding confusion and misunderstanding, morality will be defined in terms of the articles and clauses in the EU treaties and agreements that call on EU institutions to promote democracy, human rights, and rule of law. As explained in the literature review, the debate around the place of morality is politics took different forms, from total negligence of its place to the indispensable

place of morality in politics. For this reason, the literature review addresses morality in terms of: the emergence of the modern states, as the EU functions with institutions that resemble state authority, and International Relations (IR) theory, and the place of morality in both.

This is not the first time the EU's response to the Arab Spring has been examined in a thesis (Hassan, 2015; Sadek, 2016), and the moral background of the EU's foreign policy towards the MENA region (Meikle, 2016). However, this thesis deals with EU's foreign policy towards Egypt through the EU's own standards of morality, namely the moral clauses of promoting democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, as found in the EU's treaties and agreements.

What will not be discussed here is the justifications, whether moral or realist, for interventions with coercive means. Even though it will exclude an episode of some EU member states' response to the Arab Spring, i.e., Libya, the question addressed here is the EU's ability to abide by its moral standards and the feasibility of doing so when opportunities arise.

Literature Review:

Before examining how the EU-Egypt relations unfolded during the democratic transition and after the July 3rd military coup, and whether or not the EU was able to promote democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, I will examine the literature on the emergence of the modern state and its functions. This will be possible as I will discuss how the discussion between Marxist and Weberian historical sociology evolved, as they examined the economic and sociological reasons behind the structure of the modern state. This will enable us to understand the place of morality in the state structure, hence modern politics.

After examining the modern state and its emergence, a brief overview of the two main schools of IR, namely realism and liberalism, will follow. The discussion surrounding morality in IR goes from the total absence of morality in a realist, materialistic world, to the essentiality of morality once liberal values are adopted. As the EU is a liberal institution, these arguments will later help in understanding whether the liberal nature of the EU facilitated the actualization of its moral clauses in its external relations.

The argument here is not about the absolute presence or absence of morality in international relations by the adoption of a certain theoretical framework. What this dissertation attempts to do is to synthesize these arguments, with reflections from state formation and IR theory, I will argue

that the EU was unable to engage the its moral clauses regarding promoting democracy, human rights, and the rule of law that it set for itself.

The Modern State: (de)personal, (a)moral:

Different theoretical frameworks assume the centrality of the state in modern politics. The modern state, hence, maintains a position in domestic and international politics. The literature in this thesis will examine the rise and fall of different modes of governance by looking at the economic and political structures.

Historical sociology studied the emergence and development of the modern state from two perspectives: economic and social. The economic argument, as understood by Marxists, relies on the emergence of the modern state as a consequence of the bourgeois revolution (Teschke, 2003). The bourgeois revolution is the outcome of the capitalist ambitions of separating the market from the state, which is the process of rationalizing and depersonalizing the state, allowing the existence of the economic outside the political (Gerstenberger, 2007). To Karl Marx, this state structure is built around facilitating and serving the economic affairs of the bourgeoisie.

The Weberians' argument, on the other hand, focuses on social transformation due to modernity, transferring the household authority to the individual, and transforming state-society relations (Weber, 2013). Weber's definition of the modern state as "the monopoly of the legitimate use of means of physical force within a given territory" (Weber, 1946: 78), has dominated social sciences. Exercising sovereignty over a certain territory is the exercise of the monopoly of the means of coercion. That said, it does not necessarily entail the use of these means, but the ability to use, or threaten to use, these means of coercion to main order within a defined territory.

The process of rationalizing the state structure, whether from the Marxist or Weberian perspective, is the process of making the state an objective entity based on scientific reasoning rather than religious or emotional, which entails the separation of rationality from values. This was possible through the process of secularizing and depersonalizing the state structure. Hence, the state, in the ideal type, is a rational entity than a moral one, concerned with questions of order and development.

As for the European Union, even though the argument of its supra/transnational nature, with authority beyond the state is prevalent, the EU is still a union of its member states that negotiate and determine the decision of its policies. What is unique about the EU and its member

states is the development of an economic union into a political one. In other words, it is the way in which the union's economic structure facilitated and formed a political entity with authority over certain territories, while taking into consideration the limits of the political authority due to the freedoms member states enjoy in conducting their domestic and foreign policies.

Outside of Europe, the modern state retains its European characteristics, as it was globalized and imposed by a certain structure and practices. Therefore, international politics and governance has been the reproduction of a certain understanding of statehood that is uniquely European. This means questions of democracy, liberalism and good governance, when used by European and American policymakers, are located "within the context of Western historical experience" (Asad, 1980; 18).

Subsequently, the EU is an economic union with political functions, which will become evident in the analysis section. Based on the EEC, the practices of prioritizing economic and material benefits over the promotion of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law (Taneja, 2010) dominated the EU-Egypt relations before the Arab Spring and after the July 3rd military coup. Even though the EU is argued to be founded on the principles of respecting "human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights" (European Union, 2007), these practices are intrinsic to the intra-EU relations and regulations, which are not part of the EU external relations, as argued and explained in the analysis section.

