

**Joint Master in Global Economic
Governance and Public Affairs**



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Abstract

This thesis evaluates the effectiveness of the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) in Tunisia and Morocco, two countries with distinct trajectories following the Arab Spring. The ENP, aimed at fostering stronger ties and addressing shared challenges in the Mediterranean region, has faced criticism for its limited outcomes and difficulties in implementing structural reforms. The analysis reveals that Tunisia, as the catalyst of the Arab Spring, suffered significant economic, social, and institutional repercussions. The introduction of "Western" democracy has shown limitations in the Arab context, failing to achieve stability and economic growth. Similarly, Morocco's economic stability has not translated into effective democratization and the rule of law. The thesis employs a systematic approach, examining the methodology, historical development, and objectives of the ENP. The case study chapters focus on Tunisia and Morocco, analyzing their relationships with the EU, ENP implementation, and the impact on political, social, and economic spheres. The evaluation highlights the complex challenges of implementing the ENP and the need for a tailored, long-term approach. The thesis concludes by emphasizing the importance of inclusivity and economic development in achieving effective outcomes, questioning whether the ENP and EU missed the mark in supporting these countries.

Table of Contents

1.	Introduction -----	1
2.	Methodology-----	4
3.	The European Neighborhood Policy-----	6
3.1.	Historical Development -----	6
3.2.	Changing Objectives -----	7
3.3.	Instruments -----	12
3.4.	The Arab Spring and the ENP -----	12
3.5.	Recurring Challenges -----	13
4.	Case Study on Tunisia and Morocco-----	17
4.1.	The EU & Tunisia -----	17
4.2.	ENP Implementation in Tunisia -----	18
4.3.	ENP & the Current Reality of Tunisia-----	25
4.4.	The EU & Morocco -----	34
4.5.	ENP Implementation in Morocco -----	35
4.6.	ENP & the Current Reality of Morocco-----	40
5.	Conclusion -----	47
6.	Bibliography -----	51

1. Introduction

In view of their close geographical proximity and crucial strategic importance, the European Union (EU) has long recognized the significance of cooperating with Mediterranean countries as a central priority in its external relations. In pursuit of this objective, the EU has formulated an extensive framework of policies and instruments aimed at fostering stronger ties and addressing shared challenges. However, scholars widely agree that the EU's external policies in the Mediterranean region have not produced the desired outcomes, and implementing structural reforms has proven to be exceptionally difficult. These shortcomings in EU Mediterranean policies reflect a broader challenge within EU external policy-making: the translation of policy objectives into effective implementation. The EU's engagement with Mediterranean countries is motivated by various factors, including economic interdependence, security concerns, migration dynamics, and the promotion of democratic values. The EU's policy framework encompasses several dimensions, such as political dialogue, economic cooperation, development assistance, and support for democratic reforms. The overarching goal is to promote stability, prosperity, and democracy throughout the Mediterranean region.

In response to these challenges and in an effort to strengthen cooperation with Mediterranean countries, the European Union (EU) implemented the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) in 2004. Over the years, the ENP underwent multiple revisions and annual strategy paper reviews, with the most recent update in 2021 aimed at better addressing the evolving challenges in the Mediterranean region. Building upon this context, the primary objective of this thesis is to evaluate the effectiveness of the ENP by conducting a comparative analysis of its implementation and impact in two key countries: Tunisia and Morocco. Tunisia and Morocco have been specifically selected for this study due to their divergent trajectories following the Arab Spring revolution in 2010/2011. Their distinct political, economic, and social developments offer valuable insights into the influence of the ENP on various aspects of their social, economic, and political spheres. Our analysis reveals that Tunisia, as the catalyst of the Arab Spring,

experienced significant repercussions on the economic, social, and institutional fronts in the aftermath. We argue that while pure authoritarian regimes have historically proven ineffective in the region, the introduction of "Western" democracy has faced several limitations within the Arab context, failing to achieve socio-political stability and economic growth. Furthermore, despite Morocco's relative economic stability, the ENP has fallen short in its objectives pertaining to democracy, rule of law, and other related aspects.

The structure of this thesis involves a systematic approach to examining the ENP and its implementation in Tunisia and Morocco. Firstly, the methodology employed for assessing the ENP will be introduced. This will provide a framework for evaluating the effectiveness of the policy in the chosen countries. Subsequently, the thesis will delve into the European Neighbourhood Policy itself, tracing its historical development and elucidating its objectives and recurring challenges. By providing this comprehensive background, a solid foundation will be laid for understanding the context in which the ENP operates. Moving forward, the second chapter will focus on the case study of Tunisia and Morocco. The chapter will commence by analyzing the relationship between these countries and the EU, exploring the dynamics and interactions that shape their engagement. Subsequently, the implementation of the policy in each respective country will be examined, with a particular emphasis on the funds and projects. This analysis will provide insights into the extent to which the ENP has been operationalized and its impact on the political, social, and economic spheres of the two cases. The chapter will culminate with a comprehensive evaluation of the current political, social, and economic development in Tunisia and Morocco. By considering the outcomes in light of the ENP's objectives, the effectiveness of the policy in each country will be assessed. Finally, in the conclusion, the analysis and results obtained throughout the thesis will be synthesized, providing a comprehensive understanding of the ENP's overall effectiveness in Tunisia and Morocco, as well as insights into its implications for future policy considerations.

Before digging into the paper, it is essential to acknowledge that the analysis conducted in this study may have certain limitations. The effectiveness of the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) in Morocco and Tunisia has been assessed by examining its

implementation, including the allocation of funding and the execution of projects, and comparing it to the current situations in the two countries. The underlying premise is that if the countries are manifesting the objectives outlined by the ENP, such as democracy, the rule of law, and inclusive development, then the ENP is deemed an effective instrument. Conversely, if these desired elements are absent, it indicates the ineffectiveness of the ENP in achieving its goals. However, it is important to recognize that this analysis provides a partial view of the overall impact of the ENP. The ENP's effectiveness cannot be solely determined by the presence or absence of the aforementioned variables. Other factors, such as local dynamics, regional challenges, and external influences, can also shape the outcomes and should be taken into consideration. Additionally, the assessment of effectiveness may be subjective, as perceptions and interpretations of the ENP's objectives may vary among different stakeholders.

2. Methodology

The methodology employed in this thesis involves a qualitative analysis of the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) and its implementation in the countries of Morocco and Tunisia. The objective is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the strengths, weaknesses, and implications of the ENP, and to inform future policy implementation strategies. The case selection of Tunisia and Morocco is based on the difference in directions following the Arab Spring revolution, which allows for valuable insights into the influence of the ENP on various aspects of their social, economic, and political spheres.

To ensure a comprehensive analysis, a wide range of data sources has been utilized. Official documents related to the ENP and EU foreign relations were carefully examined, including the texts of agreements, to understand the terms, provisions, and intentions of the policy. Historical accounts and analyses by renowned historians and experts were consulted to provide a broader understanding of the historical context, events, and factors leading up to the negotiations and their subsequent impact. Data from international institutions such as the World Bank and regional state institutions were considered, along with newspapers and online journals, to examine the present situation in the selected countries. However, there are limitations to the availability of data. Recent data on the ENP may be difficult to find and may lack updates on official EU pages. Similarly, data related to Morocco and Tunisia may not be freely disclosed and can be challenging to obtain, especially from official sources. Additionally, data from non-EU countries, including the EU Southern European neighborhood countries, may have limitations in terms of validation and completeness. This highlights the ineffectiveness of the ENP in promoting cooperation and strengthening relations, as the member countries may not feel obligated to submit information and the EU may not actively pursue a comprehensive collection of data. Despite these limitations, the utilization of various sources allows for a comprehensive analysis of the policy and its application in the north African countries. The qualitative approach provides valuable insights into the strengths and weaknesses of the policy and its implications for future policy considerations. By examining the available data and drawing on expert perspectives, this study aims to contribute to a better

understanding of the effectiveness of the ENP and to identify lessons and approaches for achieving successful outcomes in the future.

3. The European Neighborhood Policy

This chapter offers a comprehensive analysis of the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP), including its origins, development, and revisions, with a focus on Southern member countries. It explores the impact of the Arab Spring and persistent challenges. Understanding this background sets the foundation for the subsequent chapter on Morocco and Tunisia.

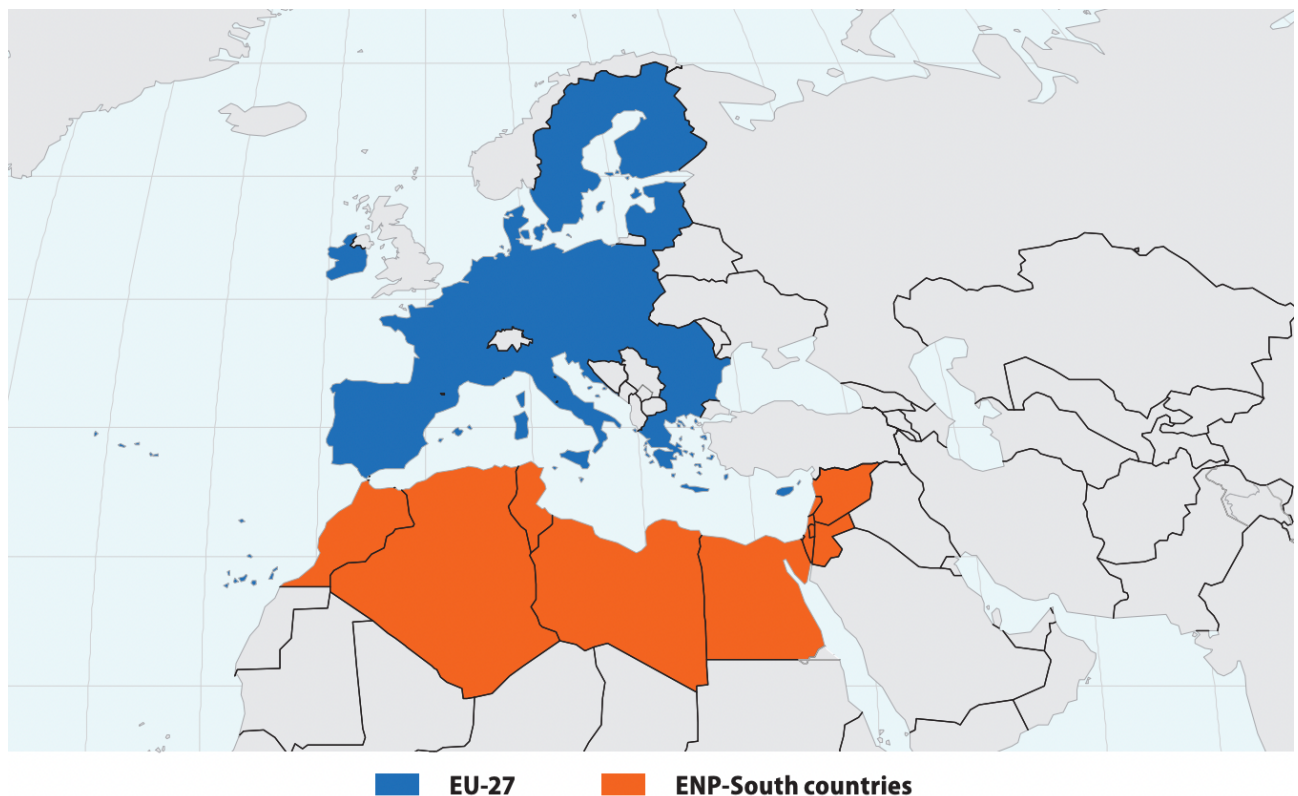
3.1. Historical Development

The genesis of the European Neighborhood Policy can be traced back to the Barcelona Process initiated by the European Union (EU) in 1995. This conference played a crucial role in shaping the first unified European strategy for the Mediterranean region, bringing together EU member states, neighboring countries, and observers like the United States (Pierantozzi, 2018). The Barcelona conference emphasized the need for cooperation to ensure stability and security in the region and aimed to establish a free trade zone while upholding civil and political rights. In 2008, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership became the Union for the Mediterranean (UpM), addressing challenges in dialogue between the Palestinian National Authority and Israel (ibid.). The UpM maintained the framework of the Barcelona Process and introduced six regional objectives to enhance cooperation among Mediterranean countries, focusing on sustainable development and economic growth (ibid.). The European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) was established in 2003 as the EU's first regional dimension for neighboring countries. It aimed to strengthen ties, promote stability, prosperity, and good governance. The ENP was launched in 2007, reflecting the EU's commitment to developing its relationship with neighboring countries, especially considering the challenges posed by EU expansion and changing geopolitics (European Commission, 2004). The EU faced internal challenges of security, preventing divisions and engaging with strategic third countries as well as external difficulties such as the economic crisis, the Arab Spring, conflicts, and migration flows which deeply impacted its foreign policy (Pierantozzi, 2018). In response, the EU adopted the ENP, a comprehensive approach fostering economic measures, alignment, and legal frameworks with partner countries. The EU recognized the interconnectedness and potential for

collaborative growth and stability by deepening engagement and cooperation with neighboring regions.

