

T.C.
MARMARA ÜNİVERSİTESİ
AVRUPA ARAŞTIRMALARI ENSTİTÜSÜ

AVRUPA BİRLİĞİ SİYASETİ VE ULUSLARARASI İLİŞKİLER
ANABİLİM DALI

**A DEFENSIVE NEOREALIST ASSESSMENT OF
THE EU'S NORTH AFRICA POLICY:
BEFORE AND AFTER THE ARAB SPRING**

DOKTORA TEZİ

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DANIŞMAN: DOÇ. DR. EMİRHAN GÖRAL

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TEZ ONAY SAYFASI

Marmara Üniversitesi Avrupa Araştırmaları Enstitüsü Müdürlüğüne

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ÖZET

Orta Doğu ve Kuzey Afrika (MENA) Bölgesi'nin bir parçası olarak Kuzey Afrika Avrupa'nın yakın çevresidir ve dolayısıyla Avrupa güvenliği için stratejik öneme sahiptir. Akdeniz Afrikası, Avrupa Birliği (AB) için daha çok ticari ve ekonomik olarak önemli bir rol oynamaktayken Soğuk Savaş sonrası dönemde göç, terör, enerji güvenliği ve başarısız devlet konuları bölgenin başlıca güvenlik sorunları haline gelmiştir. 2010/11'de Kuzey Afrika'da başlayan Arap Baharı olayları, bu olayların sonuçları ve sonrası açısından Avrupa güvenliğini ve bölgedeki diğer önemli çıkarları ciddi bir şekilde tehdit eden sorunlu bir dönüşüm sürecini tetiklemiştir. Bu durum; başta Rusya ve Çin olmak üzere Kuzey Afrika'da yükselen güçlerin hızla genişleyen rolüyle birleşip, bölgede ABD ve AB'nin kendi aralarında dikkate değer etkileşim ve işbirliğine rağmen bölge mimarisini yeniden tasarlama konusunda bir rekabet yaşadıkları çok kutuplu yeni bir bölgesel oluşumu beslemektedir. Bunun bir sonucu olarak, Arap Baharı'nın başlamasından sonraki yıllar Birliğin bu zorlukların üstesinden gelmek için aldığı dış politika pozisyonunda görüleceği üzere hayatta kalma konusunu önüne daha fazla çıkarmıştır. Bir denge arayışı içinde olan AB, Akdeniz'in güneyinde statükosunu korumaya ve bölgede hayatta kalmaya çalışmakta ama aynı zamanda bölge üzerindeki hegemonik idealleri konusunda tereddüt etmektedir. Bu bağlamda, bu çalışma, sistemik bir teoriyi, tam adıyla savunmacı neorealizmi, AB'nin yıllar içinde uluslararası sistemik baskı altında bölgesel çıkarları, mücadeleleri ve gelecekteki hedeflerini güç hesaplamaları ve gelecekteki niyetlerine dayanarak Kuzey Afrika dış politikasına uygulamayı hedeflemektedir. Çalışma, AB'nin güneyinde kendi güvenliğini nasıl ve ne ölçüde arttırıp arttırmadığını araştırmaktadır. Çalışma, AB'nin Kuzey Afrika'daki en büyük amacının bütünsel bir yaklaşımla "güç dengesi" ve "tehdit dengesi" vasıtasıyla çeşitli dengeleme mekanizmaları kullanarak güvenliğini arttıracak düzenleme ve politikalar oluşturmak olduğunu iddia etmektedir. Çalışmanın yöntemi, AB'nin bölgedeki ampirik olarak gözlemlenebilir davranışının bir teorinin (savunmacı neorealizm) belirli bir vakaya (AB'nin Kuzey Afrika ile ilişkileri) uygulanarak açıklanmasıdır. Bu çalışma, AB'nin dış politika davranışı ve savunmacı neorealist varsayımların esas olarak eşleştiğini göstermiştir. Çalışma, AB'nin güneyindeki güvenlik çıkarlarını ve tehditlerini bölgeye karşı savunmacı ve yumuşak güç projeksiyonu tutumu göstererek dengelediğini önermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Savunmacı Neorealizm, Avrupa Birliği – Kuzey Afrika İlişkileri, Ortadoğu ve Kuzey Afrika Bölgesi, Göç, Terör, Enerji Güvenliği, Başarısız Devlet, Ticaret ve Ekonomi.

ABSTRACT

North Africa, part of the MENA region, is Europe's immediate neighborhood, hence is of strategic importance for European security. While Mediterranean Africa plays an important role in trade and economic issues for the European Union (EU); migration, terrorism, energy security and state failure have become the main security problems of the region throughout the post-Cold War era. The Arab Spring events of 2010/11 have triggered a troubled transformation process in North Africa, where the consequences and aftermath of the events seriously threatened European security and other important interests in the region. This has coupled with the rapidly expanding role of new rising powers, Russia and China in particular, fostering a new multipolar regional context in North Africa where the US and the EU have already had a competition in redesigning the architecture of the region, notwithstanding the considerable interaction and cooperation between the two. As a consequence, the years after the start of the Arab Spring has brought the survival issue to the fore of the Union ever more, evident in its foreign policy position to overcome these challenges. In search of balance, the EU has persistently sought to preserve its status quo in its Mediterranean South, seeking to survive, at the same time hesitant about its hegemonic ideals over the region. On these premises, this study aims to apply a systemic theory, namely defensive neorealism on the EU's foreign policy behavior in North Africa by examining its interests, challenges and aims toward the region over years, based on power calculations and future intentions under the international systemic pressure. It seeks to determine whether and to what extent the EU builds up and maximizes its security in its southern periphery. The study claims that the supreme aim of the EU in North Africa is to create arrangements fostering security through various balancing mechanisms, namely "balance of power" and "balance of threat" brought together in a joined-up approach. In retrospect, the method of the study is the application of a theory (defensive neorealism) to a specific case (the case of the EU's relations with North Africa) to investigate how the empirically observable behavior of the EU in the region can be explained through this theoretical lens. This study has shown that the EU's behavior and defensive neorealist assumptions mainly match. It suggests that the EU has taken a defensive and soft power-projection attitude into the region; hence balancing its security interests and threats in its south.