IR Theory:

In order to understand the place of morality in international relations, this part is dedicated to outlining the main points of two schools of IR theory: realism and liberalism. Meanwhile other schools have evolved and contributed to IR theory as a field of study, realism and liberalism have been dominating IR theory as its cornerstone. For this reason, the main points of realism and liberalism will be looked at from how its thinkers saw it, and then morality will be placed in their arguments.

2.1. Realism:

Starting with realism, realism traces its history back to Thucydides' "History of the Peloponnesian War", in which he stated: "war is a matter not so much of arms as of money, which makes arms of use.", making it the cornerstone of classical IR theory. Thucydides laid the founding principles of realism: rationality and power-centered relations, by making it clear that the "strong get what

they can, and the weak suffer what they must". Rationality manifests itself here through power, as it serves one's own self-interest, and justice as self-serving element, i.e., expediency.

Thomas Hobbes and his Leviathan put forward the nature of the relations system and the concept of rationality. For him, the concept of "human nature" played an important role, as human nature made the system anarchic between the people, and rationality came with giving up, consensually, their natural rights –the right to kill and be killed- to the Leviathan. Saying that, they gained what was seen as civil rights under the Leviathan's rule. However, the international system, full of states and Leviathans is a world of rough equality in which anarchy dominates and the constant fear of war is lurking in the background of the international politics. Nevertheless, this fear is contained by the insomniac nature of the state bureaucracy; unlike humans, it never sleeps. Therefore, state of nature in inter-state relations has a different content. It does not necessarily result in war as the state apparatus is always awakened and watching the borders. Since sovereigns focus on domestic production and internal security, they do not find time to make plans to expand their borders on the expense of other states.

What is found in both of these claims is that morality is either sidelined or neglected in international politics. Charles Beitz (1979) walked the same line by claiming that there is not a place for moral judgement in international politics. This is later adopted by George Kennan (1985) in his argument that national interest lacks this characteristic or moral judgement. Therefore, national interest and power politics do not only play a primary role, but it is how states perform in international politics.

E. H. Carr saw that self-interest breads anarchy in the system, as the competition is always there. He saw that harmony of interests is the imagination of liberals, exists in their theories only, as the pretense of harmony only serves the major powers, not the other states. He saw that national interest is to serves oneself, not the common interest. He even saw ethics as a function of politics, unlike what liberals would say. His claim is that the 20 years' crisis was generated out of liberalism, revealing "the bankruptcy of liberalism" (Carr, 1990: 38). They asked for peace and harmony of interests without analyzing the world properly, which led Chamberlain to think that he held "peace" in his hands. He made a clear distinction between realism and utopianism (liberalism/idealism) and offered some sort of golden mean called sound political thinking, which refers to combining realism and utopianism in order to act judiciously in international politics.

Carr does not neglect the moral value that could be attributed to the actions of states in international politics. As Robert Giplin puts it: "in a world of scarce resources and conflict over the distribution of those resources, human beings confront one another ultimately as members of groups, and not as isolated individuals" (Giplin, 1984: 290). Therefore, morality differs in international politics, as individuals are collected into groups, rather than individual humans.

Hans Morgenthau, another modern realist thinker, accepted the concept of Human Nature as it is the objective law in the international system. He saw human nature as self-interested, conscious, power-seeking, and rational (Morgenthau, 1948). Power is manifested in self-interest, as it is rooted in humans, and it is the framework of interests. He claimed that we should not look at values and ideologies as such, but to consider realism as amoral in order to see the consequences of actions clearly. That said, this amorality is not completely detached from any moral quality, as national interest is a moral value. To consider moral judgement away from the national interest of the state is an irrational act, or as he puts it: "The choice is … between one set of principles divorced from political reality and another set of principles derived from political reality" (Morgenthau, 1950: 853-4).

The realist debate surrounding morality in international politics looks at morality either in its nonexistence or national interest as a moral value it itself to different degrees.

2.2. Liberalism:

Immanuel Kant, the 18th century Prussian philosopher, is one of the foremost liberal intellectuals who studied morality, its feasibility, and how to reach a moral world. Even though Kant's work on morality is immense, such as his *Critique of Practical Reason* and *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose*, what is looked at here is his *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch* (1903), in which he depicted the conditions of establishing perpetual peace between nations.

Kant's view of peace and democracy is considered the founding principle of liberalism. To Kant, promoting freedom and fundamental rights of individuals is an enlightened self-interest, understood here as a branch of morality, that is premised on the establishment of democratic societies, or constitutional republicanism. To Kant, these constitutional republics would refrain from getting in conflicts as their general wills are coming out of their citizens, as these citizens care about their lives and stability. They are not "subjects" to any arbitrary decision made by a ruler. Hence, peace is achieved between these republics, which then establish a "pacific zone".