The development of the ENP aimed to address shared challenges, history, and values, promoting strong partnerships and shared prosperity through closer cooperation. The EU acknowledged the significance of geographic proximity and sought to capitalize on it for mutual benefits, recognizing the need for adaptation and responsiveness to evolving realities in neighboring regions.

Map of the European Union and the ENP-South countries



Source: EuroStat

3.2.Changing Objectives

The European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) was established in 2004 to foster cooperation and prevent divisions between the European Union (EU) and its neighboring countries, with the aim of promoting stability, security, and well-being for all (European Commission, 2004). It recognized the need for a distinct framework to reinforce relations

with partner countries, different from the possibilities offered by Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union. The ENP aimed to prevent new dividing lines and provide countries with opportunities to participate in various EU activities through political, security, economic, and cultural cooperation. This approach involved jointly defining priorities with partner countries, which would bring them closer to the EU. Action Plans were developed, covering areas such as political dialogue, trade, market integration, justice, energy, transport, environment, research, innovation, and social policy. This relationship with neighboring countries was based on shared values, including the rule of law, good governance, respect for human rights, promotion of good neighborly relations, market economy principles, and sustainable development. Commitments were sought in areas such as counterterrorism, non-proliferation, compliance with international law, and conflict resolution. The ENP aimed to establish a privileged relationship based on mutual commitments and common objectives, ensuring cooperation, stability, and shared prosperity in the EU's neighborhood (ibid.).

The European Neighborhood Policy was then reviewed in 2011 as a consequence of the events taking place in the Southern Mediterranean. While the policy was not exclusively targeted at the countries directly affected by the revolutionary changes of the Arab Spring, these developments played a significant role in necessitating a reassessment and update of the strategy. In the report on the review of the European Neighborhood Policy released by the Committee on Foreign Affairs, it is openly acknowledged that “[r]ecent events [...] have shown that EU support to political reforms in neighboring countries has met with limited results” and that for this reason, a “new approach is needed to strengthen the partnership between the EU and the countries and societies of the neighborhood: to build and consolidate healthy democracies, pursue sustainable economic growth and manage cross-border links” (European Parliament, 2011). Delving into further detail, the “new approach” supported inclusive and sustainable economic and social development. It not only emphasized the strengthening of the Eastern Partnership and the regional initiatives in the Southern Mediterranean but also encompassed various areas of cooperation, including trade, energy, transport, migration, and mobility (ibid.). In order to effectively achieve these objectives, the policy provided a range of mechanisms and instruments to facilitate the implementation of the shared goals and aspirations. One of the most

intriguing aspects highlighted in the Strategy Paper was its pronounced emphasis on the democratic dimension. The document explicitly stated that the “[t]he new approach must be based on mutual accountability and a shared commitment to the universal values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law” (ibid.). The paper puts forth the recommendation of adopting a customized approach to EU support, taking into account the specific circumstances of each neighboring country, while imposing certain conditions on the provided assistance. It is within this context that the 'more for more' principle was introduced. According to this principle, countries that demonstrate greater progress in democratic reform are granted stronger partnerships with the EU and receive increased support, both in terms of financial aid and political engagement. The document also acknowledges the potential implementation of negative measures in cases where these essential requirements are not met. As stated, "for countries where reform has not taken place, the EU will reconsider or even reduce funding" (ibid.). The EU aims to exercise negative conditionality towards governments that violate human rights and democracy standards. Furthermore, in constructing this inclusive notion of democracy, a lot of emphasis was placed on the promotion of civil society as an effective tool for democratic reform in the bordering nations. The second section of the chapter “To support progress towards deep democracy” was aptly entitled “A partnership with societies” (ibid.), and set out a four- point agenda for improving the level of EU collaboration with civil society organizations in the respective countries.

The European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) underwent a significant shift in its policy objectives from 2004 to 2011. The revised objectives placed a stronger emphasis on promoting democracy and strengthening the political dimension, as reflected in the introduction of the 'more for more' principle. This principle linked increased EU support and benefits to the progress made by partner countries in democratic reforms and governance, while recognizing the crucial role of civil societies in fostering democratic values (European Commission, 2015). From 2011 to 2015, the ENP faced various challenges that questioned the effectiveness of its strategy. These challenges included managing refugee influxes, addressing energy crises and security threats like the terrorist attacks in Paris (ibid.). Consequently, the European Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) conducted a comprehensive review of the ENP in 2015,

following a consultation process (ibid.). The urgency and significance of this review were emphasized by a resolution adopted by the Parliament in July 2015, calling for a more strategic, focused, flexible, and coherent ENP. Subsequently, in November 2015, the EEAS and the Commission presented a communication based on the consultation outcomes, further shaping the direction of the policy (EEAS, 2015).

What transpired through public consultation was that while the offer of a closer relationship with the EU for countries undertaking governance reforms had motivated change in some instances, other partner countries perceived the existing practices and policies as overly prescriptive and not fully aligned with their aspirations (ibid.). Consequently, the revised policy of 2015 aimed to address this disparity by prioritize differentiation and promoting greater mutual ownership (European Commission, 2015.). It recognized that not all partners aspired to EU rules and standards and acknowledged the diverse desires of each member country regarding the nature and focus of their partnership with the EU (ibid.). Moreover, it introduced a fresh approach aiming to transform the dynamics between the EU and its partners into a "partnership of equals" (ibid.) This approach was rooted in collaborative efforts to identify common objectives and employ tools that uphold EU values while also promoting EU interests. It focused on creating more specific and tailored strategies for individual neighboring countries, rather than a one-size-fits-all policy framework for the Eastern and Southern neighborhood.

In 2017, the policy underwent additional review to assess the progress made under the previous strategy and, if necessary, incorporate amendments to reflect the developments of recent years. This revision introduced a better approach aimed at reinforcing the commitment to respecting the diverse aspirations of the European Union's (EU) partners. It emphasized a more effective pursuit of mutual interests, adopting new working methods to foster a stronger sense of ownership among the partners, and encouraging greater involvement and shared responsibility from the Member States (European Commission, 2017). One key aspect of the revised policy was the introduction of enhanced flexibility in the EU's policy implementation and allocation of development funds (ibid.). This flexibility allowed for more adaptability and responsiveness to the specific needs and priorities of partner countries. Moreover, a significant addition to the

policy was the launch of new frameworks for bilateral agreements with individual member countries. These frameworks facilitated closer cooperation and streamlined the implementation of policy, enabling more effective collaboration (ibid.). It sought to create a more dynamic and cooperative framework that fostered mutual understanding, cooperation and progress in achieving shared objectives.

On March 2019, the European Parliament passed a resolution that specifically focused on the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) as a critical instrument to promote democracy and stability in the aftermath of the Arab Spring. The resolution supported the pivotal role of the ENP in advancing democratic principles, supporting governance reforms, and driving positive transformations in the countries affected by the Arab Spring (European parliament, 2019). In particular, it outlined the EU's policy objectives towards North African and Middle Eastern countries, emphasizing the importance of encouraging political and economic reforms tailored to each specific characteristic. It also stressed the significance of fostering regional cooperation among the countries in the region as well as with the EU (ibid.). While acknowledging significant financial investments and ongoing political and economic outreach, the resolution expressed concerns about the limited impact of EU policies and the lack of substantial political and economic leverage (ibid.). It did recognize, however, the efforts made by the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the Commission, in collaboration and dialogue with the European Parliament, to undertake substantial reforms of the EU policy framework for post-Arab Spring countries which aimed to enhance its capacity in the Maghreb and Mashreq regions (ibid.).

In February 2021, the European Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy released a communication titled 'Renewed partnership with the Southern Neighborhood' (European Commission, 2021). This document aimed to shed light on the ongoing challenges faced by Mediterranean state members. The urgency to address these challenges was further emphasized by the COVID-19 pandemic. The new Agenda for the Mediterranean presented in the communication incorporates new areas and forms of cooperation that emerged during the crisis, focusing on green and digital transition as strategic priorities (ibid.). Unlike

previous ENP strategies, the 2021 Communication emphasizes "human development" and recognizes the significance of governance and the rule of law in economic cooperation. This shift reflects a change in perspective regarding the role of social and political aspects in driving transformative economic change (Furness, 2021). While democracy remains crucial, the Communication acknowledges the importance of prioritizing economic stability to foster sustainable transformation. By adopting a holistic approach that addresses both social and political dimensions, it recognizes the potential for inclusive growth, reduced inequality, and improved overall well-being (ibid).

3.3. Instruments

The European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) utilizes bilateral action plans and partnership priorities to guide cooperation between the European Union (EU) and partner countries. These plans outline political and economic reforms with specific short and medium-term goals spanning three to five years, tailored to the unique needs and capabilities of each party (Carmona, Trapouzanlis, and Jongberg, 2022). The overarching objectives of these plans include promoting democratic and inclusive societies, encouraging economic integration, and facilitating cross-border movement (ibid.). The EU provides financial assistance, political collaboration, and technical cooperation to support the achievement of ENP goals. The main funding instrument during 2014-2020 was the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI), which allocated EUR 15.4 billion. Additionally, three other instruments, the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI), European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), and Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA), catered to specific areas (ibid.). In the period from 2021 to 2027, the EU's cooperation is being guided by the 'Global Europe' instrument, blending grant funding with loans in order to achieve desired outcomes (European Commission, 2023.). The ENP also facilitates market access through comprehensive and deep free trade agreements (DCFTAs) within the EU's association agreements, promoting cooperation across various domains (ibid.).

3.4. The Arab Spring and the ENP

During the Arab Spring in late 2010 and early 2011, pro-democracy uprisings and protests erupted in the Middle East and North Africa region. These movements were driven by grievances related to corruption, lack of political freedoms, and high unemployment. Tunisia, where protests against the authoritarian ruler Ben Ali began in December 2010, served as the starting point, inspiring similar movements in other countries (Robinson & Merrow, 2020). The Arab Spring brought significant political changes to the region, with some countries experiencing the overthrow of authoritarian regimes, while others witnessed more moderate reforms or devastating civil wars (Fontana, 2015). Regardless of the outcome, the uprisings had a profound impact on the political systems in the Arab world, leading to changes in leadership and institutional arrangements (ibid.). Before the 2011 protests, the EU's approach to the MENA region prioritized economic development and political stability over democracy promotion due to security concerns (Hatab, 2019). The EU's cooperation with these countries was primarily driven by trade interests, often overlooking human rights violations committed by their leaders. This approach unintentionally strengthened authoritarian regimes and contributed to regional instability (Kildiş, 2019). Economic developments benefited the regimes rather than the general population, exacerbating social unrest and instability (ibid.).

In response to the Arab Spring, the EU introduced a deepen democracy strategy that emphasized mutual accountability and a commitment to universal values such as human rights and the rule of law (Hatab, 2019). The EU aimed to provide country-specific support but with conditions that must be met. The level of support depends on a country's commitment to democracy, the rule of law, and the pace of progress (Volpe, 2012). The EU intends to offer more substantial support to partners actively promoting democracy, including freedom of expression, political party formation, impartial justice, accountable security forces, and a non-corrupt civil service (ibid.).

3.5.Recurring Challenges

The Arab Spring had profound and wide-ranging implications, not only for the countries directly impacted by the revolutions but also for the neighboring countries in the European Union (EU). As a result, the EU was compelled to reassess its policies towards its Southern Mediterranean neighbors. In February 2011, Catherine Ashton, the former

High Representative, acknowledged the necessity for a comprehensive review of the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) in light of the emerging challenges in the region (Hatab, 2019). Subsequently, the European Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy issued a joint communication titled "A Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean." This marked the initial response of the EU to the unfolding events of the Arab Spring. Shortly thereafter, in May 2011, the EU released a new strategy paper entitled "A New Response to a Changing Neighborhood," which entailed a thorough revision and development of the priorities and operational guidelines of the European Neighborhood Policy (Volpe, 2012).

The enduring impact of the Arab Spring on the political realities of the Mediterranean region has been both remarkable and far-reaching, leaving an indelible mark on the ENP strategies. From 2011 to the most recent 2021 iteration, the Arab Spring has consistently featured prominently, underscoring its ongoing relevance and the significant challenges it has posed. Such is the magnitude of its influence that even in 2019, the European Parliament issued a resolution titled "Post-Arab Spring: way forward for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region," specifically addressing the post-Arab Spring landscape (European Parliament, 2021). The enduring recognition of the Arab Spring's significance within the ENP reflects the deep understanding of its transformative power and the need to navigate its aftermath effectively. The unwavering attention to this pivotal period of change is evident in the continuous inclusion of the event in ENP strategies. By acknowledging the lasting consequences of the Arab Spring, the European Parliament's resolution further highlights the continued dedication to understanding the region's trajectory and identifying paths for progress.