Key Words: Defensive Neorealism, European Union - North Africa Relations, MENA, Migration, Terrorism, Energy Security, Failed States, Trade and Economic Issues.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Association Agreements
AQIM	Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
BMENA	Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative
BP	British Petrol
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
BRIC	Brazil, Russia, India and China
CAMM	Common Agendas for Migration and Mobility
CASCF	China-Arab States Cooperation Forum
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
DCFTA	Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement
EAD	Euro-Arab Dialogue
EC	European Communities
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
EDA	European Defence Agency
EEC	European Economic Community
EIA	Energy Information Administration
EIB	European Investment Bank
EMP	Euro-Mediterranean Partnership
ENP	European Neighborhood Policy
ENPI	European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument
EPC	European Political Cooperation
ESDI	European Security and Defence Identity
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy

ESS	European Security Strategy
EU	European Union
EUBAM	EU Border Assistance Mission
EUGS	European Global Strategy
EURATOM	European Atomic Energy Community
FIS	Islamic Salvation Front
FLN	National Liberation Front
FSI	Fragile State Index
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
GAMM	Global Approach to Migration and Mobility
G8	Group of Eight
GMP	Global Mediterranean Policy
GTI	Global Terrorism Index
IEA	International Energy Agency
ILSA	Iran Libya Sanctions Act
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
JHA	Justice and Home Affairs
LNG	Liquefied Natural Gas
MEDA	Mesures d'Accompagnement (EU's Financial Instrument for the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership)
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MENA-TIP	MENA Trade and Investment Partnership
MEPI	Middle East Partnership Initiative
MSR	21 st Century Maritime Silk Road

MP	Mobility Partnerships
MP	Mediterranean Partners
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NSS	National Security Strategy (US)
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SPRING	Support for Partnership, Reform and Inclusive Growth
TEU	Treaty of European Union
TREVI	Terrorism, Radicalism, Extremism and International Violence
UFM	Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean
UK	United Kingdom
UMA	Arab Maghreb Union
UN	United Nations
US	United States of America
USSR	The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WB	World Bank
WEU	Western European Union
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction
WTO	World Trade Organization
WWII	World War II

INTRODUCTION

Defensive neorealism as a theoretical approach describes how systemic considerations and external challenges affect and drive foreign policy behavior, thus provides a persuasive analytical framework to understand the actions of European Union (the EU) in its south. In this thesis, the application of defensive neorealism to the EU-North Africa relations marks the importance of the study as the subject has been under-researched from this particular approach. As survival ranks high on the aims of defensive neorealism, one can claim that this has been the supreme aim of the EU in its North Africa policy, that is, to create arrangements fostering security through various balancing mechanisms. In this sense, post-Cold War European foreign policy in North Africa -where the EU, as a ‘defensive positionalist’, seemingly worries about its security and power relative to its main rivals and competitors in the region, hence strives to maintain its position- can be drawn on defensive neorealism as a powerful tool.

The latest Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) of the EU is considered an institution designed not to serve transatlantic strategic objectives any more, but to meet security concerns within Europe’s geopolitical neighborhood (Dyson 2013:387). In the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union, Europeans - evolved from a Community to a Union by every institutional foundation aimed at the development of independent European security architecture - have grown eager to hold a defensive regional alliance. Europeans thought that they would have “a better chance of surrounding themselves with collaborative governments promoting prosperous harmony” (Calleo 2008). Ultimately, this consolidated the relationship between the US and the EU. While the EU needed to develop good relations and peaceful interactions with its neighbors for its own security and safety for the reasons varying from counter-terrorism to migration, energy to trade, a defensive bent has strongly prevailed across its external role, coupled with the emergence of imminent collective security challenges.

In 2010/11, the Arab Spring events triggered a troubled transformation process in North Africa, where the consequences and aftermath of the events seriously

threatened EU security and other important interests in the region. This has coupled with the rapidly expanding role of new rising powers, Russia and China in particular, fostering a new multipolar regional context in North Africa where the US and the EU have already had a competition in redesigning the architecture of the region, notwithstanding the considerable interaction and cooperation between the two. As a consequence, the years since the start of the Arab Spring has strongly brought the survival issue to the fore of the Union ever more, evident in its foreign policy position to overcome these challenges. Taken more broadly, the EU, in search of balance, has persistently sought to preserve its status quo in its Mediterranean South, seeking to survive, at the same time hesitant about its hegemonic ideals over the region. And this uncertainty has prompted a variety of hedging balancing strategies towards the major actors in the region.

Terminology

There is a long and extensive discussion about the terminology of the wave of mass anti-regime protests and the following major changes occurred in North Africa, known colloquially as the Arab Spring that has swept the whole region since the end of 2010. So far, a combination of different connotations have been used for the dramatic cascade of events, mostly grounded on Arabist sentiments, such as the ‘Arab Awakening’, ‘Arab Democracy Spring’, ‘Arab Revolutions’, ‘Arab Uprisings’, ‘Arab Unrest’, ‘Arab Revolts’ and even ‘Jasmine Revolution’(Tunisia). From those, ‘spring’, ‘revolutions’ and ‘uprisings’ are the ones that have mainly been used to denote the events (Pace and Cavatorta 2012:136). Yet it could be added that based on the memory of the past periods of Islam in North Africa, which also converged with the influence of European Enlightenment, the ideals of what commonly called the *Nahda* or the Arab Renaissance of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, implying ‘revival’ rather than ‘revolution’, have also been used to indicate the spirit of 2010 events since both fueled similar emancipatory expectations (Filali-Ansary 2012:9-10; Filii 2011).

In this thesis, the most popular phrase, the ‘Arab Spring’ is used to pinpoint the phenomenon, which was initially coined by Marc Lynch in *Foreign Policy* magazine in January 6, 2011 article entitled “Obama’s Arab Spring” then spread widely in the media

quickly and became popular (Labitsch 2014, Abushouk 2016). On the other hand, the metaphor of ‘spring’ is as contested as ever. While the term, in a reference to the historic 1968 Prague Spring, symbolically represented the enthusiasm of a new beginning for hopeful progress and renewal in North Africa at the outset (especially during the protests of 2010-2011), the political and social upheavals led, quite the reverse, to profound transformation revolved around violent conflicts and civil wars, leaving regional dynamics in a state of flux and consequently turning all the hopes into a “winter” (Behr 2012:2; Balfour 2012:27). In more concrete terms, the hopes for democratic political transition along with a spill-over effect in the Arab world have been dashed with the events. While this was the case, and yet, despite the questions whether or not the ‘Arab Spring’ is an empty or false slogan, the phrase has been the most encompassing and widespread conception at all times. That is why it is also used in this thesis as a framing and umbrella definition in an attempt to provide a universal rhetoric for understanding the notion when referring to the events.¹

Methodology

In this thesis, a systemic theory, namely defensive neorealism is applied for the case of EU-North Africa relations with considering actors and interests of the EU. The thesis methodology is constituted by this case study. The relationship between the EU and its southern neighbors, referring to its Afro-Mediterranean Arab partners, is the main focus area of the thesis. The level of analysis is systemic. As the level of analysis is systemic in this thesis, how the EU can be analyzed in the view of systemic analysis comes to the forefront. In search of an answer to this question, the EU is considered as a *sub-system* within the neorealist perspective so that it could also be evaluated in its own dynamics. Indeed, neorealists see integration and the continuity of cooperation hard to achieve due to concerns over relative gains and the balance of power. This is also true for the EU as certain features of it contradict neorealist predictions (Collard-Wexler 2006:398). Yet, it should be noted that with its institutional structures, processes and mechanisms, the EU is unique (*sui generis*), dynamic and incremental in nature. Its

¹ For more detailed analysis on the conceptualization of the ‘Arab Spring’, see: Ludmila Torlakova, “Metaphors of the Arab Spring: Figurative Construals of the Uprisings and Revolutions”, *Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies*, Vol 14 (2014): 1-25.

complex actor structure comprises a highly diversified albeit interconnected European sub-system. Bauer (2015:34-35) suggests that “the analysis of EU policy toward the Mediterranean should not neglect the findings on the logic of the EU system itself as a result of the EU’s systemic structure”, because balancing of national interests of the member states are represented by various forms of interaction through supranational EU institutions, such as the European Council, the Council of the European Union, the European Commission and the European Parliament. While the EU’s complex and hybrid form brings about many difficulties in neorealist perspective, defensive neorealism allows exploring the effects of intervening unit level variables, thus makes it more functional to analyze the phenomenon through which the EU has been termed as a *system structure*.