Kant did not deny the hard conditions of the state of nature and how it produced what can be understood as, human nature. That said, this perpetual peace, in his perspective, is feasible and can be achieved through the harmony of interests. He did not mean altruism or selflessness, but still this harmony would come out of rationality as our self-interest would lead us to compromise to achieve peace and security. Henceforth, the pacific zone is expansionist in its nature as people would prefer peace and security, which is based on democratic values of representing nations' wills, over conflict and war.

With this in mind, Democratic Peace Theory was developed on the premise that "when the citizens who bear the burdens of war elect their governments, wars become impossible" (Doyle, 1986; 1511). In other words, democratic accountability plays a role in promoting peace, and as democracy prevails domestically, war is eliminated internationally, as states are instruments in reflecting the demands of individual citizens (Moravcsik, 2008).

Liberals, such as Keohane and Nye, emphasize the role that interdependence, economic relations, and international organizations in fostering peace and promoting democratic values. To Nye (2015), this is achievable through soft power, that does not necessarily contradict with realism, and to Keohane (1984), international organizations help in lessening the destructive impacts of anarchy in international politics.

Liberalism, hence, does not only look at the economic interactions between states, and the consequential peace achieved, with a pure economic lens, but with a moral obligation that requires these states to democratize and establish constitutions that represent their citizen's rights, i.e. rule of law. Morality here plays a central role in international politics, whether in determining how relations between nations are conducted or sustained, or the moral obligation to promote freedom and democracy.

EU, Democracy and the Arab Spring:
The story of the EU's promotion of democracy starts with The European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (1994), that was followed with the inclusion of respect for democratic principles and human rights in association agreements and economic cooperation agreements between EU member states and third countries (1995).

The issue of the EU and democracy promotion in the Arab Spring states has been amply covered in the literature (Fioramonti, 2012; Peters, 2012). Some argued for the EU's commitment to the promotion of democracy (Lloyd, 2010; Del Sarto, 2016; Bürkner & Scott, 2018), others argued the EU's security and stability concerns triumphed over their commitment to promoting democracy (Pace & Cavatorta, 2012; Isa, 2017; Hatab, 2019; Shikaki, 2020). The former takes into account the EU's "normative power" as an exporter of democratic norms, meanwhile the latter looks at the economic and security challenges that were posed with the rise of the Arab Spring.

Conceptualization: *Morality*:

As mentioned in the literature review, morality takes different roles and definitions in international politics, ranging from total denial of its existence to its indispensable role in it. As of the EU, its official line is to demonstrate the EU's determination to address human rights violations by integrating human rights clauses in its agreements, which provide the EU "with a basis for positive engagement on human rights and democracy issues with third countries" (Council of the European Union, 2005).

The EU's democracy promotion and human rights clauses in its international agreements provoked criticism, whether due to cultural relativism when approaching the issue of human rights and democracy, or the "neo-colonial" argument that these clauses might hold the same spirit of the Livingstone's ideas of "Christianity, Commerce, and Civilization" (Williams, 2006). For example, Sisi invoked cultural relativism on several occasions when confronted by journalists or leaders of states (Ali Eldin, 2022). For this reason, and to avoid confusion, morality here will be defined in terms of the articles and clauses on the promotion of, and respect for, democracy, human rights, and rule of law in the EU's agreements and treaties. For example:

The EU-Mediterranean Association Agreement (2004) with Egypt states in Article 2:

> "Relations between the Parties … shall be based on respect of democratic principles and fundamental human rights as set out in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights"

And the Treaty on European Union (2012), in which it is stated under Article 21:

> "1. The Union's action on the international scene shall be guided by the principles which have inspired its own creation, development and enlargement, and which it

seeks to advance in the wider world: democracy, the rule of law, the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for human dignity, the principles of equality and solidarity, and respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law.

2(b). The Union shall define and pursue common policies and actions, and shall work for a high degree of cooperation in all fields of international relations, in order to: consolidate and support democracy, the rule of law, human rights and the principles of international law

The Union shall ensure consistency between the different areas of its external action and between these and its other policies. The Council and the Commission, assisted by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, shall ensure that consistency and shall cooperate to that effect."

Hence, morality here will be defined in terms of 1) the respect, promotion, and advancement of democracy, human rights, and rule of law, 2) the consistency of coordination and abiding by these standards. Even though the EU emphasized the intrinsic nature of democracy in granting and sustaining stability, stability here is understood in a two-dimensional manner: the absence of political events that could trigger radical political change; and the resumption of economic activities without major disturbance. Therefore, stability is understood as part of the interest rather than morality.

Methodology:

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) will be employed here to better understand how narratives interplay with policy practices, and how this is reflected in the legitimization of the July 3rd coup in Egypt. CDA, as understood by Fairclough (2012), looks at the relations between the semiotic and the material in a three-dimensional manner: structure, practice, and events. This will help in looking at the structure of the EU, the relations between Egypt and the EU in terms of practices, and the events the triggered such practices. Hence, reports of the EU institutions, as mentioned above, will be analyzed in terms of narrative.