The promotion of democracy in the affected countries has been a key aspect continually reviewed in the ENP strategies. While democracy and security have long been central to European policies in the Mediterranean, critics argue that these policies have primarily prioritized the preservation of the bloc's security, stability, and geostrategic interests, rather than the promotion of normative democratic values. The events of the Arab Spring were seen by some scholars as a potential "Fourth Wave" of democratization sweeping

through North Africa, presenting a historic opportunity for democratic transition (Howard and Hussain, 2013). In the early years, the EU focused its democracy assistance on technical support for elections and reforms aimed at fostering good governance and market liberalization (Rivera, 2020). However, this democracy assistance faced consistent criticism for its top-down approach, predominantly engaging with third-country elites, while neglecting broader civil society participation. Critics also pointed out the EU's slow and inefficient mobilization of instruments conducive to sustainable democratic change. Despite some reforms in subsequent strategies, reports of alleged failures persist, primarily due to inconsistencies in the EU's support for democratization. This inconsistency often stems from discrepancies between stated policy objectives or between objectives and actual practices (ibid.). The dilemma arises from simultaneously pursuing two policy objectives—democracy and stability—which are seen as having potentially incompatible goals (ibid.). Scholars have noted a tendency for stability to take precedence over democracy in the EU's assistance, leading to skepticism about its commitment to intensifying democracy promotion efforts in the long run. Other scholars have identified additional dilemmas, such as the correlation between democratization and peacebuilding, or the challenge of balancing democratization with socio-economic development (ibid.). The disconnect between the rhetoric of "deepening democracy" and the reality on the ground in each country is evident. It is not solely a matter of ensuring political and civil rights but also of creating a domestic regulatory framework and institutional environment conducive to the flourishing of a vibrant civil society (Hatab, 2018). The new policy of the EU underestimated the medium and long-term repercussions of the political developments in the Arab region, leading to a misalignment between security needs and security policies. The complex nature of societies in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and the heterogeneity of domestic actors among the Southern neighbors have resulted in diverse conceptions of democratic change among various groups, including secular nationalists, Islamists, liberals, and anarchists. Consequently, these diverse political trajectories have shaped the post-Arab Spring phase in different ways (ibid.). Additionally, other factors influencing the EU's inconsistent democracy assistance include the preferences of local elites, civil society actors, and the presence of other foreign donors or powers, which are often overlooked (ibid.). Insufficient coordination between the Member States and the EU represents a significant challenge

that undermines their collective ability to exert a positive influence in the Maghreb and Mashreq regions (European Parliament, 2019). Without proper coordination, the effectiveness of individual Member States' actions in the region is compromised, emphasizing the need for synergistic alignment with the EU's overarching objectives. However, achieving this level of coordination is complex due to certain assumptions made by the Commission. The EU assumes that these countries not only desire to align with its objectives but also possess the capacity and resources to effectively transform or adapt to the EU's narratives. The feasibility of such alignment and transformation varies among the countries, introducing additional obstacles to achieving comprehensive coordination and synergy (ibid.).

4. Case Study on Tunisia and Morocco

This chapter offers a comprehensive analysis of the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) in the unique contexts of Tunisia and Morocco. The primary objective is to assess the implementation of the ENP in each country and its relationship with the broader EU policy framework. Additionally, this chapter delves into the socio-economic and political developments in Tunisia and Morocco, aiming to understand the influence of the ENP implementation on their respective situations and to evaluate whether the results demonstrate the effectiveness of this policy instrument in achieving its objectives in these countries.

4.1. The EU & Tunisia

The relationship between Tunisia and the EU is characterized by a unique nature compared to other Southern Mediterranean countries. Tunisia stood out as the sole member state to embark on the path of democratization among all the nations affected by the Arab Spring. Recognizing the significance of this development, the EU actively engaged in Tunisia's political and economic reality, leading to the establishment of a privileged partnership between the two entities for the period of 2018-2020 (EU Commission Website, 2023). The EU holds a prominent position as Tunisia's primary trading partner, with substantial economic interdependence. In 2020, nearly half of Tunisia's total imports, amounting to 48%, were sourced from the EU. Correspondingly, the EU absorbed a significant portion of Tunisia's exports, accounting for 67% of the country's total export market share (Factograph Tunisia, 2022). The trade in goods between the EU and Tunisia reached substantial figures, with the Union importing goods worth €8.6 billion from Tunisia, while its exports amounted to €8.8 billion (ibid.). Moving beyond goods trade, services also play a crucial role in their relationship. In 2019, the EU's imports of services from Tunisia amounted to €3 billion, indicating the importance of services trade between the two parties. Additionally, the EU's exports of services reached €1.3 billion in the same year, showcasing the mutually beneficial nature of this aspect of their economic ties (ibid.). Investment flows have also been significant.

In 2019, the EU's Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) stocks in Tunisia amounted to €4.2 billion, highlighting the substantial economic presence and commitment to supporting Tunisia's development (ibid.). Conversely, Tunisia's FDI stocks in the EU reached €800 million, underscoring the bilateral investment relationship between the two (ibid.). However, equally importantly, the relationship between the EU and Tunisia extends beyond economic cooperation. The ENP Action Plans for Tunisia emphasize the EU's unwavering commitment to supporting Tunisia's journey towards democracy. The EU has been actively promoting and guiding its partner in adopting democratic principles and political values, fostering a close partnership in the political realm as well.

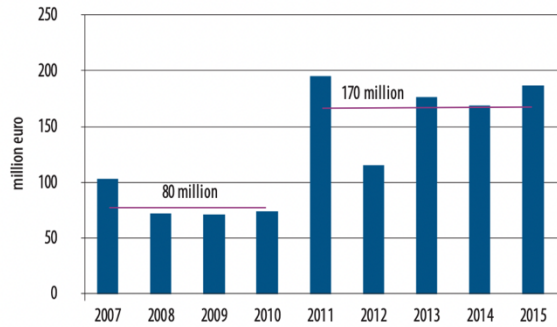
Given this context, the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) has played a crucial role as a vital source of support for Tunisia both prior to and following the Arab Spring. However, the effectiveness and influence of this policy have been subject to extensive analysis, particularly considering the ongoing political and economic challenges experienced in the country. In the following sections, we will examine and discuss the implementation of the ENP in Tunisia since the onset of the Arab Spring, leading up to its most recent implementation. Subsequently, we will assess the impact of the policy by analyzing the present status and the current reality of the country

4.2. ENP Implementation in Tunisia

In 2010, prior to the revolution, the European Commission had a development aid program with a budget of 240 million euros allocated for the period from 2011 to 2013 (European Court of Auditors, 2017). The program identified several priority areas for development assistance, including employment, economic reforms, support for the private sector and justice. A key overarching objective was to promote good governance. However, following the revolution, there was a substantial increase in the allocated funds, and the focus of the EU's bilateral cooperation shifted (ibid.). The budget for the period from 2011 to 2013 nearly doubled to 445 million euros, reflecting the heightened attention and support given in the aftermath of the revolution (ibid.). The average annual allocations, combining funds from the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) and the European Neighborhood Instrument (ENI), increased significantly from 80 million euros before the revolution to 170 million euros for the

Graph 1 Source: European Court of Auditors

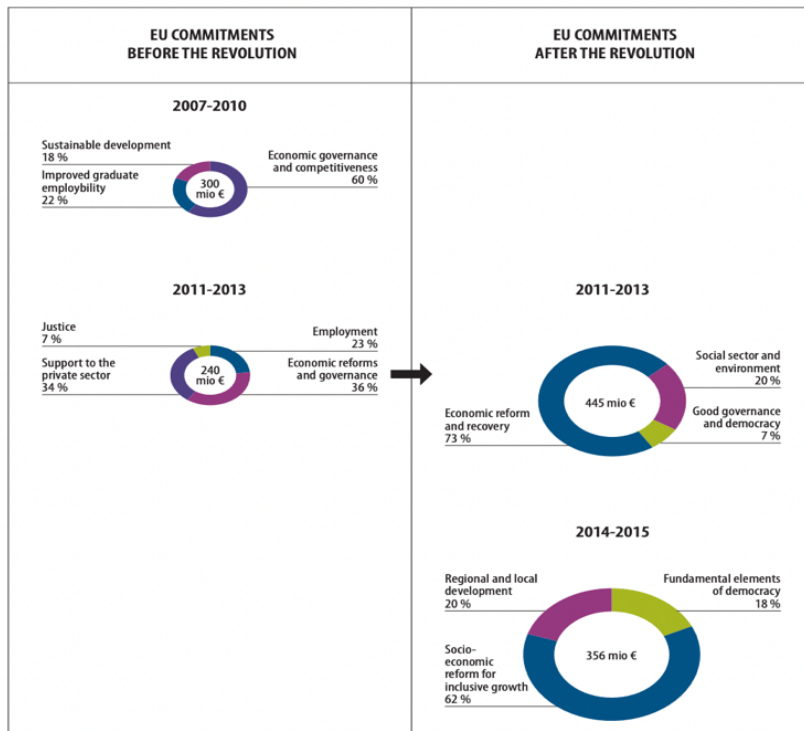
ENPI and ENI annual commitments to Tunisia for the period 2007 to 2015



assistance to partner countries demonstrating sustained commitment to progress in implementing reforms.

Since 2011, the European Union (EU) has placed significant emphasis on providing assistance in the area of democracy support (refer to Graph 2). This has been achieved through various means, including election observation missions that aim to ensure proper conduct of elections. In addition, the EU has implemented programs to support civil society, justice, and the functioning of the newly established parliament, further reinforcing the democratic transition (ibid.). Following the events of 2011, the European

ENPI and ENI commitments to Tunisia before and after 2011 by priority area (size in proportion of the allocations per year)



Graph 2 Source: European Court of Auditors

period spanning from 2011 to 2015 (refer to Graph 1) (ibid.). This substantial increase in funding was mainly granted through an incentive-based mechanism known as "more for more," which provided additional

Commission also devised programs to address regional disparities, which had been among the underlying factors contributing to security challenges and social tensions (ibid.). These programs specifically targeted marginalized areas, focused on rehabilitating low-

income neighborhoods, and aimed to enhance the health sector. While macroeconomic and democratic reform challenges were addressed relatively quickly, the security sector reform posed a more significant and prolonged challenge. The Tunisian government initially requested EU support for this reform in October 2011 (ibid.). The Commission promptly responded to the request; however, it took two years for Tunisian authorities to reach an agreement. It wasn't until January 2015, four years after the initial request, that an identification and formulation mission was conducted after receiving approval from authorities (ibid.). It is important to note that these funds and policies are typically implemented over a period of three to five years, representing a short to medium-term approach. However, considering the lengthy process and the time it took for Tunisia to adapt to these policies and effectively utilize the allocated funds, a longer-term approach may have been more beneficial. The EU's time frame for implementing these programs was quite substantial and it appears that they did not fully anticipate the extended timeline required by Tunisia to fully embrace and implement the reforms. This has resulted in the programs having a more significant impact in the short term rather than achieving sustained long-term outcomes. A more gradual approach with realistic expectations could have been more effective. The Tunisian authorities faced challenges in developing a reliable and comprehensive national development plan. The absence of such a plan hindered donors from obtaining a comprehensive understanding of the country's priorities, funding requirements and progress on key indicators (ibid.). Additionally, the European Union's (EU) actions were primarily designed based on continuous and intensive policy dialogues with Tunisian authorities, which have unfortunately been mismanaged (ibid.). The evident cooperation issue has had a direct impact on the effectiveness and implementation of all policies in the country. The fundamental principle of cooperation, which lies at the core of the EU's European Neighborhood Policy (ENP), has not been well executed, resulting in limitations in the implementation of programs despite being designed specifically for the country circumstances. Furthermore, the European Union's (EU) actions encompassed a broad range of activities since, in the aftermath of the 2011 revolution, there was a significant demand for support across various sectors. The Action Plan for 2013-2017, part of the privileged partnership, outlined thirteen priorities, each associated with multiple actions (ibid.). With an increase in available funds, the Commission sought to expand the scope of cooperation to meet

these demands (ibid.). However, this approach resulted in decisions being made and projects being planned that covered too many areas without sufficient specificity and strategic planning. This dispersion of funds across numerous areas without a focused and well-planned approach has created challenges in the effectiveness and impact of these initiatives.