In this research, both the historical premises and the current international context are examined within the framework of EU-North Africa interregional engagement. A tangible example is taken into consideration to support the case study. The Arab Spring of 2010/11 creates a living “test ground” for the concrete implementation of defensive neorealism on the EU’s North Africa policy. It has been chosen primarily for the reason that the Arab Spring events triggered profound systemic changes in Europe’s closest geographic proximity, thus led to a reconsideration of EU policies, in particular those with regard to security, political and economic areas. In retrospect, the Union has arguably taken a defensive and soft power-projection attitude into the region. Yet, the EU’s relations with its southern shore have always been too fragmented and profoundly dominated by security challenges and concerns in the past. As the revolutions rapidly evolved, the Union has enormously confronted with new challenges where it has struggled to guard and balance its interests, on the one hand; and expand its influence as a political player in the region against the US and other external powers on the other hand.

In this context, the events of the Arab Spring serves as an impetus to investigate the underlying factors of the EU’s capabilities and attempts in North Africa – along with its ‘hidden’ foreign policy motives – in parallel with the changing realities of the regional political structure spread throughout MENA. Furthermore, revolutions help make a comparison between the EU’s foreign policy strategies – especially on the issues

such as migration, terrorism, energy security, trade and economy – towards its southern neighborhood in the wake of Arab revolts, and the readjustment of its regional security agenda following the events between December 2010 and July 2013.

Research Question and Hypotheses

The research question of this thesis is to determine whether and to what extent the EU builds up and maximizes its security in its southern periphery. In this respect, the general research aim is to give a theoretical insight to the EU-North Africa relations following the defensive neorealist theoretical paradigm. From this theoretical lens, this thesis augments the explanatory power of neorealism, assessing the change and continual systemic-level behavioral patterns that European foreign policy has demonstrated in North Africa since the post-colonial period in general, and between 2010 and 2013 in particular, when the Arab Spring led to a reversion of the *status quo ante* in the Arab world brought by the periods of political chaos and the subsequent deteriorating security situation and even civil war as in Libya. As special emphasis is placed on the application of defensive neorealism, “why-questions” in quest for the rationale behind the EU’s North Africa policy (both before and after the Arab Spring) are asked by using the main underpinnings of the theory. Accordingly, the overarching question guiding this study is: why the EU as a regional and global actor has undertaken “balancing behavior” (balancing power and balancing threat) with respect to its relations with North Africa. That is, to explain the relations combining the insights of Kenneth Waltz’s “balance of power” theory and Stephan Walt’s “balance of threat” theory”. It is, also, to figure out to what extent the EU maintains its security interests and preserves its status quo in North Africa within the framework of power struggle against powerful external actors operating in the region.

This thesis has both a geographical and thematic focus. It covers a large geographical scope that has brought the two regions across the Mediterranean, Europe and North Africa, together. The thesis scrutinizes European foreign policy behavior towards North Africa region. It attempts to sketch a set of shifting security patterns in Europe’s southern neighborhood both in political-security and economic spheres which have emerged since the post-colonial period in general, while fast developing in the

post-9/11 period and particularly in the post-Spring period. Based on neorealism, the thesis describes the structure of the regional order in North Africa as multipolar; hence it generates an understanding of the region where major powers are in play to enhance their share of economic and political presence. As such, with regard to thematic focus; the thesis, concerning all security patterns, highlights –where necessary– different forms of European balancing behavior prevailed whether through allying with North African partners or against each external major power, namely the US, Russia and China, who determined to foster their economic and political leverage in North Africa region sidelining Europe.

On the whole, by conducting the application of a defensive neorealist perspective on EU-North Africa relations as a case study, three hypotheses/propositions are derived in this study in order to be able to assess European security seeking behavior in North Africa in the succeeding chapters:

1. The EU constitutes a dual strategy towards the US in North Africa; both a *soft-balancing* act to offset US unilateralism in the region and a *bandwagoning* approach to keep the ‘US pacifier’ in a security alliance against threats that are endangering European security and regional stability.
2. The EU intends to build up its power and enhance its influence against emerging great powers in North Africa in order to preserve its status quo by *soft-balancing* Russia and China.
3. The EU seeks to maximize its security in North Africa against threats that are endangering European security and regional stability by adopting an *offshore balancing strategy* and so shifting foreign policy burdens to its North African partners through regional tools.

The Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is composed of three chapters:

The first chapter sets the theoretical framework of this study. It examines existing literature on realism, neorealism, and the division between offensive and defensive neorealism². The main purpose is to explore the extent to which European practices on North Africa region can be explained by neorealist paradigm. It emphasizes that neorealism can provide theoretical tools to explain the motivations of the member states in dealing with security matters at the EU level.

Like in many theories, neorealism has some relative blind spots or gaps. On the other hand, the intra-theory debate in neorealism opens up new and divergent assumptions between offensive neorealism and defensive neorealism. Both theories produce “radically different prescriptions for military doctrine, foreign economic policy, military intervention, and crisis management” (Taliaferro 2000:130). In terms of analyzing the logic behind European policies in North Africa, it could be put forward that defensive-neorealist reasoning, out of two systemic theories, is more appropriate to choose, because it emphasizes that interests of security and survival are the primary concerns of all states, that is also true for the actions of the EU as an international actor and its individual members as self-interested actors. In such an analysis, defensive neorealism suggests helpful predictions and prescriptions to explore European security behavior in North Africa by looking through two theoretical lenses, namely balance of power realism and balance of threat realism³. On this premise, it provides insight for the rest of the thesis.

The first chapter is divided into five sections. The first section of the chapter lays out the realist thought, unfolding its key features. By examining the key arguments of neorealism, the second section expands on the neorealist contributions in theory and

² Offensive and defensive neorealism are also referred to as offensive and defensive *realism*. This thesis will employ the definition of offensive and defensive *neorealism*.