Narrative is used here to describe as an act with "dramatic nature" which attracts attention for a longer period of time (Mclaughlin & Velez, 2019). Mclaughlin and Velez emphasized how

people interact with the sources of narratives, which later connects the constructed mental models to a larger scheme. This provokes the question of the structure of institutions and relations, which I intend to use historical sociology as a theoretical framework, i.e., Weberian modern state, to better understand the structure of the EU's institutions.

As this thesis focuses on the place of morality in EU foreign policy and the subsequent legitimization of authoritarianism in Egypt, the timeframe of the data collected and studies focus primarily on the period between 2011-2020, with some exceptions to agreements and academic sources that were deemed relevant to the case study. For this reason, the data collected was derived from official documents (such as reports, memos, and resolutions by the EU institutions), newspapers and articles, press releases, and secondary sources.

Analysis:

This section will analyze how EU institutions responded to Egypt's political situation before and after the July 3rd military coup. It will look at the political developments in Egypt under the SCAF, Morsi, and Sisi, how the EU reacted to these developments, and whether or not it found a way to employ its moral clauses during this period.

Western powers, including the EU, have contributed to the emboldening of authoritarian regimes by promoting and developing partnerships that do not challenge the prevailing authoritarian status quo (Bush, 2015). The EU's foreign policy towards the MENA region, and Egypt more specifically, was based on maintaining stability by continuing to support the status quo. This becomes more obvious when taking the politics of scale within the EU foreign policy structure into consideration, as southern EU member states refrained from promoting democracy and human rights in favor of extensive dialogue and cooperation in what could be perceived as direct threats to them, such as irregular migration, instability, and terrorism.

The Revolution and Democratic Transition:

The relations between the EU and Egypt goes back to since the establishment of the EU, but it was formalized with the Barcelona Euro-Mediterranean Conference in 1995, which laid out the foundations of the Union for the Mediterranean, transnationally, and the EU-Egypt Association Agreement in 2001. During that period, and up until 2011, relations focused mostly on issues that would not disturb the partnership, taking into consideration the unchangeable importance of Egypt to the EU and vice versa, as explained above. Therefore, issues of promoting democracy, human

rights, and rule of law were sidelined. This explains the EU's hesitant reaction to the Arab Spring and January 25th revolution in Egypt at the beginning, which affected the reputation of the EU in the region during the transitional period (Pinfari, 2013). However, it also presented the EU with a case of engaging its moral clauses during a distributive momentum, namely the Arab Spring, that was aimed at fostering democracy in the region.

After Hosni Mubarak stepped down and the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) became the *de facto* leader of Egypt, a transitional roadmap was put forward that included writing a new constitution, and new parliamentary and presidential elections. The revolutionary momentum in the region was met with an internal revision of the EU's relations with authoritarian regimes before the Arab Spring, and how these relations were in direct contradiction with the EU's moral clauses.

In the 2011 European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) report on the situation in Egypt, a moderate, yet positive, language was used to describe the situation. It described the ambitions of Egyptians for freedom and democracy and started to examine the practices of SCAF without shying out to call the practices as "not satisfactory" while portraying the state of human rights (European Commission, 2012). It dealt with many issues, from the electoral process, the role of the EU in financing the training of election observers, raised concerns about the human rights abuses and restrictions on freedom of expression and NGOs, and invited Egyptian authorities to hand over power to a civilian administration, adopt an inclusive, democratic constitution, and ensure a good environment for NGOs in line with international standards.

During the 2011 parliamentary elections in Egypt, the EU offered to send an election observation mission, which was declined by the SCAF. Even though this could have raised concerns, the ENP adopted a rather positive attitude, as the EU was replaced by seven (7) international NGOs to observe the elections, and their results show that "there was no systematic, large-scale vote rigging" (European Commission, 2012: 4).

The actualization and materialization of EU's moral clauses was possible when dealing with Egypt during the period of 2011-2013 due to the popular demand in the streets of Egypt for democracy and civilian government. This has put the SCAF under pressure to take not radical, but gradual, steps towards democracy during the transitional period. This was marked with free and transparent elections and a referendum, and partial lifting of the state of emergency in early 2013.

In other words, the popular pushbacks against the SCAF's authoritarian tendencies, with General Sisi as a member of it at that time, facilitated the gradual steps towards democracy in Egypt during that period.

The situation changed in 2012, as the executive powers were handed over to a civilian president, Mohamed Morsi. During his first visit to the West, Morsi went to Brussels in a message of ensuring the continuation of EU-Egypt relations at the highest level. In the press statement made by the president of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy, after meeting with President Morsi, a language of allyship was adopted due to the fact that Morsi was the first Egyptian president to visit the EU institutions. The same statement ended with expressing solidarity in building democratic future in Egypt: "This is a responsibility President Morsi is faced with" and that the "EU will stand by [the Egyptian peoples'] side as a friend, a neighbor, a partner" (European Council, 2012).