The Commission successfully implemented bilateral development assistance programs, which accounted for approximately 56% of the commitments made under the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) and European Neighborhood Instrument (ENI) (ibid.). These programs efficiently channeled significant funds in a relatively short timeframe. On average, it took one to two years from the program design phase to the disbursement of the majority of contracted funds. By the end of 2015, the Public Administration Reform (PAR) programs had disbursed 78% of the committed amounts for the period of 2011-2015. However, by the end of 2015, only 60% of the available project allocations had been contracted (ibid.). The primary objective of this EU assistance was to provide substantial financial support to Tunisia's fragile economy, promote social cohesion, and encourage the country to undertake reforms through a Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity (COM, 2011). The disbursements related to these programs during the period of 2011 to 2015 amounted to approximately 350 million euros. Starting from 2013, the budgets for these projects were classified as "state building contracts" (SBC), which allowed for more flexible disbursement conditions (European Court of Auditors, 2017). However, it should be noted that SBCs are typically not intended to extend beyond one or two years, whereas Tunisia received this form of budget support for three years due to implementation delays. The delays encountered in the implementation of the programs can be primarily attributed to the challenging environment in which they operated. This environment was characterized by political instability and institutional resistance to change, which posed significant obstacles to the smooth execution of the programs. Additionally, there were weaknesses in the design of the programs that should have been more effectively addressed by the Commission.

When considering the environmental challenges that significantly affected the limitations of the EU's policy in Tunisia, it becomes evident that the short-term nature of these programs played a crucial role. These programs failed to adequately consider the potential political and social discrepancies that the country would encounter in the years following their implementation. As a result, they were ill-prepared to address the evolving dynamics and complexities of Tunisia's post-revolutionary landscape. After the Arab Spring movement, the political landscape in Tunisia underwent significant upheaval. The revolution resulted in the collapse of a previously stable regime, leading to the formation of three interim cabinets (Fontana, 2015). Various political parties, including the formerly outlawed Islamist party Ennahda, were legalized. The country held its first free and fair elections in October 2011 to elect members of the Constitutional Assembly responsible for drafting a new constitution. Ennahda's Secretary General Jebali became Prime Minister, while CPR's leader Marzouki was elected President of the Republic (ibid.). However, the Ennahda-led government faced two major political crises following the assassinations of two opposition leaders within a span of six months, which fueled rumors of Ennahda's alleged involvement in the killings. After months of negotiations guided by a National Dialogue, both opposition parties and Ennahda agreed to the creation of a technocratic government led by Prime Minister Jomaa, who remained in office until early February 2015 (ibid.). On the other hand, as mentioned before, the weaknesses in the design of the programs should also be noted. These include the lack of relevant, specific, and measurable project objectives, the absence of indicators that hindered proper performance measurement, activity monitoring, and timely corrective actions. Furthermore, the absence of baseline indicators limited the ability to compare the situation before and after the implementation of the actions (European Court of Auditors, 2017). Implementing a large-scale policy without conducting a thorough analysis and gathering relevant data on program performance and Tunisia's subsequent progress will always present challenges. Even with potential changes and adjustments in the future, the lack of concrete analysis and data hinders effective implementation.

During 2015, the Tunisian economy was strongly affected by the terrorist attacks and other security developments, which harmed its tourism inflows, investment and growth. In this context, and following a request by the Tunisian authorities and the evaluation of

the country's external financing needs, the Commission proposed additional macro-financial assistance (MFA) to Tunisia in the amount of up to EUR 500 million in loans. The decision was adopted by the European Parliament and the Council on 6 July 2016. The Memorandum of Understanding was signed on 27 April 2017 and it entered into force on 11 August 2017, following its ratification by the Tunisian parliament. The MFA was designed to support Tunisia's economic recovery while implementing a wide-ranging and ambitious reform agenda. The Commission approved the disbursement of the first tranche (EUR 200 million in loans) on 9 October 2017 and the disbursement of the second tranche (EUR 150 million in loans) on 24 June 2019. The disbursement of the third and final tranche (EUR 150 million in loans) was approved on 30 October 2019 (Eu Commission Website, 2019). Moreover, For the 2014-2020 period, the Commission set up 15 joint programs with neighboring countries (ENI CBC Programs). With a total EU contribution of almost €1 billion, these programs are intended to benefit both the Member States and the neighboring countries with which they directly share a land or maritime border (European Court of Auditors, 2022). In response to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, Tunisia received additional financial support from the European Union (EU). Recognizing the urgent needs of Tunisia and its citizens during this crisis, the EU swiftly mobilized a dedicated response package amounting to €329 million. This funding was specifically allocated to address health-related requirements, such as reinforcing the 'Essaha Aziza' program, as well as facilitating socio-economic recovery. Furthermore, Tunisia benefits from the European Union Trust Fund (EUTF) Africa's regional emergency response program to combat the impact of the coronavirus in North Africa, with a dedicated allocation of €10 million. This program aims to provide targeted assistance to vulnerable migrants and refugees, while also extending support to Tunisian institutions and civil society organizations. To address the vaccination efforts, Tunisia receives vaccines through the COVAX Facility, a global initiative supported by Team Europe with a substantial commitment of over €3 billion. Additionally, EU member states provide bilateral support, ensuring a comprehensive approach to vaccine distribution and immunization efforts in Tunisia (Eu factsheets, 2022).

The European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) served as the primary EU financing instrument for bilateral cooperation with Tunisia from 2014 to 2020, playing a crucial

role in supporting various development initiatives. However, the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic necessitated a reevaluation of the EU's approach, prompting the creation of the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe (NDICI-GE). This new instrument, which shapes the EU's cooperation framework for the period 2021-2027, introduces a comprehensive approach that encompasses diverse financial mechanisms. The NDICI-GE places emphasis on the utilization of grant funding while also integrating the blending of grants with loans and budgetary guarantees, enabling the mobilization of resources from European and International Financing Institutions. By adopting this multifaceted approach, the EU aims to leverage a range of funding sources to maximize the impact of its cooperation initiatives not only with Tunisia but also with other partner countries. Under the NDICI-GE, the EU has committed significant bilateral assistance to Tunisia amounting to €600 million for the period 2021-2024 (European Commission Website, 2023). This assistance is expected to focus on three priority sectors: promoting good governance and the rule of law, stimulating sustainable economic growth that generates employment and supports the energy transition, and reinforcing social cohesion among different generations and regions (ibid.). Additionally, in response to the challenges faced by countries in the Southern Neighbourhood, including rising food prices, the EU has mobilized funds through the establishment of a Food and Resilience Facility worth EUR 225 million for the years 2021-2022 (ibid.). This facility provides support to mitigate the effects of the crisis and complements the current bilateral allocations, which amount to approximately EUR 3.8 billion between 2021-2024. The EU plans to provide nearly EUR 1 billion in grant support for sectors related to food security and social protection in the Southern Neighbourhood until 2024.

To conclude, the period following the revolution in 2011 witnessed significant efforts by the EU to provide financial assistance to Tunisia, and overall, the funds have been reasonably well allocated. Recognizing the new challenges faced by the country, extra funds were made available, and the Commission collaborated with other donors to ensure effective disbursement. However, the EU's management of its assistance revealed certain shortcomings. One notable challenge was the slow progress observed which can be attributed to various factors, including frequent changes in government and the absence

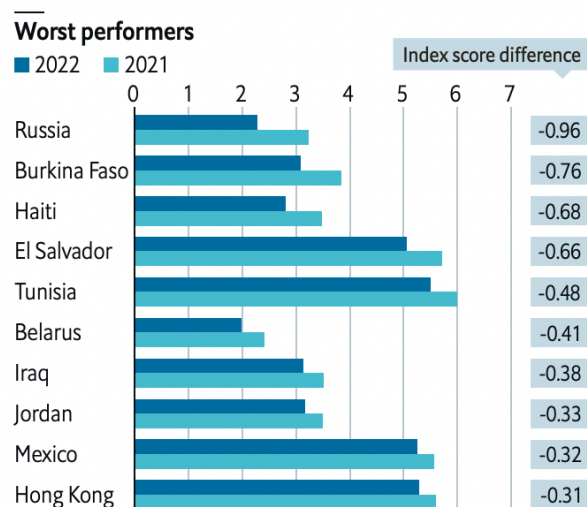
of a comprehensive national development plan. Given the aftermath of the Arab Spring and the substantial changes it brought about, the EU should have been more cognizant of the need for a well-coordinated approach. Additionally, the Commission's ambitious agenda, attempting to address numerous priorities, may have strained the still fragile administration of Tunisia. It is important to note that the latest instrument introduced by the EU, along with the most recent funds and policies, have not yet been fully implemented, and their effects are still evolving. Consequently, more precise data regarding their impact is not readily available at this stage. However, the approach that has been chosen to assess the overall effectiveness of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) in Tunisia would be to analyze the current state of the country in relation to the policy objectives outlined in the ENP strategies. This analysis will be further explored in the subsequent paragraph.

4.3.ENP & the Current Reality of Tunisia

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) has continuously evolved since its establishment in 2004, adapting to emerging circumstances and addressing the challenges it faces. Over the years, the EU and its member countries have undertaken numerous analyses and advancements to enhance the effectiveness of the ENP. However, when it comes to assessing the instrument's impact in Tunisia, particularly under the most recent approach introduced by the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe (NDICI-GE), a critical question arises: How can we effectively analyze its effectiveness? To gauge the effectiveness of the ENP in Tunisia, it is crucial to examine the key elements emphasized by the policy, such as democracy and civil societies, economy and development, the rule of law and security. By studying the implementation and progress of these focal elements within the context of Tunisia's reality, we can gain valuable insights into the country's development trajectory and identify any areas of stagnation or regression. This analytical approach enables us to assess the alignment between the ENP's objectives and Tunisia's actual development outcomes, shedding light on the effectiveness of the policy in driving change.

Democracy & Rule of Law

Following the Arab Spring revolution, the EU recognized the significance of supporting Tunisia's democratic transition and became actively involved in assisting the country in its path towards democracy. The EU intensified its efforts to bolster democratic institutions, governance, and human rights in Tunisia. It provided substantial financial and technical assistance to support Tunisia's transition, which included initiatives aimed at strengthening democratic governance, promoting the rule of law, and fostering respect for human rights. Throughout most of the 1990s and 2000s, Tunisia was widely regarded as one of the most successful countries in the North African region. However, the underlying political and developmental imbalances became a growing source of frustration. The revolution in 2011 served as a manifestation of the people's desire for a more democratic political system, an inclusive and transparent economy, and a more equitable society. In the aftermath of the Arab Spring, Tunisia stood alone in the region embarking on a path towards democratization. During the initial stages of this extensive process, Tunisia achieved significant progress by granting its population greater voice and civic freedoms, and by adopting a new political framework formalized with the 2014 constitution (World Bank, 2022). However, as of 2023, Tunisia finds itself at a critical crossroads, undergoing a transformation of its constitutional order by introducing measures that have garnered widespread popular opposition. On July 25th, 2021, the President of Tunisia enforced the emergency powers granted under Article 80 of the Constitution to dismiss the Prime Minister, suspend the Parliament and removing parliamentary immunity, assuming the Presidency of the Public Prosecutor's Office (ibid.). Subsequent developments, including the replacement of the Supreme Judicial Council (CSM) with an interim body and a planned constitutional referendum, led to a fundamental shift in the political framework of the country (ibid.). These actions resulted in Tunisia's democratic classification downgrading from a "flawed democracy" in 2014 to a "hybrid



Graph 3 Source: Economist Intelligence, Democracy Index Report 2022

regime" in 2021 (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2023). Notably, Tunisia ranked among the top 10 countries with a decline in democratic scores in 2022, regressing by -0.48 compared to the previous year (refer to Graph 3). The democracy index score has reached a similar level to that of 2011, during the peak of the Arab Spring. It experienced positive growth following the revolutions until the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, coinciding with the rise to power of the current President, Kais Saied (refer to Table 1) (ibid.).