³ In 2010, defensive neorealism was even titled as “a theory of security strategies for our time”. See, Shiping Tang (2010). *A Theory of Security Strategies for Our Time: Defensive Realism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

attempts to show how the empirically observable behavior of the EU and of its member states can be explained from a theoretical perspective. The third section compares both variants of neorealism, offensive and defensive, by emphasizing the significance of the defensive camp in the theoretical architecture so as to establish that many of the insights provided by the theory are compatible with the implications for European behavior in its Southern Mediterranean neighborhood. The fourth section provides a comprehensive overview of the application of defensive neorealism to the domain of European foreign policy. The purpose is to evaluate briefly to what extent neorealism, defensive neorealist theory in particular, is useful in understanding European integration and its practices, for the context of which the EU and North Africa relations are also located. It provides a snapshot of the EU's changing role in foreign policy behavior over time. It discusses the development of European foreign and security policy through defensive neorealist paradigm in order to reassess the historical evidence that presumably supports the theory. The last section aims to establish the link between neorealism and the changing global order so as to be able to draw foreign policy implications for the EU. It reflects how the EU's defensive foreign policy orientation in a multipolar context is influenced by the emergence of new major powers in North Africa.

The second chapter offers a historical and empirical context on the evolving importance of North Africa for Europe. First, it deeply explores a range of different institutional and supposedly chaotic arrangements created by the EU towards North Africa over the past decades. It then determines the underlying causes and challenges of the Arab Spring together with an analysis of European response. Accordingly, the chapter is divided into three sections. The focus in the first section of the chapter is on the significance of North Africa for Europe from a defensive neorealist argument in order to be able to explain the logic behind EU policies in the region. It aims at briefly examining the strategic importance of North Africa region, for an insight, based on a number of critical issues that deeply affect the approach of the EU to the region and vice versa, so that how these issues have influenced and shaped the way EU-North Africa relationship over time may be discussed on a broader basis. The second section evaluates EU Frameworks towards North Africa prior to the Arab Spring. It aims to assess what has happened with respect to European policies in the region since the initial agreements of the 1970s, focusing more on the evolution of European efforts

from the end of the Cold War to the end of 2010 –well before the Arab Spring started. This helps examine, in the third section, how these policy combinations have essentially shaped the EU’s attitude during the Arab Spring as a test case in representing the continuation of its defensive posture towards North Africa. In this respect, by taking a closer look at general and country-specific factors within wider regional –economic, social and political– context in which the Arab Spring has emerged, the aim is to investigate and identify the reasons of the phenomenon clearly so as to be able to uncover and evaluate the EU’s responses and contributions to its wider policymaking agenda towards the region.

The third chapter consists of one broad section devoted to specific thematic areas for shifting security patterns in North Africa, which are critical for the EU. The chapter lays out, in detail, the security patterns –namely migration, terrorism, energy security, failed states, economic and trade issues– selected for being the greatest strategic factors theoretically related to the Union’s defensive motives in its southern periphery. The chapter provides guidance to understanding different dimensions of each thematic area on European security behavior consistent with the aim of maintaining its status-quo. It attempts to make an analysis from a theoretical perspective by combining the related actors, issue areas and balancing mechanisms from all possible angles, both by focusing on certain historical events and providing examples where necessary.

CHAPTER 1

A SYSTEMIC THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

1.1. Realist Thought

Contemporary realism, a broad and pragmatic approach to international relations, arose in response to liberal idealism in the early 1940s and dominated the discipline since then almost unchallenged⁴. Historically speaking, even as long ago as the times of Thucydides (400 B.C.), Machiavelli (1513), Hobbes (1651) and Rousseau (1762), as well as twentieth century realism including E. H. Carr, Hans Morgenthau, and Reinhold Niebuhr, political realism constituted the basis for the science of international politics. Importantly, the theory was first recognized as the conventional wisdom in continental Europe after the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 with its legitimation of the state system. Yet despite being deeply embedded in European intellectual tradition, its philosophical underpinnings were drawn from the experiences of American engagements as well⁵.

⁴ Liberal idealism is an optimistic theory of international relations. It was bound up with the experiment of the League of Nations, receiving a harsh attack in E.H. Carr's *The Twenty Years Crisis* (1939). The doctrine intended to build an international political system after WWI that would seek to achieve Kantian *perpetual peace* (1795), thus had hopeful prospects for a peaceful and prosperous world. This is the main reason why the theory is labelled "idealist". Main propositions of the theory represent a set of ethical and moral claims such as collective security, the impact of cooperation, economic interdependence, international norms and a harmony of interests between states. However, these propositions inclined towards a negative conception when the *idealist* foreign policy of Woodrow Wilson - as the main architect of the League of Nations - did not accomplish what it was designed to do. This failure ultimately led to the Second World War and subsequently re-changed the very constitution of world politics towards a balance of power politics of anarchical international relations: to the new era of contemporary realism.

⁵ Among the publications of the key figures of both interwar and post-war theorists that represent their realist views are: Nicholas Spykman, *America's Strategy in World Politics: The United States and the Balance of Power* (New York, 1942); E. H. Carr, *Twenty Years' Crisis* (London, 1939); Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 5th ed. (New York, 1948); Arnold Wolfers, *Discord and Collaboration* (Baltimore, 1962); Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness* (New York, 1945); George F. Kennan, *American Diplomacy, 1900-1950* (Chicago, 1951); Henry A. Kissinger, *The White House Years* (London, 1979). Note that Carr is regarded as an English School theorist rather than as a traditional realist by many scholars. See for example, Andrew Linklater, *The English School*, in Scott Burchill (et.al.) (eds), *Theories of International Relations*, third edition, (Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 84-136.

While realist thought has evolved considerably over time, it is not regarded as a single theory (Wohlforth 2008:131; Baylis *et al.* 2008:95, Holsti 2004:54; Walt 1998:31). The most commonly used categorization is a simple historical periodization⁶ from classical realism through to the re-interpretation of the theory: neorealism or structural realism⁷. In order to analyze how European Union fits into the neorealist discussion of foreign policy analysis, it is first necessary to highlight some of the prevailing lines of realism in which neorealism has its roots, and then grasp the essential contribution of neorealist paradigm to make it accessible for future reference in the study of European foreign and security policy cooperation.

While approaches within realism differ, realists share some common aspects of thought. Basically, the main assumptions of the theory are converged around “groupism”, “egoism”, and “power-centrism” (Wohlforth 2008:133; Keohane 1986:7). *Groupism (state-centricism)* emphasizes that sovereign nation-states are the primary actors of the international system⁸. Whereas non-state actors (including the EU) may have a role in the structure of international politics, states, especially the powerful ones, are “the major actors” of the system (Waltz 1979:64). Accordingly, any research on world affairs must assess power relations between nation states as primary entities. Moreover, *state sovereignty* coming from the “universalization of the Westphalian system” (Sutch and Elias 2007:29) generates competition between states to gain power over others and provide their own security. The assumption behind this second feature is that states are guided by the logic of *self-interest (egoism)*. The fundamental assertion of this is that states are unitary *rational* actors and aware of their external environment. They think and behave strategically for survival with an international motto of “take care of yourself” (Keohane 1986:103). States can only rely on themselves whatever their core national interests are – security, survival, power or relative gains. A *self-help*

⁶ The simplest distinction is divided into three periods: Classical realism (up to the twentieth century), modern realism (1939-1979) and structural realism – neorealism (1979 -). For a complete analysis of the realist school, see: John A. Vasquez, *The Power of Power Politics: from classical realism to neotraditionalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

⁷ This thesis will employ the term ‘neorealism’ granting ‘structural realism’ as a label for Waltz’s theory.