During that time, the ENP report described that "significant milestones were achieved" during the transition process, namely "the orderly organisation of elections, the end of the state of emergency and the smooth transition from military to civilian rule" (European Commission, 2013: 2). That said, the report started criticizing with a strong language the setbacks and how the state of polarization was handled in Egypt. Some of the major setbacks were the dissolution of the parliament by the SCAF, the "controversial decree" issued by Morsi that granted him "sweeping powers", the constitutional referendum, and the state of the civil society organizations (CSOs), which led to the cancellation of €4 million fund for enhancing CSOs capacity (European Court of Auditors, 2013), a case of applying conditionality with Egypt. This reflected a commitment from the European side to uphold its moral clauses when incidents of setbacks, even if not major, took place.

The cancellation of the CSOs €4 million fund was in line with the conditionality principle and the general atmosphere of skepticism towards the transitional period after the election of Morsi. It echoed the EP's resolution to stop granting "any budgetary support" to Egypt until progress is achieved in the areas of governance (European Parliament, 2013a). That said, "strategic patience", as claimed by Catherine Ashton, was the official line of the European Commission (European Union, 2013). While taking strategic patience and conditionality into consideration, Morsi's administration still perceived the EU as an essential partner. For example, unlike the

SCAF's refusal of the EU's offer to field an election observation mission, after the presidential election and the appointment of a civilian government in Egypt, an official invitation was extended to the EU by the Egyptian authorities to observe the parliamentary elections that were supposed to take place between April and June 2013 (European Commission, 2013).

The dichotomy between democracy and stability, looked at here as a dichotomy between moral and pragmatic paths, was maintained in the EU-Egypt relations. The skeptical language that was adopted when reporting the situation in, and conducting relations with, Egypt under Morsi was balanced with the language of allyship in the other aspects of cooperation, namely security and crisis management. The EU wanted to present itself as a "critical friend" of Egypt, upholding its moral clauses, while maintaining relations to ensure strategic cooperation.

The July 3rd Military Coup and the Aftermath:

The policies towards Egypt and the new EU-Egypt partnerships since the July 3rd military coup represent a case of democracy prevention (Brownlee, 2012) such as the one adopted by the US in Egypt. This can be seen in the initial refrainment to call what took place as a military coup, the negligence of the moral clauses – whether the Treaty on European Union or the agreements with Egypt –, and the adoption of what can be called "more [support] for less [reform]" conditionality principle. In other words, the "critical friend" decided to go back to the pre-Arab Spring practices of sidelining democracy and human rights when conducting relations with Sisi's Egypt.

Following the July 3rd military coup, the EU institutions' official stance was in favor of returning to the path of democracy and handing power over to a democratically elected civilian government. As per the Resolution on the Situation in Egypt by the EP (European Parliament, 2013b; 2013c), the language used show three main issues:

- Concern over the diversion from the democratic path in Egypt,
- Concern over the disproportionate use of force by the Egyptian security forces, and the Muslim Brotherhood's failure to curb the masses from using violence, and
- Urging the EU to use the conditionality principle (more for more) when dealing with Egypt.

The EU's reaction to the coup could be placed within the trauma of its reaction to the Arab Spring; the hesitance of the EU to denounce Mubarak's regime hurt the reputation of the EU in Egypt. Faced with this dilemma, the EU opted for meditating between the coup and the Muslim Brotherhood, while refraining from calling what happened as a coup, which is applicable to all EU

institutions. The language used was to treat both sides equally by not blaming, or urging, one side more than the other (European Union, 2013b). The EU-Egypt relations reached a standstill with the failure of mediation between the military and the Muslim Brotherhood, while a language of "great concern" was adopted in response to Rabaa and Al-Nahda massacres (European Union, 2013c), that cause the deaths of over 1000 civilian. This resulted in a conclusion adopted by the Council, without any binding clauses to it (Council of the European Union, 2013).

The stand-still situation that followed the July 3rd military coup between the EU institutions and Egypt, and the language adopted by the Egyptian authorities, such as "Egypt could manage without EU help" (Black, 2013), were due to the sudden flow of money from the GCC member states to the coup in Egypt. This flow of money and aid packages to stabilize the coup is understandable in the case of the GCC-Egypt relations for two reasons: the GCC is a "club of monarchies" (Derichs & Demmelhuber, 2014: 188) that challenges political change, and the Arab Spring presented radical political change; and the complex relationship between the Muslim Brotherhood and the dynasties of the GCC.

A "façade democracy" (Ritter, 2014) has been the policy that the July 3rd military coup adopted since 2013. The implementation of this policy took place in three (3) phases: writing and adopting the new constitution in 2014, presidential elections, and parliamentary elections. Starting with the 2014 constitution, it was praised for its liberal and politically balanced language, emphasizing the sovereignty of the masses and respect for human rights. This was later praised by the EU in the 2014 ENP's implementation progress report, in which it is stated:

> "the Constitution can be considered to be more liberal than the previous
> constitutions … it includes an unprecedented level of protection for human rights
> and individual freedoms, and bolsters the rights of women and gender equality."
> (European Commission, 2015a: 4)

However, many of the constitution's articles were limited by "in a manner organized by the law", which is a point of criticism the ENP report reveals, however without any further elaboration. Another point is the unchecked powers of the Egyptian military and the rights it was granted by this constitution, such as the SCAF's final say on the appointment of the Minister of Defense, the continuation of military trials of civilians, and the military budget as a single item before the parliament.