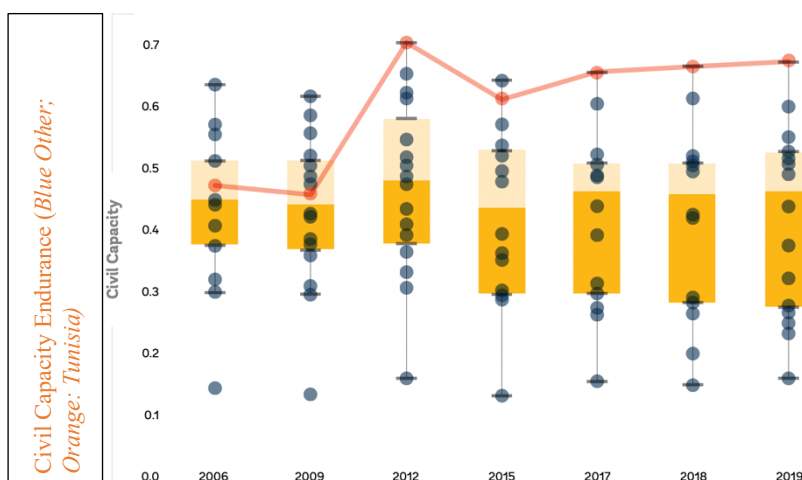
Tunisia Democracy Index 2008-2022

2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2008	Years
5.51	5.99	6.59	6.72	6.41	6.32	6.40	6.72	6.31	5.76	5.67	5.53	2.79	2.96	Scores

Table 1 Source: Economist Intelligence, Democracy Index Report

Post-revolution polls indicate widespread popular support for the President's actions, despite disputes from political parties (World Bank, 2022). However, the initial optimism that followed the revolution has gradually transformed into frustration and mistrust. A referendum took place on Monday, July 25, 2022, resulting in the approval of the new constitution by 94.6 percent of voters (2.6 million), establishing a presidential system of government (ibid.). Under the new constitution, the President assumes executive responsibilities with the assistance of the government. They possess the authority to appoint the Head of Government, cabinet members, and individuals to senior civil and military positions. Notably, the President holds the power to dismiss the government or its members and can invoke a state of emergency. Importantly, there are no provisions allowing for the President's removal (ibid.). The Parliament consists of two chambers, namely the Assembly of People's Representatives and the National Council of Regions and Districts, both headquartered in Tunis. Judges are appointed through presidential decree based on recommendations from the Superior Council of the Judiciary, with a prohibition on judicial strikes (ibid.). Furthermore, the constitution pledges to safeguard rights and freedoms, including the right to form political parties and engage in protests. Guaranteed freedoms include freedom of opinion, publication and belief. However, evidence suggests that the current government is not upholding these aforementioned elements of the constitution. Challenges concerning freedom of speech and human rights

have emerged. President Kais Saied issued a new law as part of a campaign against goods speculators, posing a significant threat to freedom of expression (Guellali, 2022). Decree-Law 2022-14, effective since March 21, 2022, contains vaguely worded provisions that could result in prison sentences, ranging from ten years to life, even for engaging in public debates on the economy (ibid.). The decree-law criminalizes the intentional spread of "false or incorrect news or information" that could discourage consumers from purchasing or disrupt the supply of goods, leading to price increases. While combating fraudulent market influence is a legitimate concern, sweeping laws like Decree-Law 2022-14 open the door to unfair and abusive prosecutions (ibid.). In addition, a law impeding civil societies has recently been proposed by the President. Civil society has always played a crucial role in promoting freedom and voicing concerns in Tunisia. Following the revolution, civil capacity increased and remained consistently strong over the years (refer to Graph 4). Notably, the Tunisian General Labour Union (UGTT) and Tunisian Confederation of Industry, Trade and Handicrafts (UTICA) continue to hold significant power ten years after the Revolution, exerting a substantial influence on political and policy decisions (World Bank, 2022). Reports from Tunisian media in February 2022 highlighted that the government drafted amendments to Decree 88-2011, significantly enhancing state control over civil society and severely undermining Tunisians' associational rights, without engaging in public discussions or consultations with civil society (Cole et al., 2022). This law regulates the creation and rights of civil society associations. President Saïed expressed intentions to modify the legal framework for civil society organizations (CSOs) to prevent them from accessing foreign funding,



Graph 4 Source: World Bank Tunisia Systematic Country Diagnostic 2022

arguing that such practices serve as a cover for financing political parties. He also reportedly claimed that despite their appearance as associations, they are, in reality, extensions of foreign powers seeking to control the Tunisian people through financial means (ibid.). The

current ruling government of Tunisia grants the President the ability to unilaterally promulgate or modify laws without parliamentary or judicial oversight, posing a significant risk to civil societies and undermining the progress achieved since the Arab Spring.

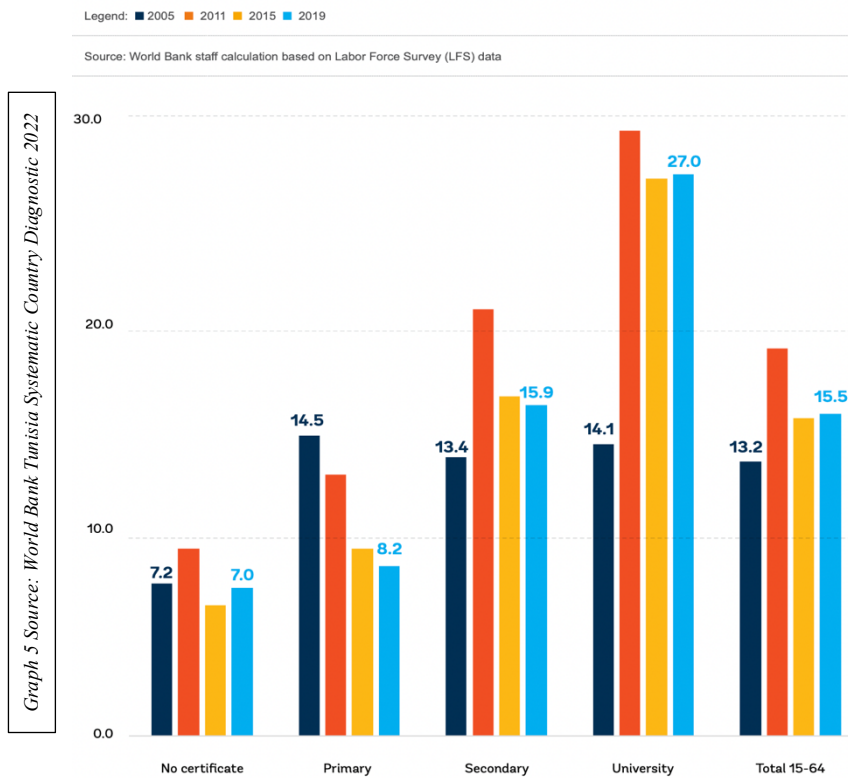
The establishment and advancement of democracy rely heavily on a stable and continuous political environment. However, in the case of Tunisia, the political landscape has been characterized by fragmentation and polarization, following the revolution. The constitutional adoption of a proportional electoral system and a hybrid semi-presidential regime has created challenges for governments to secure substantial and enduring majorities. Moreover, the historical division between secularists and Islamists has been a prominent feature of Tunisian politics since the Revolution, and this divide has arguably intensified in recent years (World Bank, 2022). The emergence of populism on both ends of the political spectrum has further exacerbated tensions, impeding the prospects of a successful national dialogue (ibid.). Remarkably, the tenure of prime ministers and Presidents has been marked by volatility and instability. This context sheds light on why the initial support for President Saied's government proposal emerged among the people. They believed that a more concentrated power in a single figure would bring about greater stability and enhance the government's ability to effectively address and make decisions on the pressing issues facing the country. The current situation in Tunisia, with the potential shift towards a more authoritarian regime, raises concerns about the effectiveness of the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) in promoting and fostering democracy. The ENP was designed to support and encourage democratic reforms in neighboring countries, including Tunisia. Yet, the recent developments indicate a regression in democratic principles and a divergence from the objectives of the policy. This raises questions about the impact and influence of the ENP in shaping Tunisia's political landscape and the broader effectiveness of the EU's efforts to promote democracy in the region.

Economy and Development

To this day, as mentioned before, the European Union (EU) remains Tunisia's largest trading partner, comprising 57.9% of its trade in 2020: 70.9% of Tunisia's exports were directed towards the EU, while 48.3% of its imports originated from the EU (European Commission Website, 2023). As the 35th largest trade partner of the EU, Tunisia accounted for 0.5% of the EU's overall global trade in 2020. However, the recent remarks made by Josep Borrell, the high representative of the European Union, on March 20th, shed light on the present alarming circumstances (Jacqué and Bobin, 2023). Borrell emphasized that the EU cannot turn a blind eye to the ongoing events in Tunisia, describing the situation as highly perilous. Tunisia is currently teetering on the brink of bankruptcy, and its security forces have detained approximately 20 political opponents since the beginning of the year (ibid.). This unsettling combination of a repressive regime and the country's potential "Lebanonization," as expressed by Borrell, has raised concerns not only in Italy but also in France and Germany. He repeatedly remarked that Tunisia is not just a neighbor but also a partner to the EU, underscoring the immediate repercussions that unfold from its situation. He stressed that the developments in Tunisia not only escalate migration flows but also generate instability and insecurity within the region. Thus, it becomes imperative for the EU to prevent an economic and social collapse in Tunisia and extend support to the population (ibid.).

Tunisians are currently grappling with the most severe crisis in a generation, as the COVID-19 pandemic has inflicted further damage on an already sluggish economy. While macroeconomic policies, such as fiscal stimulus and monetary easing, have mitigated the depth and severity of the recession, the pandemic has exacerbated underlying structural weaknesses. These include low investment and job creation, high unemployment and informality, a mismatch between skills demand and supply, and a brain drain of highly skilled professionals (OECD, 2022). Over the past decade, Tunisia has made significant strides in reducing poverty. The national poverty rate declined from 20.5 percent to 13.8 percent between 2010 and 2019, with extreme poverty also witnessing a considerable decline from 6 percent to 1.7 percent during this period. However, the progress in poverty reduction has not been consistent throughout the years. The initial post-revolution period saw a faster reduction with poverty dropping from 20.5 percent to 15.2 percent between 2010 and 2015, while the subsequent years from 2015

and 2019 witnessed a slower pace of such reduction (World Bank, 2022). The profile of the poor in Tunisia has remained largely unchanged between 2000 and 2019. In both pre and post-revolution Tunisia, poverty has been positively correlated with factors such as household size, location, age, and educational attainment of the household head (ibid.). The majority of households with higher poverty incidence rates continue to be headed by

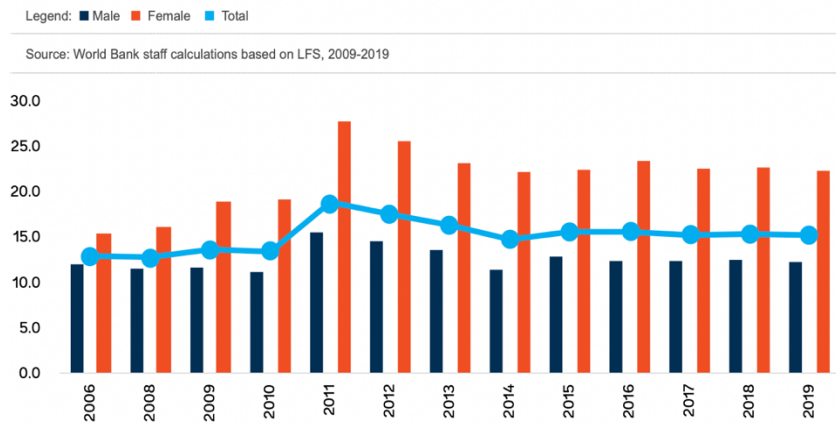


young, uneducated men residing in rural areas, primarily seeking employment or working in agriculture or the construction sector. Furthermore, Tunisia continues to confront the challenge of persistently high rates of unemployment, especially among the educated population (ibid.). Although the

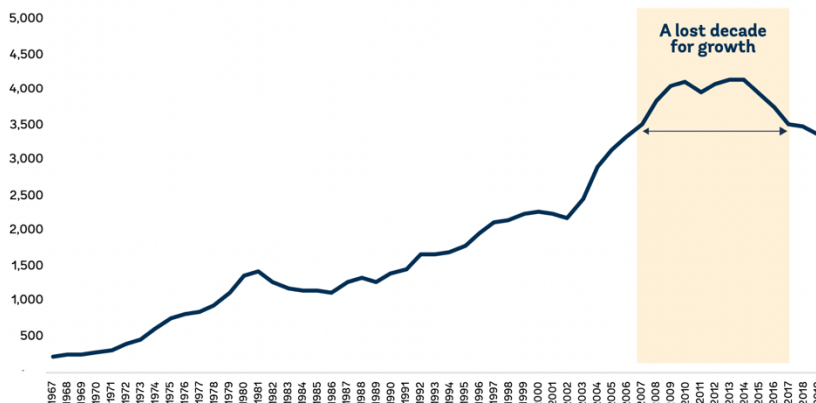
overall unemployment rate has remained relatively high in recent years, ranging between 13 and 15 percent, there has been a significant deterioration in the unemployment rate for university graduates (refer to Graph 5). This issue disproportionately affects the youth and women, with national unemployment rates reaching 12.6 percent for males and 22.5 percent for females in 2019 (ibid.), significantly surpassing the national average (refer to Graph 6).