⁸ As a result of this, the theory is mostly referred to as *black-boxing* the state, or the *billiard-ball* conception in which states function as individual principal actors (billiard balls) of a global pool table where they act against each other irrespective of “domestic variables” (Bova 2012:71) - such as individuals or sub-state actors like the government type, the religion or culture.

mechanism, hence, is the main logic for nation-states in ensuring well-being and survival (Waltz 1979:111). The third premise on which realists agree is the importance of *power*. From this perspective, realism assumes that only *power* can rule in a hostile and competitive international arena⁹. Power, mostly measured by military capabilities, is the common denominator of international politics. Morgenthau (1973) proposed that states are in a never-ending struggle for the maximization of power. Because survival is not guaranteed in the constant rivalry of states, each state is compelled to provide for its own security, thus encouraged to maximize its power in case of others' hostile intentions. In that, states look for opportunities to take advantage of other states as they barely trust each other (Mearsheimer 1995:9). This lack of trust results in the state of *security dilemma*¹⁰ indicating how power and security competition occur between states.

It is *anarchy* – the absence of a rule-making central authority above states – which is regarded as the root cause of the security dilemma by realists¹¹. According to Dunne and Schmidt (In Baylis and Smith 2001:143), “realists argue that the basic structure of international politics is one of anarchy in that each of the independent sovereign states considers themselves to be their own highest authority and do not recognize a higher power above them”. It should be stated at this point realists do not deny anarchy but they do not believe that it is the major ordering principle of the international system. That is why anarchy is a common feature of realist thought only as much as it is about the states' reluctance to accept an authority above them. On the other hand, neorealist thought argues that the anarchical nature of the international system dictates state behavior, that is why Waltz (1979:118) contends that states' choices are constrained by anarchy. Grieco (1988:485) states that “for realists, international anarchy fosters competition and conflict among states and inhibits their willingness to cooperate even when they share common interests”. This is “because there are no institutions or

⁹ Realists define power as “the ability to control outcomes” (Dunne and Schmidt, in Baylis and Smith 2001:158).

¹⁰ The term initially coined by John Herz in 1950s. In his words (1950:157; cited in Baylis and Smith 2001:257), the security dilemma is “a structural notion in which the self-help attempts of states to look after their security needs tend, regardless of intention, to lead to rising insecurity for others as each interprets its own measures as defensive and measures of others as potentially threatening”. See: John H. Herz, (1950), “Idealist Internationalism and the Security Dilemma”, *World Politics*, 2(2):157-180. It is also called as the “spiral model”, see: Robert Jervis, “Cooperation under the Security Dilemma”, *World Politics* 30(2), 186–214 (Cambridge University Press, 1978).

¹¹ “[...] the concept of anarchy is used by realists to emphasize the point that the international realm is distinguished by the lack of a central authority” (Dunne and Schmidt, in Baylis and Smith 2001:143).

authorities that can make and enforce international laws, the policies of cooperation that will bring mutual rewards if others cooperate may bring disaster if they do not” (Jervis 1978:167).

Together, these features have come to constitute a grand theory of international relations. It is possible to make an objective analysis through afore-said assumptions and propositions of the realist theory (Morgenthau 1973; Waltz 1979). Realism simplifies the world on the basis of a logical positivist approach (Sutch and Elias 2007:47). By providing an organized set of steps to be followed, it has practical application in a variety of problems. As the most famous example, realism provided powerful explanations for the collapse of the post-war international order and the following struggles throughout the Cold War that was consistent with the main features of the US-Soviet rivalry (Walt 1998:31). Although one can argue that classical realism lost its explanatory power with the end of the Cold War, it should be stressed that the theory still keeps its presence with re-interpretation as neorealism today, which is why it has had considerable impact on the workings of the international system for a long time.

In addition to the characteristics of realism listed above, its emphasis on appraising the world without “idealization” is worth mentioning. Though it may be an oversimplification, the realist doctrine basically underlines “what you see is what you get” in portraying the world. In the same sense, E. H. Carr (1939) adopts an overtly dialectic framework in *The Twenty Years’ Crisis* in which he deplores utopianism¹² that created a vision of “the way things ought to be”. Idealism, as Carr’s main criticism, emphasizes the formation of a democratic world peace with the aim of enhancing the prospects for cooperation through international bodies (such as the League of Nations). However, creating a peaceful world is not possible for realists as they believe that the international anarchical system is based on power relations, hence it is conflictual. In his consideration of the League of Nations, Carr thought that the institution was “the product of abstract theory” (1939:38). Because, the architects of the institution actually created and implemented a “body of theory which corresponded to their needs [...]

¹² Carr, a leading proponent of realism, thought that states are the major actors of the international system, searching for power. He believed that idealists totally ignored the role of power in their view of international politics. For him, they were ‘utopian’ in believing in the possibility that a peaceful international order can be created by changing how states relate to each other.

fitting their practice to it, and it to their practice” (1939:37). Yet, those formulated but inapplicable principles behind the League caused the organization to fail. By drawing on Machiavelli, Carr (1939:82) indicates three main tenets of realist foundation:

In the first place, history is a sequence of cause and effect, whose course can be analyzed and understood by intellectual effort but not [...] directed by 'imagination.'
Secondly, theory does not [...] create practice, but practice theory [...]. Thirdly, politics are not [...] a function of ethics, but ethics of politics (1939:82).

According to Carr (1939:17), the complete realist who is rooted in the past, thinks in terms of causality, accepts all sequence of events, and thus refuses the possibility of changing that reality. This, the argument runs, entails that history should only be judged by historical standards, because “there can be no reality outside the historical process” (1939:85-86). Yet explaining history well in the real world is “the ultimate test of any theory” (Mearsheimer 2001:6). As realism is labeled as an “explanatory” theory, one can say that the goal of the realist theory is not to describe but to *explain* by moving away from reality (Waltz 1979:7). All this implies that realistic analysis seeks to clarify the underlying trends and patterns of behavior (or practices) by analyzing them within the whole course of historical evolution.

On the other hand, it is mainly considered that pragmatic realism needs to contain a reasonable amount of idealist components. Exemplary for this can be the European Union itself: an organization built on a liberal “ideal” with realistic intentions of 28 sovereign members. The EU is an actor with its diverging agendas, while some of them corresponds to traditional *Realpolitik* based on protecting its own interests, some others are found on establishing a secure and stable “force for good” framework endorsing democracy, human rights, market economy, gender equality, etc. (Scott 2009:233). This indicates why the foreign policy of the EU maintains a balance between realism and idealism to achieve its goals.