After approving the constitution, presidential elections were held in May 2014, in which Field Marshal Sisi won by 97% of the votes, which was observed by the EU's Election Observation Mission (EOM). The EOM saw, according to the 2014 ENP report, that the electoral process of the presidential elections as "satisfactory" taking into account the "challenging political context" the followed the July 3rd military coup. However, it criticized "the partial media coverage, very limited space for dissent, and the political/legal context the elections were held in." That said, there is a discrepancy between the ENP and EOM reports. In the EOM report (European Union Election Observation Mission, 2014), we find that the equipment that the EOM team needed and brought with them were held back by the Egyptian customs for three (3) weeks, only for them to start working on 21 May, which hindered EOM from fulfilling its mandate in full.

In the presidential election in 2014, not only the Muslim Brotherhood campaigned to boycott the election, but also the Strong Egypt Party and April 6 Movement followed suit and campaigned for the same purpose, claiming Sisi has violated his promised of not running for the presidency (Al-Basosy, 2014). Hamdeen Sabahy, the presidential candidate against Sisi in this election, expressed his doubts about the official numbers of the voters' turnout, claiming that such numbers lack "credibility" (France 24, 2014).

As for the last one, the parliamentary elections, it was the last step of the transitional roadmap that the July 3rd military coup has put. The election of a new parliament in 2015 was the final step of the transitional roadmap. The 2017 revised ENP report did not comment on the election process itself, but it saw the high number of female MPs (89 in total) as a sign of progress (European Commission, 2017).

By taking a closer look at the parliamentary politics in Egypt following the July 3rd military coup, the case of the opposition in the parliament can illuminate why the revised ENP report did not comment on the process. The opposition coalition in the 2015 parliament consisted of nine (9) MPs. Later, this coalition lost seven (7) of its seats in the 2019 elections, and was joined by one new member, making the opposition in the parliament consisting of three (3) MPs. Diaa El Din Dawood, a member of this opposition, commented on this low number, almost 0.5% of the parliament, by saying: "Do we have [real] political parties in Egypt? Do we have a [suitable] political environment? The parliament is a mirror, a reflection [of the reality]" (MBC Masr, 2021)

meaning that the reality on the ground in Egyptian politics does not allow for a real opposition to the regime to emerge. This did not provoke any criticism from the EU.

Ritter argues that even though such a façade is a justification by authoritarian regimes to deepen their relations with democratic countries, it can also lead to opportunity for dissent. That said, Sisi's regime invests in his image as a democratic leader while maintaining an iron fist over Egypt's political life. Such a façade is used, as in the case of Sisi, to maintain and deepen relations with democracies, provide a framework of political control, and allow his governments to reply when faced with criticisms (Cook, 2021).

The regime in Egypt was able to serve the interests of EU member states and European firms, which helped in changing the conversation on human rights and democracy from confrontational to subtle criticism. This was possible due to the emerging instability in the region, mixed with threats and incidents of terrorism in both Europe and MENA, and irregular migration. Dialogues between the EU, its member states, and Egypt were followed by agreements and partnerships that solidified the relations.

The EU allowed itself to be criticized by adopting a moral compass in rhetoric that does not confer with its practices. This opened the door for authoritarian regimes to blackmail the EU, increase their bargaining power, and even mock the EU. On several occasions, the Egyptian Foreign Ministry criticized the EU's response to humanitarian crises, the EU should "live up to their responsibilities … in accordance with the principles of international humanitarian law" (Nader, 2015).

The European market, namely infrastructure and arms deals, presented an opportunity to invest in legitimization for Sisi's regime. Following 2013, arms sales between EU member states and Egypt increased exponentially despite the EU non-binding council resolution in August 2013 to halt arms sales to Egypt. That said, in the following years, Egypt became the second largest importer of French and Italian weaponries, while new deals are taking place with France, Italy, and Germany. Adding to this the role of European firms, such as Siemens' deal worth €8 billion (Reuters, 2015), ENI's discovery of Zohr gas field (Agence Ecofin, 2015), and the Transmashholding-Hungary's €1 billion contract to sell train cars to Egypt (Railway Technology 2018). As for loans, the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) granted loans worth €8.1 (European Investment Bank,

2022) and €6.5 billion (European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, 2022), respectively, to Egypt since 2013.

The call for, which was later an adopted resolution, an EU-wide ban on exporting technologies that could be used for surveillance to suppress citizens was violated on a number of occasions, such as Hacking Team, Area SpA (Italy); Gamma International (UK & Germany); Trovicor (Germany); and Nexa/Amesya, Sirli mission (France) (TIMEP, 2019). Investigations in some of these cases were opened. However, the initial agreements and exportation of such technologies have already taken place, which enabled the regime in Egypt to increase its control and suppression of dissidents.