Throughout the 2010s, Tunisia has experienced weak economic growth and limited structural change. The average GDP growth declined to 1.7 percent between

Graph 6 Source: World Bank Tunisia Systematic Country Diagnostic 2022



2011 and 2018, a significant drop from the 3.5 percent average between 2000 and 2011 and even lower for the period between 2011 and 2020, given the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic (ibid.). This decline in growth affected all sectors of the economy, except for agriculture. Furthermore, it is worth noting that while Tunisia experienced a decline in Gross National Income (GNI) per capita, as shown in Graph 7, with a return to pre-2008 levels by 2019 (ibid.), there has been some progress since then. In 2021, the GNI per capita, purchasing power parity (PPP) in the country was reported to be at 10,910 USD (Trading Economics Website, 2023). This figure indicates a slight improvement compared to the previous years and reflects the ongoing efforts to stabilize and strengthen the country's economy. While the GNI per capita in 2021 is still below the levels seen prior to the global financial crisis, the modest increase suggests some signs of recovery and potential for further growth. However, it is crucial to consider this figure in the broader context of Tunisia's economic challenges, including high unemployment rates, limited structural changes, and the need for sustained growth and development.



Graph 7 Source: World Bank Tunisia Systematic Country Diagnostic 2022

The past decade has witnessed a decline in investment, which has hampered Tunisia's potential for productivity growth and led to an increasing reliance

on consumption. This economic slowdown can be attributed to various factors, including political uncertainty, sluggish progress in implementing structural reforms, and deteriorating security conditions. These challenges have created an unfavorable environment for investment. In December 2022, Tunisia experienced an increase in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) by 165.3 USD compared to the previous quarter, reflecting a positive trend in foreign investment inflows (CEIC, 2023). Nevertheless, political uncertainty continues to weaken the investment and growth landscape. Since the revolution, Tunisia has witnessed frequent changes in government, with an average prime ministerial term of approximately 1.3 years (World Bank, 2022). The current government has faced significant backlash, particularly from the European Union, which has observed a stark difference in Tunisia compared to previous years. These circumstances have eroded investor confidence and hindered the necessary continuity for implementing crucial structural reforms over the medium to long term. In addition to political challenges, Tunisia's economy is also grappling with a higher trade deficit, consumer subsidies, and limited access to international financing, making local debt financing a challenge (World Bank Website, 2023). Furthermore, the country's inflation rate reached 10.4% in February 2023, the highest in over three decades, primarily driven by surging energy and food prices (ibid.). These factors have put immense pressure on the economy, highlighting the urgency of implementing reforms to foster sustainable growth.

The current economic crisis in Tunisia raises important questions about the effectiveness of the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) in implementing comprehensive reforms and supporting economic development in partner countries. Despite the EU's substantial involvement and financial assistance through the ENP, Tunisia is facing one of its worst economic shocks since the Arab Spring revolution. This highlights the need to critically evaluate the ENP's implementation and its impact on Tunisia's economic transformation. The EU has provided significant financial support to Tunisia, including grants, loans, and technical assistance, to foster economic growth, job creation, and structural reforms. However, the current economic challenges facing Tunisia suggest that there may be shortcomings in the implementation of the ENP. One possible issue would be the focus on political reforms at the expense of comprehensive economic reforms. While political stability and democratic governance are crucial, economic development is equally vital

for long-term sustainability. The ENP's emphasis on political transformation may have overshadowed the urgent need for economic reforms, leading to an imbalance in Tunisia's development priorities.

4.4. The EU & Morocco

The EU-Morocco relationship has been characterized by strong ties and mutual dependence. Morocco viewed the introduction of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) as an opportunity to establish a comprehensive bilateral relationship with the EU, fulfilling its longstanding aspiration for direct engagement rather than relying on regional counterparts. Morocco's proactive response to this initiative, supported by King Mohamed VI's earlier proposal for a bilateral relationship within the flexible Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP), positioned the country as the first to achieve Advanced Status (AS) within the European Neighbourhood framework (Govantes, 2018). The EU has allocated significant funding, including MEDA and ENPI grants, as well as loans from the European Investment Bank (EIB), to Morocco, distinguishing it as the primary beneficiary. Moreover, Morocco's active involvement in the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) further highlights its unique position among African nations (Govantes, 2020). The EU's dependence on Morocco extends to the security of the Mediterranean region, forming the basis of their partnership, which addresses various common challenges such as economic development, innovation, climate change, justice, security, mobility, migration, and good governance. Migration, in particular, has been a persistent issue, prompting joint efforts by the EU to prevent security crises and effectively manage migration flows. Nevertheless, it is crucial to scrutinize Morocco's Advanced Status within the EU-Morocco relationship. Despite the existence of evident deficiencies and a lack of comprehensive evaluations regarding democracy and human rights, it has been granted Advanced Status in 2008. This decision was justified based on the perceived level of achievement in implementing the Action Plan, particularly in terms of cooperation, progress in human rights, and the democratization of political structures (ibid.). The EU has often presented Morocco as a shining example, a role model for Arab countries, while conveniently turning a blind eye to significant democratic shortcomings in terms of public freedoms and human rights. Although the EU praises Morocco's democratic facade, it

fails to address the underlying reality (ibid.). This approach highlights the EU's priority of maintaining positive relations and pursuing economic growth, overshadowing its commitment to actively promote democracy. Genuine dedication would entail finding forms of economic cooperation that do not inadvertently support authoritarian elites. Therefore, the EU's support for Morocco's seemingly well-functioning democracy raises questions about its true intentions and the extent of its commitment to upholding democratic values.

The economic dimension of the EU-Morocco relationship stands as an additional testament to its significance. It is noteworthy that the EU holds the position of being Morocco's primary trading partner, while Morocco, in turn, holds the status of being the EU's largest trade partner among the Southern Neighbourhood countries, representing 25% of the total EU trade in goods within the region (European Commission Factsheet, 2022). In the year 2021, an impressive 49% of Morocco's total imports originated from the EU, while 59% of its total exports were directed towards the EU. This robust trade flow between the EU and Morocco amounted to a staggering €44 billion in goods exchanged (ibid.). Moreover, the Union stands as the principal foreign investor in Morocco, contributing to over half of the country's foreign direct investment (FDI) stock (ibid.). These statistics underscore the economic interdependence and the significant role played by the EU in Morocco's economic landscape. In light of this, the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) has played a pivotal role in maintaining the relationship between the two partners, both prior to and after the Arab Spring. The effectiveness and influence of this policy in Morocco have been extensively studied, and unlike Tunisia, Morocco has demonstrated adept management of its relationship with the EU. This section aims to explore and evaluate the implementation of the ENP in Morocco since the onset of the Arab Spring, culminating in its most recent application. Subsequently, we will analyze the impact of this policy by examining the current status and the prevailing challenges faced by the country.

4.5. ENP Implementation in Morocco

Morocco has long sought a framework that allows for bilateral relations, a desire that can be traced back to its early engagement with the European Communities (Fernández

Molina, 2015), including its aspirations for European Community accession in 1984 and 1987 during the reign of Hassan II. The ENP resonated with Morocco, as evidenced by the explicit endorsement of the initiative by Foreign Affairs Minister Taieb Fassi Fihri who referred to a speech by King Mohammed VI in 2000 advocating for the introduction of bilateralism into the EMP (Govantes, 2018). Unlike other countries along the southern rim, Morocco is relatively comfortable with the concept of Europeanization, as it has become an integral part of its narrative. In 1992, Hassan II likened Morocco to a tree with roots in African soil and leaves swayed by the winds of Europe (op. cited by Govantes, 2018). Prior to the formulation of the action plan, the European Commission conducted an independent assessment of the country in question. The country report on Morocco highlighted significant democratic deficiencies stemming from the concentration of power in the hands of the King, who appointed key government positions (European Commission, 2004). The report also underscored the limited political influence of parties and the parliament, as well as the glaring shortcomings in the areas of human rights and public freedoms (ibid.). The action plan formulated with Morocco primarily addressed non-structural aspects of the political system, lacking provisions for political reforms that would foster democratic development or institutional changes (ibid.). Notably, however, the plan included a range of measures pertaining to migration policy and cooperation on security issues. Of particular significance were Morocco's alignment with EU legislation regarding refugees and asylum, efforts to combat illegal immigration and the signing of a readmission agreement. Throughout the implementation of the ENP, Morocco actively pursued a policy of extensive collaboration with the EU, seeking to strengthen privileged dialogue within this new framework. While the country engaged in cooperation across all proposed areas, it maintained certain boundaries: avoiding discussions on the status of Western Sahara, rejecting interference in internal institutional affairs, and refraining from signing a comprehensive agreement on the readmission of immigrants that could undermine its negotiation leverage with the EU (Govantes, 2018). Morocco's collaboration with the EU primarily focused on security and migration control. The success of this strategy became evident when Morocco achieved advanced status in its relations with the EU in 2008. With this status, the EU recognized the significance and quality of the relationship, explicitly acknowledging Morocco's European aspirations and its progress in terms of democracy and modernization (Govantes, 2020). However,

comparable positive progress within the country regarding democracy, human rights, and public freedoms was lacking. In terms of economic cooperation, the EU's investment in Morocco through the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) during the 2007-2010 period amounted to 654 million euros, making Rabat the largest recipient of these funds (European Commission, 2022). The majority of this investment was directed towards social and economic programs, with 45.3% allocated to education and health initiatives, and 36.7% designated for business-related programs. Only a small portion, 4.3% of the funds, was allocated to governance and human rights programs, focusing on improving the judicial system and advancing women's rights (Govantes, 2018).

The impact of the Arab Spring movement in Morocco, although evident, was less profound compared to other countries such as Tunisia. The Moroccan regime effectively managed to navigate the situation without experiencing a collapse. In February 2011, protests organized through online platforms took place in cities like Rabat and Casablanca, rallying under the banner of "Justice, freedom, and dignity." The movement called for political reforms aimed at establishing a genuine democracy and advocated for a transition of the monarchy towards a parliamentary model with reduced power. Notably, the majority of organizations involved in the movement did not challenge the monarchy itself or its current leadership (Fernández Molina, 2011). The monarchy successfully neutralized the movement's demands by employing a classic strategy that combined offering incentives with exerting pressure (Sater, 2011). This approach involved a mixture of repression, threats against leaders, coercion of political parties and populist measures such as subsidizing essential goods, raising public employee wages and providing job opportunities for specific groups of unemployed graduates (ibid.). Through this strategy, the movement became fragmented, and the option of participating in a constitutional reform process was presented, further dividing its members. In July of the same year, the constitution was approved through a referendum, despite public disapproval of the main organizations associated with the February 20th Movement. The constitution largely preserved the monarchy's powers, with minor changes such as removing the monarch's sacred status and requiring the prime minister to come from the party with the largest number of elected deputies (ibid.). In the Moroccan action plan, the commitments related to democracy were found to be less stringent than those observed

for Tunisia, despite the increased importance of this variable within the "more for more" initiative. The ENPI financing instrument for the period 2011-2013 primarily focused on the economic sector, although the allocated amount to support the democratic transition increased significantly to 7.2% compared to the previous period. For the period 2014-2020, the budget is divided into four broad sections: basic services (30%), democratic governance, rule of law, and mobility (25%), employment and sustainable growth (25%), and support for the comprehensive free trade agreement and civil society (20%) (Govantes, 2020). However, these categories are quite broad, making it challenging to measure their specific impact on policies. For instance, the second section combines elements related to democracy (such as justice system reform and governance) with unrelated policies (such as prison modernization, migration, and mobility). Similarly, the fourth section covers support for organized civil society alongside the development of the DCFTA (Govantes, 2018). Despite Morocco's limited progress in democratization, it remains the EU's primary partner in the southern neighborhood of the ENP. Monitoring reports consistently shed light on significant deficiencies in the functioning of parliament, the judiciary, freedom of association, and the press. Notably, the reform of the press code to decriminalize crimes of opinion has been awaited since 2005 (ibid.). The reports also emphasize the need to address gender inequality and criticize Morocco for trying a group of 25 Sahrawi civilians in military courts (ibid.). Nevertheless, the monitoring reports maintain a positive view of Morocco, explicitly highlighting the privileged bilateral relations. In the economic realm, the reports highlight Morocco's gradual integration into the European internal market and macroeconomic stability, underscoring progress in the negotiations for a DCFTA between the two parties (Govantes, 2020). However, in recent months, bilateral relations have faced setbacks due to judgments by EU courts of justice regarding Morocco's lack of jurisdiction over the territorial waters of Western Sahara, impacting the agreement and the DCFTA negotiations (ibid.).