On the other hand; a realist approach based primarily on power politics is most closely linked to Morgenthau’s and Machiavelli’s legacies. Neglecting of ideals and

acting only on the basis of power without any consideration of moral and ethical principles may result in self-defeating policies (Baylis *et al.* 2008:98). Nazi Germany, for instance, attempted a Machiavellist realist design in their ideological agendas during the first half of the twentieth century; nonetheless it was destroyed in the war failing in the prospects of expansionist and militarist *realpolitik*.

In view of that, even Carr, despite his shattering criticism of idealism, emphasizes morality in many contexts. He warns that “pure realism can offer nothing but a naked struggle for power” (1939:118). Morality should not be ignored. An “idealist” dimension is thus necessary for power calculations, yet in these calculations the role of power is greater and that of morality less. Effective morality can only be produced by an effective authority, as embodied in the much quoted phrase of Machiavelli: “Morality is the product of power” (Carr 1939:102).

Accordingly, it can be said that an idealist and moral conduct within a realistic perspective is understandable as long as its implications are favorable to the actor concerned. In reverse, a foreign policy that fluctuates between “interests” and “ideals” can be ambivalent and hypocritical. All this can be regarded as one of the very important starting points for analyzing the EU’s foreign policy towards North Africa to understand whether the EU has an idealistic vision to create a zone of peace and prosperity in the region or it seeks to impose norms and conditions driven by self-interest.

1.2. Concerns for Relative Gains in Neorealism and the European Union

Acknowledging the significance of realism briefly discussed above, the turn is now made to neorealism and its implications for European integration that this section aims at scrutinizing. In order to be able to draw a picture of the neorealist approach to analyze the EU foreign policy, assumptions of the theory have to be taken for granted. From these assumptions; the rapidly changing nature of the international balance of power and how the concerns on the EU member states’ pursuit of relative gains influence the bargaining process at the EU level constitute the main ones. The obstacle with such hypotheses is that neorealism tends to treat states like *black boxes* (i.e. unitary

actors driven by self-help) without considering other roles that domestic factors may have on the dynamics of the international system.

Acquiring relative power over other states is the main priority of states in neorealism. Specifically, four interconnected focal points with respect to the issue of relative gains; (1) the relative gains concern for cooperation, (2) the relative gains concern for power asymmetries, (3) the relative gains concern within neo-neo debate and the role of institutions, (4) the relative gains concern for security and economic affairs will be handled as they are highly contested and widely debated themes taken from the neorealist paradigm that have important implications for the EU foreign policy-making. But beforehand, the major contributions that neorealism has made to the field are briefly mentioned below.

Since the 1970s, Kenneth Waltz's neorealism swept the field of international politics. While core tenets of traditional realism presented a behaviorist approach, they enabled the systematic method after the theory was succeeded by Waltz's formulation¹³. Instead of classical realism's central theme of "human nature", neorealists explain power politics in terms of relative distribution of power in the international system (structuralism). Thus, much of the neorealist literature can be regarded as a new version to the main paradigms of realism rather than as a rival approach for the analysis of the international system. Structural realism – as the name implies – can aptly be captured with the effects of the *anarchical structure* of the international system on the behavior of states in contrast to classical realism's close association with the behavior of states and decision-making of actors. It is, in fact, the anarchic structure that forces states to pursue power¹⁴. From a traditional realist perspective, for example, the decision by Iran to acquire nuclear arms would be explained by looking at the leaders' ideologies or domestic actors' decisions. This can be seen as a unit level (bottom-up) explanation. In contrast, neorealism holds a top-down systemic foreign policy analysis in which human nature is not at issue; rather, better explanation for Iran's pursuit of nuclear arms would

¹³ Besides Kenneth Waltz, leading proponents of neorealism who have developed and explored different focus points of the theory include John Mearsheimer, Robert Gilpin, Stephen Krasner, Joseph Grieco, Stephen Walt and Barry Posen.

¹⁴ For a summary on the key differences between traditional and neorealist theory, see: Baylis and Smith 2001:185-186.

be the anarchic international system creating a need for states to obtain power and provide for their own security¹⁵.

At this point, it might be useful to have a look at Waltz's explanation of the *systemic* determinants of international politics. Waltz groups the *structure* of the international system to three propositions (1979:79-101): "ordering principles, the character of the units and the distribution of capabilities". The first one is concerned with the principles on how the system is ordered. Notably, anarchy and decentralization are the defining features of the international system rather than a centralized and hierarchical realm. The second proposition shows that the units of an anarchical system are formally and functionally similar. For example, nation-states all share the main motive of survival and security. The third one is based on the premise that these units are "distinguished primarily by their greater or lesser capabilities for performing similar tasks" (Waltz 1979:97). Although capabilities are a unit level self-regarding attribute, distribution of capabilities is a system-wide concept. Whenever the distribution of capabilities changes across the system, the structure along with the expectations and behavior of the units, such as war and peace or balance of power, also changes. Here, one can argue that certain external threats or challenges (in the condition of anarchy) have made sudden shifts in the course of European integration. As Youngs (2011:92) exemplifies, "post-war reconciliation created the European Communities; American and Japanese competition drove the Single European Act; the Cold War's abrupt end gave birth to the Maastricht treaty and, less resolutely, 9/11 and international terrorism prompted a deepening of security co-operation". Given that, the conditions and/or the pressures of the international system can be addressed as the reason of why neorealism views the possibilities of international cooperation, gains in capabilities, and the role of multipolarity mostly in pessimistic terms.

¹⁵ Note that Waltzian neorealism has its roots in the horror of nuclear war during much of the Cold War. Most of the analyses with an aim to provide a framework on states' nuclear aspirations thus indicate system-wide effects on a neorealist basis. See, for example: Clifton W. Sherrill, "Why Iran Wants the Bomb and What It Means for US Policy", *Nonproliferation Review*, vol.19, no.1 (2012).

1.2.1. Cooperation

Cooperation is one of the major criticisms of neorealist theory. While neorealists do not deny international cooperation, they are suspicious and cautious about it. Grieco (1988:486-487), following neorealist thinking (of Waltz 1979), argues that anarchy is the major challenger to cooperation because it makes states worry about survival as independent actors, therefore it constraints their willingness to cooperate. The concerns that hinder cooperation are defined twofold: relative gains considerations and threat of cheating (Waltz 1979:104-106; Grieco 1988:487; Mearsheimer 2001:51-52).