However, all of this came on the expense of the Egyptian economy. Meanwhile the GCC member states' financial support for the coup helped in levitating the economic hardships that could have been faced by the coup during its first years, this financial support was not sustainable. Furthermore, the ever-expanding role of the Egyptian army in the economy is not helping in managing the economic situation, as it lacks transparency (Sayigh, 2019). With the expanding economic activities of the military, new trade and arms deals with other states, and a growing population with 60% of it either vulnerable or under the poverty line (World Bank, 2019), the economic situation threatens the survival of Sisi's regime in Egypt, causing instability to unfold in the long-term.

The EU is concerned with the state of stability in Egypt, as Egypt is considered as an important partner of the EU in ensuring the stability of the MENA region. Over the years of the Arab Spring and after the July 3rd military coup, whether in the EU-Egypt Partnership Priorities agreement, EP's resolutions, or the ENP's progress reports, there is an emphasis on the inherit role of democracy and the role of law in granting and sustaining democracy. In the Partnership Priorities (2017-2020), it is stated:

> "Stabilisation is a common challenge facing the EU and Egypt. Establishing a modern, democratic state that delivers benefits equitably to all people is essential for this … Egypt and the EU are therefore committed to promoting democracy, fundamental freedoms and human rights" (The Association Council, 2017: 6)

The principle of conditionality, i.e., more for more, seems to have not been applied appropriately when dealing with the Egyptian authorities following the July 3rd military coup, if not reversed to "more for less". Even though the Egyptian authorities, since July 2013, have taken backward steps from the democratic transition, namely the military coup followed with an ever-decreasing space for criticism or freedom of speech, violations to the rule of law and human rights, the EU increased its cooperation with, and support for, the Egyptian regime.

This was later codified by the signing of the revised European Neighbourhood Policy, in which a new approach to promoting democracy and human rights was adopted. The principle of conditionality (more for more) was deemed "successful" yet "not sufficiently strong incentive" where there was not commitment from the partners nor the political will to carry it (European Commission, 2015b: 5). Different approaches to promote democracy and human rights were promised but the vague language left it up for interpretation. Another important feature is the centrality of stability in the revised ENP. The EU differentiated, subtly, between stability and democracy; meanwhile "democracy, human rights and the rule of law and economic openness" are the cornerstone of the EU's stability, stabilization is the "main political priority" of the ENP, without limiting it to these conditions.

That said, the issue of stability was put into question by the EP when demonstrations took place on 20 September 2019 against Sisi's regime. Two issues started to gain more salience: the long-term destabilizing nature of authoritarianism, and the EP's push for more action to be taken regarding the EU's foreign policy towards Egypt. The adopted resolution included calls by the EP for a "profound and comprehensive review of its relations with Egypt", "establish clear benchmarks that make further cooperation with Egypt conditional on progress in the reform of democratic institutions, the rule of law and human rights", and condemning EU member states for their non-compliance with the 21 August 2013 resolution for "the suspension of export licences for any equipment which might be used for internal repression" (European Parliament, 2019).

Nevertheless, the 2019 EP resolution was neglected by the Council and Commission, as on several occasions in 2020, the President of the Council, Charles Michel, emphasized the importance of strengthening the EU-Egypt partnership (Council of the European Union, 2020). This demonstrated the tension between supranationally elected members of the EP, on one hand, and officials in the other EU institutions, and how the EU is detached from its moral clauses and

its own resolutions when the issue is between realpolitik or promoting democracy, human rights, and rule of law.

Conclusion and Discussion:

This thesis presents a case of how the EU, a liberal, democratic transnational organization (Haine, 2009), chose not to utilize and engage its moral clauses in its foreign policy when dealing with authoritarian regimes. The EU embodies the characteristics of supranational modern state, by having its parliament, councils, courts, and external services office, which explains, as mentioned in the literature review, how this structure of the modern state relies on rational thinking than any value-based system. Another feature is the adoption of realist policies in international relations than liberal ones. Meanwhile realists assumed the absence or subservient role of morality in international politics, liberalism emphasized the place of morality. By neglecting its moral clauses while conducting foreign relations, the EU negates a feature of its liberal structure.

More interestingly, the case of the revolution and Morsi demonstrate that the EU is able to engage its moral clauses, fostering relations with countries in democratic transition, and establishing new partnerships with these countries, without compromising conditionality or tradeoff its moral clauses for stability and security. This should not be confused with promoting democracy in undemocratic, oppressive states, as the EU's reaction is either timid or negligent when it comes to employing these clauses while conducting relations with such regimes. In other words, the EU utilizes the existing momentum, such as the Arab Spring, when it is deemed favorable to the EU rather than help creating one. This can be seen with the counterrevolution – presented by the July 3rd military coup – in Egypt. Since 2013, the EU fostered the relations with Egypt on the basis of stability rather than democracy, human rights, and the rule of law promotion. This does not only puts the moral clauses and the normative power of the EU into question, but it also puts the EU in a difficult position in justifying its policies when stability is threatened by the authoritarian practices of the regime in Egypt, and for the future relations with a democratic Egypt that will see in the EU a counterproductive, untrustworthy partner that can replace democratic aspirations with short-term pragmatic practices once the opportunity allows.