On February 9, 2021, the European Commission adopted a new Agenda for the Mediterranean, which was later endorsed by the European Council, signifying a renewed commitment to strengthen the EU's partnership with the region (European Commission, 2023). This comprehensive agenda is complemented by an Economic and Investment Plan aimed at mobilizing substantial investments in Morocco, with a target of up to €8.4 billion by 2027. Out of this amount, €1.68 billion will be provided as grants from the EU

budget (ibid.). Over the years, the EU has been actively supporting Morocco's investments through various financial platforms such as the Neighbourhood Investment Platform and more recently the European Fund for Sustainable Development. Through these initiatives, the EU has played a pivotal role in financing vital infrastructure projects in sectors including energy, water, and transport, in collaboration with esteemed European Financial Institutions such as the EIB, EBRD, AFD, and KfW. Notable examples of these infrastructure projects include the Ouarzazate and Midelt energy farms, urban railways in Rabat and Casablanca, and wind energy programs in Midelt and Essaouira (ibid.). Furthermore, in October 2022, the European Union and the Kingdom of Morocco strengthened their collaboration in environmental protection, biodiversity conservation, and climate change mitigation through the launch of the EU-Morocco Green Partnership (ibid.). This partnership represents a significant milestone as it is the first Green Partnership established by the EU with a partner country, aimed at advancing the external dimension of the European Green Deal. It also serves as one of the flagship initiatives of the European Investment Plan for the Southern Neighbours (ibid.). In the area of migration and border management, the EU and Morocco have fostered a close partnership since 2004, which was further reinforced in 2013 with the Mobility Partnership and in 2018 with the EU's support for the implementation of the National Immigration and Asylum Strategy (SNIA) (ibid.). As part of their ongoing collaboration, the EU and Morocco recently negotiated a new long-term and predictable budget support program under the Neighbourhood, Development, and International Cooperation Instrument-Geographical Envelope (NDICI-GE). This program, focusing on the migration sector, is set to run for a maximum duration of four years, with a total allocation of €152 million. Moreover, in March of this year, Neighbourhood and Enlargement Commissioner Olivér Várhelyi announced additional cooperation programs worth a total of €624 million (EU COM Press Corner, 2023). These programs aim to support Morocco's transition to green energy, enhance cooperation in addressing irregular migration management, and provide support for Morocco's ambitious reform plans in critical areas such as social protection, climate policy, public administration and judiciary systems. These initiatives demonstrate the EU's ongoing commitment to fostering strong and multi-faceted cooperation with Morocco across various sectors, reflecting the shared priorities and objectives of both parties.

The previous information provided regarding the implementation of the ENP in Morocco highlights a distinct contrast with its implementation in Tunisia. The enduring and stable relationship between Morocco and the EU has facilitated a more effective engagement with the country in light of the ENP. It is worth noting that the stability of the monarchy has allowed for a smoother implementation of the policy, requiring less particular attention to operational aspects. Nonetheless, similar to the assessment approach employed for Tunisia, the overall effectiveness of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) in Morocco will be evaluated by examining the current state of the country in relation to the policy objectives outlined in the ENP strategies, further expanded upon in the following paragraph.

4.6. ENP & the Current Reality of Morocco

The implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) in Morocco requires a comprehensive and nuanced assessment. Similar to the approach taken for Tunisia, we will analyze the effectiveness of the policy in Morocco, considering its political, economic, social, rule of law, and security dimensions. This analysis will be conducted within the unique context of Morocco, allowing us to evaluate the policy's impact on driving change and promoting its interests. Through this examination, we aim to identify strengths and potential areas for improvement that are specific to Morocco's circumstances.

Democracy & Rule of Law

Before the Arab Spring, Morocco operated under a constitutional monarchy led by King Mohammed VI. The political system in Morocco encompassed elements of both monarchy and democracy. While the king possessed significant executive powers, including the authority to dissolve the parliament, appoint the prime minister, and intervene in national affairs, the country also featured a parliamentary system with an elected legislative body known as the House of Representatives (BTI, 2022). Although Morocco had made some advancements in political reforms prior to the Arab Spring, it fell short of achieving a fully democratic system. In 1999, King Mohammed VI assumed the throne and initiated constitutional and legal changes aimed at promoting democracy

and human rights within the country. These reforms involved the establishment of a Consultative Council, the creation of an independent human rights body, and the amendment of several laws to enhance civil liberties (ibid.). However, despite these efforts, Morocco's political system retained significant monarchical powers, and certain restrictions were imposed on freedom of expression, assembly, and association. Political opposition, particularly from Islamist groups, faced limitations and occasional crackdowns. The Arab Spring movement, which commenced in late 2010 and spread across multiple countries in the region, also influenced Morocco. In February 2011, protests erupted in Morocco, demanding political reforms, increased democracy, and a reduction in the monarchy's powers. The government responded to these demonstrations with a combination of repression and limited concessions. In 2011, King Mohammed VI announced a series of constitutional reforms that were subsequently subjected to a referendum (ibid.). These revisions aimed to decentralize power, reinforce the roles of the prime minister and parliament, and enhance the judiciary's independence. However, these changes were largely perceived as superficial and failed to adequately address the protesters' demands. According to Freedom House's assessment in 2022, Morocco received a score of 37 out of 100, classifying it as a "Partly Free" country (refer to Figure 1). The country's constitutional and legal framework allows for competitive legislative elections; however, the transparency of the electoral process is not guaranteed (Freedom House, 2022). While Morocco has a multiparty system with the emergence of new parties, these parties often struggle to assert themselves in the face of the dominant power of the monarchy (ibid.). Unlike Tunisia, Morocco experiences less fragmentation within its government, resulting in a stable and less dynamic political landscape. While this situation may pose challenges in terms of implementing the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) with regards to democracy promotion and the rule of law, it proves advantageous for negotiation and cooperation with the country. The stability of the monarchy has fostered a strong relationship between the EU and Morocco, facilitating the effective implementation and support of financial operations. When it comes to civil societies and the expression of people's voices, the

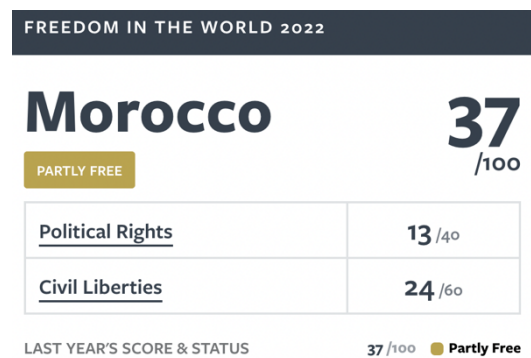
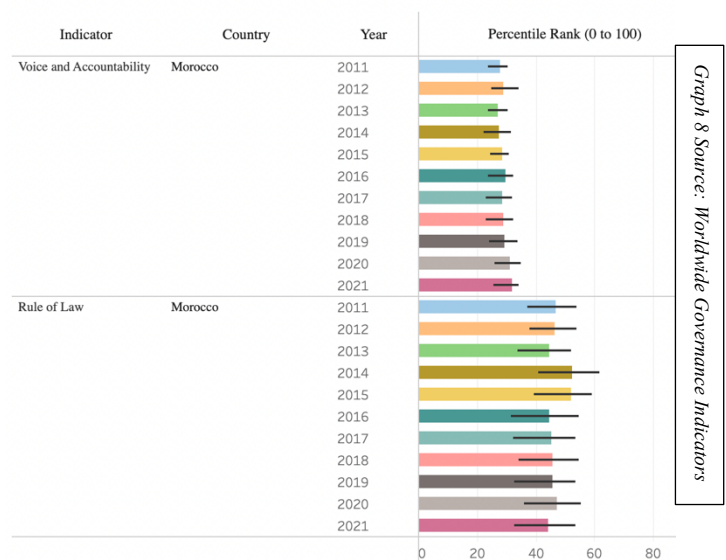


Figure 1 Source: Freedom House

freedom of political assembly in Morocco is severely restricted. The authorities have been known to employ excessive force and violence to disperse protests. One notable instance was the government's suppression of the 2016-17 Hirak Rif protest movement, which sought to address issues of corruption and economic deprivation. Protest leaders, including Nasser Zefzafi, received lengthy prison sentences in 2018, while other activists also faced legal consequences (ibid.). Moreover, activists involved in organizing anti-government demonstrations, which protest against "hogra" - a term referring to perceived official indifference or contempt leading to a loss of dignity - often face harassment from the authorities (ibid.). Ongoing economic challenges, exacerbated by structural inequities and the COVID-19 pandemic, have deeply contributed to unrest in 2021. Although civil society organizations remain

active, they encounter legal harassment, travel restrictions, intrusive surveillance and various other obstacles that impede their work. The authorities routinely deny registration to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) associated with Justice and Charity or those advocating for the rights of marginalized communities

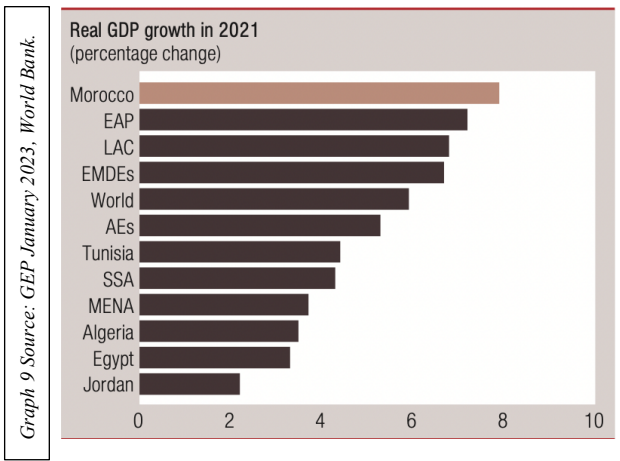
(ibid.). Examining the World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators (refer to Graph 8), it becomes evident that there has been minimal change in the trend of "Voice and Accountability" from the onset of the Arab Spring to 2021. While there has been some improvement over the years, the progress has been limited. Conversely, developments concerning the rule of law have taken a different trajectory (refer to Graph 8). There were notable improvements in the years immediately following the revolutions, particularly in 2014 and 2015. However, the score has continuously declined and reached its lowest point in 2021, significantly lower than the peak observed in the aforementioned years. Despite the reforms implemented in the realm of democracy and the rule of law through constitutional changes and the promises put forth by the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), the data reflects a consistent political situation in Morocco. The existing



challenges persist, indicating the need for further efforts to address issues related to democracy and the rule of law in the country.

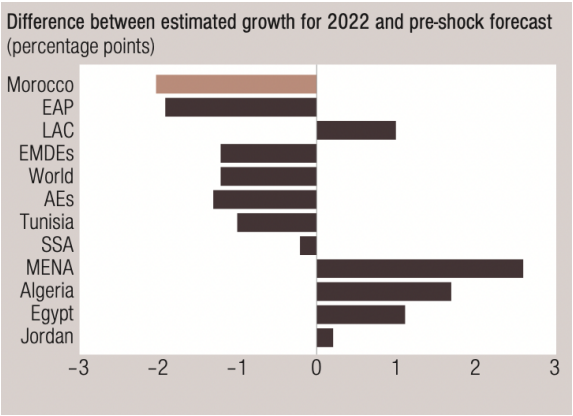
In the political context of Morocco, the conflict with the Polisario Front holds significant relevance internationally (Chograni, 2021). The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was established as a framework to cultivate cooperation and positive relations with neighboring countries, with the ultimate aim of fostering stability, security and prosperity in the region. However, the protracted dispute revolving around the status of Western Sahara poses a formidable challenge to the values and objectives of the ENP. The ongoing conflict between Morocco and the Polisario Front hinders the potential for constructive cooperation not only between Morocco and its neighboring countries but also within the region as a whole. The inability to find a resolution obstructs the establishment of lasting peace and stability, which are fundamental prerequisites for the successful implementation of the ENP. Moreover, the ramifications of the conflict extend beyond the immediate parties involved, exacerbating tensions with Algeria, a staunch supporter of the Polisario Front, and fueling regional rivalries. This not only dampens the prospects for reaching a resolution but also undermines the overall security and stability of the Mediterranean. Considering the European Union's perspective, the conflict poses challenges to its own security interests. The EU has a vested interest in maintaining a stable and secure neighborhood, as any instability can directly impact its security, migration patterns and economic interests. Consequently, the impact of this conflict on regional stability and security undermines the EU's endeavors to promote its strategic objectives, including those outlined in the ENP.