As power is “relative” in a competitive world (i.e. any increase in power by a state means a decrease in the power of the other), “how the profits or gains will be distributed” among states (Mearsheimer 1995:12) is an important question¹⁶. According to Snidal (1991), whether states are motivated or not with relative gains concerns, has important implications for international cooperation. He (1991:702) aims to demonstrate that when states are largely motivated by relative gains, their relations resemble Prisoners’ Dilemma (PD)¹⁷ regardless of the structure of the underlying absolute gains game. As such, cooperation becomes a hard issue (supporting the realist assumption of international anarchy). Furthermore, realists argue that the problem of suspicion and mistrust between states can make the difference between cooperation and hindrance as illustrated by PD (i.e. actors have two choices: to cooperate or to defect). Grieco argues that states are unable to predict the interests, or readily control the imminent leaderships of their partners (1988:500). Jervis (1978:68) strengthens this point in explaining that “minds can be changed, new leaders can come to power, values can shift, new opportunities and dangers can arise”. These are to say that even if states are certain that the counterpart will cooperate and that they will consequently gain (Andreatta and Koenig-Archibugi 2010:210), they are reluctant to cooperate because

¹⁶ States “can think in terms of *absolute gains*, which mean each side focuses on maximizing its own profit, and cares little about how much the other side gains or losses in the deal. Each side cares about the other only to the extent that the other side’s behavior affects its own prospects for achieving maximum profits. Alternatively, states can think in terms of *relative gains*, which means each side not only considers its individual gain, but also how well it does compared to the other side” (Mearsheimer 1995:12, emphasis added).

¹⁷ Prisoners’ Dilemma (PD) is an analytical tool to understand the behaviors and strategies of states in times of cooperation. According to it, “each side wants to maximize its own gain, but does not care about the size of the other side’s gain; each side cares about the other side only so far as the other side’s chosen strategy affects its own prospects for maximizing gain” (Mearsheimer 1995:17).

they fear that the other side might cheat and gain a relative advantage. Therefore, the “uncertainty” about the intentions of each other breeds caution, hence limits cooperation¹⁸. Of central importance becomes how absolute and relative gains matter when cooperating. Waltz’s words (1979:105) are marked as the common reference point for the problem of relative-absolute gains when states cooperate, as many scholars discussed it over¹⁹:

When faced with the possibility of cooperating for mutual gain, states that feel insecure must ask how the gain will be divided. They are compelled to ask not “Will both of us gain?” but “Who will gain more?” If an expected gain is to be divided, say, in the ratio of two to one, one state may use its disproportionate gain to implement a policy intended to damage or destroy the other. Even the prospect of large absolute gains for both parties does not elicit their cooperation so long as each fears how the other will use its increased capabilities (1979:105)²⁰.

So, one can argue that states view each other as potential rivals. Therefore, they become very much concerned with gains in their international cooperative efforts, compared with the relative size of their capabilities vis-à-vis those of rivals. Put it differently, they strive not only to maximize their own gains, but they substantially worry about each other’s gain (Grieco 1988:487; Snidal 1991:172). As neorealism suggests, states cooperate with others to increase their power and influence. Snidal (1991:715) argues that when the number of states increases in the system, the problem of relative gains concerns reduces, thus the likelihood of cooperation increases. He

¹⁸ Waltz, for example, asserts that “the impediments to collaboration may not lie in the character and the immediate intention of either party. Instead, the condition of insecurity - at least, the uncertainty of each about the other’s future intentions and actions – works against their cooperation” (1979:105).

¹⁹ A number of scholars have restored stress on the effects of absolute-relative gains on states’ willingness to cooperate in terms of: conditionality of concerns (Grieco 1988), number of actors on the system (Snidal 1991; Mosher 2003) the cost of using force (Powell 1991), security matters versus the economic (Lipson 1984; Powell 1991; Axelrod and Keohane 1985), the pursuit of economic advantages (Mastanduno 1993), or different views from neoliberalism (Keohane 1993; Stein 1982; Keohane and Martin 1995).

²⁰ Similarly, Grieco (1988:487) points out that “states in cooperative arrangements also worry that their partners might gain more from cooperation than they do. For realists, a state will focus both on its absolute and relative gains from cooperation, and a state that is satisfied with a partner’s compliance in a joint arrangement might nevertheless exit from it because the partner is achieving relatively greater gains” with an additional remark: “*The fundamental goal of states in any relationship is to prevent others from achieving advances in their relative capabilities*” (1988:498; italics in original). Snidal (1991:172) also indicates that states who tend to seek *relative gains* are not concerned about how well they fare themselves (absolute gains), but about how well they fare in comparison to other states (relative gains).

(1991:701) claims that relative gains considerations will not be important where there are more than two states. Mosher (2003:660), in accordance with Snidal's analysis (1991), aims to show that relative gains concerns may have important implications for understanding the formation of the EU. He (2003:660) argues that a merged entity like the EU will get better bargains against others, because "more actors enhance the possibilities of protecting oneself through forming coalitions; and, generally, the less well united one's potential enemies, the safer one is" (Snidal 1991:715). He, for example, emphasizes that the EU member states combine (cooperate) in order to get better bargains together against the US rather than separately²¹. Although Snidal develops a non-realist assumption here, his emphasis on the structural distribution of power in the international system still poses a realist perspective. In that, states merging and forming the EU shows a realist motivation because, still, it demonstrates states' concerns about relative gains.

1.2.2. Power Asymmetries

Snidal (1991:702) says that "relative gains hypothesis [...] has important consequences for two-actor situations and, where there are small numbers or important *asymmetries among larger numbers*, it may modify conclusions obtained from the absolute gains model" (emphasis added). Waltz (2000:24) argues that institutions serve the interests of strong states as they interpret international law based on their own benefits. In a similar vein, Mearsheimer (1995:13) addresses that "the most powerful states in the system create and shape institutions so that they can maintain their share of world power, or even increase it". In line with the assumptions of neorealism, institutions are used as a tool for the strong states to dominate other weak ones.

In empirical terms, significant power asymmetries have arisen within the EU, coupled with the pace of the European Union project and intergovernmental cooperation. These asymmetries can be regarded as a structural feature in political bargaining where relative gains and national interests are the main motivations of certain member states in policies such as foreign and security policy. Since foreign

²¹ Mosher (2003:660), however, warns that his argument, as it may be only one of the various motivations for the merging of European states to form the EU (such as creating a large internal market and thereby benefiting from greatly), must be taken as a contribution.

affairs are principally decided on an intergovernmental basis, the relative influences that powerful member states make on these decisions are important to understand in order to sort out the common responses that the EU has coordinated for crises like the Arab Spring.

In particular, veto mechanism and opt-outs from the treaties or the European legislation can be considered as a means of power politics within the Union. Recalling history, some examples may help illustrate the point in which certain member states play a great role in policy-making. France opposition to the Treaty on European Defence Community for the establishment of a European army in 1952 (fearing a restriction of its national sovereignty and creation of political integration), Eurosceptic Britain's opposition to the membership in the European Monetary Union (EMU) for the creation of the single currency (based on it was not deemed in Britain's economic interest), France's Empty Chair Crisis for the financing of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) in 1960s²² represent good examples of the pursuit of nationalist/rationalist tendency and power politics in the early European integration history. Yet for the past two decades EU member states have used their veto power more frequently (Janning 2013:2). One can claim here that a more intergovernmental Europe has been growing. France, Germany and the UK are the member states that have always taken the lead for the construction of major policies driven by their own national interests and domestic debates²³.