It is clear that the EU opted for short-term stability and solutions to the unfolding crises that followed the Arab Spring rather than to invest in long-term solutions exemplified by

democracy, human rights, and the rule of law in the countries of the MENA region. The calculated steps of the EU that resulted in solidifying relations and increasing cooperation with Sisi's regime in Egypt could backfire in case of regime change in Egypt due to the worsening economic situation and the absence of political channels for the masses to address their grief. As mentioned by the European Commission's ENP report in 2011, the reasons behind the January 25th revolution in Egypt could be "the democratic deficit, policy brutality and impunity, corruption and poor living standards triggered popular discontent".

Adding to this, this thesis shows a tension between the EP, on one hand, and the EC and the Council of EU, on the other hand. Many of the issues regarding democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, especially when dealing with a third country, are not brought forward by the EC nor the Council of EU until the EP addresses them. Meanwhile the EP tries to remain in line with the general stand of the EC and the Council of EU, it addresses issues that might concern the general public, which is understandable being directly elected, unlike most officials in the other EU institutions.

The cases of the former political prisoner, Ibrahim Halawa (European Parliament, 2015), and the tortured then murdered PhD student, Giulio Regeni (European Parliament, 2016), were mostly discussed about in the EP, which on its part urged the EC and the Council of the EU to reevaluate the relations with Sisi's Egypt and set benchmarks for the development of these relations. Ibrahim Halawa became free after dropping his Egyptian citizenship, but the case of Regeni faces more troubles as the Egyptian authorities are stalling.

One example of how the EU's foreign policy structure changes opinions and practices can be found in the change of Frans Timmermans's opinions. When he was the foreign minister of the Netherlands, Timmermans was involved in the meditation between the Muslim Brotherhood and the military, emphasized the importance of dialogue, and that the army response "is certainly not going to de-escalate the situation" (Reuters, 2013). After Rabaa Massacre, he urged the EU to be "very clear on condemning the excessive violence" (BBC, 2013). However, after becoming the Vice President of the European Commission, Timmermans adopted a rather inviting language when dealing with the Egyptian authorities, even praising Sisi's Egypt for their efforts, or as he said to journalists during the second ministerial conference of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) that "Egypt is well placed to host the COP27 in 2022 and the country has the political capability to play a major role in this" (Ahram Online, 2021).

The EU's practice of dealing with authoritarian regimes is not exclusive to the case of Sisi's Egypt. It is a continued practice of integrating and socializing these regimes in international politics, which emboldens these regimes to act without fearing feasible consequences in international fora. A few examples could be mentioned, such as Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates (UAE), China, and Russia (prior to the war in Ukraine). Saudi Arabia does not only lack democracy and freedom of expression. It also played a role in suppressing the Arab Spring, involved in war crimes in Yemen, and violated Vienna Convention for Diplomatic Mission with the case of killing Jamal Khashoggi. The UAE is not different from Saudi Arabia. As for China, since Tiananmen Square Massacre, economic relations resumed with greater developments. Lastly is Russia, which did not face serious ramifications whether for the state of democracy and human rights, nor for its role in suppressing the Syrian revolution, but the EU only acted when Russia presented a material threat to Europe by invading Ukraine in March 2022.

Authoritarian regimes in the (semi)periphery, if Wallerstein's world system theory is used here, are concerned with their survival. Most of their acts are for the purpose of upholding the existing status quo that presents no direct threat to their authority by proving their competence to the masses (Guriev & Treisman, 2015). The case of Sisi's Egypt is not any different from this. Building his presidential campaign on a platform of fast development and growth, Sisi realized the fragility of his regime when protests came out in September 2019. These protests led to the suspension of some of the austerity measures he was planning to impose on the people. As the economic situation is getting worse, Sisi made a speech in April 2022, mentioning for the first-time former president Morsi by name, saying that he never betrayed "President Morsi, may god have mercy on him" (Egypt Independent, 2022), that the worsening economic situation is a burden that falls on the shoulders of all of Egypt, not only his regime, and calling for a political dialogue without any preconditions. Since the speech and until the day of writing this, there has not been any concrete steps to change the situation in Egypt.

If there is any recommendation to the EU for its future policies with authoritarian regimes, I would recommend either the amendment of the EU treaties that involved calls for promoting democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, for the sake of consistency between rhetoric and practice, or Christian Achrianer recommended, which is:

> "Instead of increasing exports of weapons, the EU should impose a comprehensive
> arms embargo. Instead of providing al-Sisi with a propaganda platform by warmly

welcoming him in European capitals or making him the host of the EU-Arab League summit, it should use those occasions to continuously point out human rights abuses. Instead of praising the regime as a stability anchor, it should point out that repression only leads to more instability. Instead of following the Egyptian government's wish to solely focus on economic cooperation, it should bring political reforms back on the agenda. Instead of providing budget support, it should only grant clearly targeted aid directly benefitting the people. By resorting to this approach, the EU could actively stand up for its values, while keeping the dialogue alive and avoiding unrealistic expectations." (Achrainer, 2019: 511-2).

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