Economy and Development



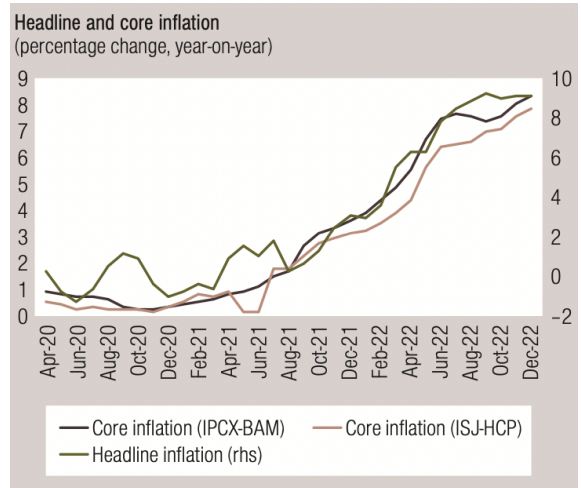
In 2021, Morocco emerged as one of the world's fastest-growing economies, showcasing remarkable resilience and robust expansion (refer to Graph 9). With a real GDP growth rate of 7.9 percent, the country outpaced not only the MENA region's average of 3.7 percent but also the global economy's growth rate of 6 percent (World Bank, 2023). Surprisingly, Morocco

even surpassed the growth rates of high-performing emerging economies in East Asia and the Pacific (7.2 percent) and Latin America (6.9 percent). This strong economic performance enabled Morocco to recover swiftly from the output loss experienced during the initial phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, successfully returning its GDP to pre-pandemic levels. The rebound can be attributed to a combination of factors. Firstly, a technical aspect played a role, as the exceptionally low economic activity base in 2020 during the peak of COVID-19 containment measures contributed to a favorable growth comparison (ibid.). Additionally, Morocco benefited from exogenous climate-related factors, experiencing a relatively rainy year following two consecutive dry years (ibid.). The effective policy response implemented by the authorities, both in terms of public health measures and macroeconomic support, also played a crucial role in facilitating the country's economic recovery. However, the post-COVID rebound has encountered obstacles due to a series of international and climatic supply shocks (refer to Graph 10). In 2022, the global economy began to decelerate as a result of spillover effects stemming from the Russian invasion of Ukraine. These effects were particularly evident in commodity markets, including food, oil, and gas. Additionally, a synchronized tightening of monetary policies in advanced economies and disruptions in global value chains further contributed to the headwinds faced by Morocco's economic trajectory. Amid the prevailing circumstances, Morocco has found itself



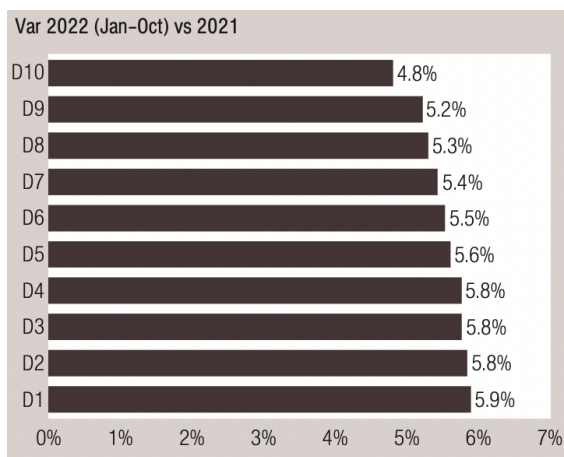
Graph 10 Source: GEP January 2023, World Bank.

grappling with an inflationary spiral, compelling the central bank to raise the policy rate in response (ibid.). The country is currently facing its highest inflation levels in three decades. Price pressures that initially emerged towards the end of 2021 gained momentum in 2022, culminating in a peak headline inflation rate of 8.3 percent in December (refer to Graph 11). The surge in inflation can be attributed primarily to exogenous supply factors, such as the global escalation in commodity prices and a decline in domestic agricultural production. These external influences have contributed to the overall price increase observed in Morocco. However, a more concerning trend has emerged as core inflation has also climbed to 7.6 percent, surpassing the average rates of 5.5 percent in the second quarter and 3.5 percent in the first quarter. This upward trajectory indicates that price pressures are



Graph 11 Source: GEP January 2023, World Bank.

gradually permeating a broader range of goods and services within the consumer price index (CPI) basket (ibid.). The combination of rising headline and core inflation poses significant challenges for the Moroccan economy. It not only affects the purchasing power of consumers but also introduces uncertainties for businesses, making it difficult to plan and operate effectively. The recent surge in inflation has had a disproportionate impact on the most vulnerable households, exacerbating economic disparities within society. Analysis of the inflation data reveals that between January and October 2022, lower-income households experienced a higher rate of inflation compared to their



Graph 12 Source: World Bank staff calculations

wealthier counterparts. Specifically, the poorest households faced an average increase of 5.8 percent, while the richest households experienced a relatively lower increase of 4.8 percent (refer to Graph 12) (ibid.). In response to these inflationary pressures, the central bank has taken proactive measures by increasing the policy rate. This move aims to curb

inflationary tendencies and restore price stability within the economy. As the EU remains Morocco's primary trading partner, and reciprocally, Morocco holds the status of being the EU's largest trade partner among the Southern Neighbourhood countries, the dynamism of Morocco's merchandise exports and remittances has been maintained throughout the year. Additionally, the international tourism sector has experienced a strong recovery following the easing of travel restrictions in early 2022 (ibid.). However, despite the resilience of exports, the current account balance has widened. The growth in exports has not been sufficient to offset other economic factors, resulting in an expansion of the current account deficit. To finance this deficit, Morocco has been attracting increasing volumes of foreign direct investment (FDI). It is worth noting that global FDI flows experienced a significant slowdown from the second quarter of 2022 onwards, influenced by tighter financial conditions and ongoing geopolitical and economic shocks (UNCTAD, 2022). Despite the challenges posed by the adverse international environment, Morocco's ability to attract FDI demonstrates its attractiveness as an investment destination. This influx of investment plays a crucial role in addressing the current account deficit and supporting the country's economic stability. While the widening current account deficit poses a challenge, Morocco's ongoing efforts to attract investment and diversify its economy indicate its commitment to addressing economic imbalances. By fostering a favorable investment climate and implementing policies that promote economic resilience, Morocco aims to reduce its reliance on external financing and achieve a more sustainable economic position.

Overall, Morocco's economic condition stands as a testament to its organizational capabilities and continuous growth. The support provided through the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and the country's relationship with the EU have played pivotal roles in its development and success. The partnership has facilitated financial operations, attracted foreign direct investment (FDI), and fostered trade, contributing to Morocco's impressive economic trajectory. The ENP has proven to be a valuable instrument in bolstering Morocco's economic stability and positioning it as one of the fastest-growing economies in the region. The continued cooperation and assistance from the EU through the ENP remain critical factors for Morocco's ongoing progress.

5. Conclusion

Has the ENP been effective in its implementation in the Arab Spring countries of Tunisia and Morocco?

Has the ENP been effectively implemented in Morocco and Tunisia, and if so, how and why? This study aimed to analyze EU's external action and provide a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of the ENP in the selected countries of Morocco and Tunisia. The previous chapters' analysis shed light on the challenges and complexities of implementing external policies, where the success of EU programs relies on the recipient countries' willingness and capacity to implement ENP reforms and align with European values. To gain a clearer theoretical perspective on EU policy-making and implementation, it is crucial to grasp the realities on the ground and understand the intricacies of domestic actors in neighboring countries (Fontana, 2015). From this perspective, the implementation of the ENP goes beyond mere transposition of EU norms or adoption of values. It involves understanding neighboring countries' capacity to implement reforms effectively and offers a dynamic vantage point to observe their internal political and policy processes. To comprehend how these actors can influence the performance of their respective countries, this study analyzed political actors in terms of their goals, agenda, resources, and expertise. Additionally, by adopting a structurationist approach, domestic actors are examined within the framework of the political system that shapes their actions. The central hypothesis is that the implementation of the ENP on the ground has fallen short of expectations. In countries where there is a significant misalignment between the goals of domestic political actors and the ENP reform agenda, weak administrative capacity, and a lack of strong and autonomous civil society, implementation gaps are more likely to occur. In this context, the Arab Spring serves as a pivotal systemic event that introduced new political actors and transformed the structures within which these actors operate. Thus, the Arab Spring was analyzed as an intervening variable that altered the relationship with the implementation of the ENP.

The cases of Morocco and Tunisia are illustrative of the diverse outcomes resulting from the implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and their implications for the policy dialogue with the European Union (EU). The implementation of the ENP in these countries has yielded mixed results, reflecting their different engagement trajectories with the EU. In the case of Morocco, the ENP implementation has demonstrated stability and progress in terms of economic development. The support provided through ENP funds has allowed the country to effectively manage its economic affairs, attract foreign direct investment (FDI), and achieve economic growth. The partnership with the EU has facilitated financial operations and trade, positioning Morocco as one of the fastest-growing economies in the region. Notably, the objectives outlined in the Strategy papers, which have been amended multiple times to accommodate Morocco's needs, have been effectively implemented, particularly concerning economic cooperation, development, and security operations. In fact, in 2021, Morocco emerged as one of the world's fastest-growing economies, displaying resilience and robust expansion, recovering swiftly from the initial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic (Degenhard, 2023). However, when examining the implementation of democratic reforms and the rule of law, the effectiveness of the ENP in Morocco has been limited. While constitutional reforms were introduced by King Mohammed VI following the Arab Spring, promising greater rights and increased parliamentary power, Morocco remains a monarchy with the monarch retaining significant powers. Freedom of expression, assembly, and association continue to face limitations, and progress in democratic development has been slow and modest. Likewise, Tunisia's experience with the ENP has faced significant challenges in achieving its objectives. Initially considered a democratic success story after the Arab Spring, recent political developments, including the actions of President Kais Saied, have raised concerns about the state of democracy and the rule of law in the country. This has put the relationship between Tunisia and the EU at risk, as the democratic values promoted through the ENP are being undermined. While Tunisia received significant attention and support, both politically and financially, in terms of democratic reforms, it finds itself in a state of political chaos and uncertainty, hindering the effective implementation of the ENP (Ghilès, 2022). In terms of the economic situation in Tunisia, the relationship with the EU has been strained. President Kais Saied's economic policy, which involves targeting speculators as the cause of the country's economic challenges,

while disregarding the importance of business owners who create wealth, has led to regional tensions. Over the past decade, the EU has provided loans to Tunisia consistently, despite the lack of commitment to enact economic reforms by successive Tunisian leaders. This misreading of the behavior of Tunisian rulers has resulted in a moral hazard, with the poor becoming poorer, regional disparities increasing, and customs duties being evaded through the country's ports. The contrasting experiences of Tunisia and Morocco highlight the complexity of implementing the ENP and its varying effectiveness. The case of Tunisia demonstrates the limitations and challenges faced in sustaining democratic reforms, even with significant support from the ENP. In contrast, Morocco's incremental progress suggests that a more measured and context-sensitive approach, coupled with a focus on specific areas of cooperation, can yield positive outcomes over time. The impact of the ENP on democratization and support in Morocco has been less pronounced. Nevertheless, Morocco has been making slow but steady progress as a country, particularly in terms of economic growth. Despite a limited focus on political reforms, the modest implementation of the ENP, due to political constraints, has paradoxically allowed Morocco to achieve better outcomes. This suggests that a more targeted and gradual approach, concentrating on specific areas of engagement rather than comprehensive involvement in all aspects of the country, has proven more effective in Morocco compared to the more immersed approach enforced in Tunisia.

Did the EU and the ENP miss the mark with their support for Tunisia's path to democracy? While they initially backed Tunisia's democratization process, it appears that they may have overlooked a crucial aspect: the swift and temporary changes brought about by the ENP's implementation may not have been the most effective approach for a country grappling with complex challenges. The ENP ought to adopt a more nuanced and long-term perspective, tailored to the unique circumstances of each nation. Particularly when supporting a fledgling democracy, especially one undergoing significant shock like the Arab Spring and subsequent institutional transformations, the ENP's short-term strategy has proven inadequate. Comparatively, when examining Morocco, the influence of the ENP has been less transformative, adopting a gradual approach that aligns with the country's political landscape. This has involved the development of new policies, constitutional amendments, and a focus on ENP variables related to democracy and

political support. Moreover, Morocco's management of projects and economic funds has been more in line with its capacities, ensuring sustainable progress. Consequently, the impact of the ENP in Morocco has exhibited a long-term nature, in contrast to the abrupt and temporary changes witnessed in Tunisia. It is evident that the more gradual implementation in Morocco was actually more effective, as it managed to achieve lasting results, unlike the situation in Tunisia.

Nevertheless, this study uncovers a significant finding on the limitations of the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP). It highlights how Morocco's growth, supported by the EU and the ENP, has primarily focused on economic advancements rather than fostering inclusive development. This imbalance becomes evident when examining the disparities between the northern and southern regions of the country, as reflected in the GNI score (Degenhard, 2023), which underscore the challenges in achieving comprehensive and inclusive development despite Morocco's stable economic growth. The case of Tunisia reinforces this observation. While Tunisia demonstrates greater inclusivity and freedom, particularly through active civil society participation, its economic development has proven to be volatile, particularly in the wake of recent political changes. Hence, the ENP's effectiveness in fully implementing its policy objectives falls short in both Morocco and Tunisia. Neither country has successfully attained the desired outcomes of the ENP, be it inclusive development in the case of Morocco or sustained economic growth in Tunisia.

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