Several other examples also exist for such contention representing military and economic perspectives, thus confirming the neorealist theory. 2011 Libyan crisis can be one example of displaying the behaviors of strong member states in the EU over concerns for national security interests. France's and UK's decisions to intervene Libya

²² An interesting point to mention here: today the EU gives over almost 50% of its budget on CAP which favors the most powerful states like France (Collard-Wexler 2006:403).

²³ There are situations, however, in which institutions constrain powerful members and empower smaller others. See, Michael E. Smith, *Europe's Foreign and Security Policy: The Institutionalization of Cooperation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004a). Such interpretation would be compatible with the case of Cyprus dispute. Despite Cyprus being one of the smallest members of the Union, it vetoes Turkey's EU talks in its path towards accession, which shows that it could in part influence the foreign policy-making processes of the EU. However, it must be noted that although smaller EU states may sometimes play important roles than realists would expect, they have structural disadvantages as a consequence of limited bargaining and voting power.

during the Arab Revolutions indicates how they have used their positions both to overcome perceived threats to their national interests (i.e. refugee flows have generated a threat to territorial integrity and border security) and to gain relative power both within the EU and the international system.

Germany's power in the EU is another example. The "community spirit" represented by the privileged Franco-German partnership notwithstanding, the commonly held belief is that the EU, to a great extent, is run by Germany. Along with the voting power based on its size of population, Germany has become the most powerful EU state as well as becoming the strongest economy in the Union (Beck 2013). As such, it exerts significant influence driven by its own interests, and reinforces its position vis-à-vis other member states, increasing its share of power in the block. This claim supports the thesis of "German hegemony" since the country has been widely perceived as the authority in Europe's financial and sovereign debt crisis management and perhaps in the EU in general²⁴. In keeping with the expectations of neorealism, all of the above implies that the EU cannot keep its member states from acting like sovereign states as individualism and self-interest are still the main motivations of them. Being a member of the European Union has not prevented European governments from having different positions and behaviors, as also evidenced by the war against Iraq in 2003. Janning (2013:6) points out that:

At the same time, the challenges of EU policymaking — be it sovereign debt, refugees and welfare migration, or Libya — make clear how hard it is to run these projects of deeper integration by committee. Rather, such crises have reinforced the perception of *power asymmetries* among member states and burdened the management with mistrust (2013:6, emphasis added)

Powerful states in the EU may sometimes avoid certain rules in order to secure their own interests. After all, power asymmetries occur as the necessary feature of the anarchical system and self-help mechanism consistent with the expectations of

²⁴ Based mainly on its economic power, Germany is considered to have emerged as an "accidental empire" holding the largest power in the European Union. For the views on German dominance of the European Union, see: Ulrich Beck, "Germany Has Created an Accidental Empire", *Social Journal Europe* (2013); Josef Janning, "State Power within European Integration: On the Limits and Context of Germany's Power in the Union", *DGAPanalyse kompakt*, No: 1 (2013).

neorealism. Janning (2013:2) contends that “state power seems to have regained prominence in the European debate”. It appears that the EU, in the post-Lisbon era, still depends on the ability of its member-states to implement decisions.

1.2.3. Neo-Neo Debate and the Role of Institutions

Having made the argument that state goals about relative power positions, both politically and economically, are a priority in explaining the behaviors of states in the international system, the problem of absolute-relative gains should now be discussed in the light of their implications upon the division of the two approaches of international relations theory. The discussion falls into the so-called “neo-neo debate” based upon realist and liberal schools of thought²⁵. Neoliberalism assumes that international institutions can have a role in changing conceptions of self-interest and make cooperation possible (Keohane 1993:271). The theory has challenged the pessimistic assumptions of neorealism on cooperation, by arguing that collective interests are more important than states’ individual interests in relative gains. Powell (1991:1303), in his effort to reveal differing views on the debate, argues that whereas states, for neoliberals, are focused primarily on their individual absolute gains and are indifferent to the gains of other states; for neorealists, states are largely concerned with relative gains. In fact, both theories agree that political-economic ends and means are important, but they differ in the relative weight on these goals. According to Jervis, “realists never claimed that relative gains were all that mattered” (1999:46). They simply lay that “in a condition of anarchy, relative gain is more important than absolute gain” (Waltz

²⁵ The debate between (neo)realism and (neo)liberalism is important to draw upon since it has spawned numerous studies of the nature and consequences of anarchy, international cooperation, relative versus absolute gains, the priority of state goals, intentions versus capabilities, institutions and regimes, see: David A. Baldwin, ed., *Neorealism and Neoliberalism: The Contemporary Debate* (New York:Columbia University Press), 1993. Here, it is necessary to briefly mention neoliberalism that emerged in 1980s as a response to neorealism. Neoliberalism, also known as neoliberal institutionalism or rational institutional theory, was formulated by Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye based on “complex interdependence” as one of the three strands of liberalism, including “liberal institutionalism” and “democratic peace”. Although neoliberalism does not deny that states are self-interested and the nature of the international system is anarchic, it offers a more optimistic assessment of cooperation than neorealism. It mainly argues that cooperation can be achieved among states through institutions and regimes. See: Axelrod R. and Robert O, Keohane, “Achieving Cooperation Under Anarchy: Strategies and Institutions”, *World Politics* 38 (October 1985), 226-54; Charles Lipson, “International Cooperation in Economic and Security Affairs”, *World Politics* 37 (October 1984), 1-23; and Arthur A. Stein, “Coordination and Collaboration: Regimes in an Anarchic World”, *International Organization*, Vol.36, No.2, (Spring, 1982), pp.299-324.

1959:198). As a result, cooperation is difficult when states focus largely on their relative-gains, rather than absolute gains. Now one can determine that the key point is not whether absolute gains are not important at all (as neorealists argue), or states do not seek relative gains (as neoliberals argue). In fact, the impact of relative gains is highly “conditional” based on a variety of factors such as the number of actors in the system, the issue areas between states, or the type of the threat (military, economic, both, or neither)²⁶. At that point, it can be argued that the pervasive behavior on states’ decisions to cooperate is first to weigh the pros and cons of relative and absolute gains and then cooperate only if it is in their interests to do so.

This brings another issue in perspective: the impact of international institutions²⁷ on cooperation as it has been commonly thought that “cooperation and the presence of institutions are correlated” (Jervis 1999:43). It is common knowledge that almost most of the international institutions such as the EU, IMF, NATO, WTO and UN are the products of American hegemony that were established on the basis of “mutual self-interest” in order to “overcome collective action problems” (Keohane 1993:284). Although neorealists do not devote much attention to institutions, for them, the European Union - an unusual supranational cooperation composed of intergovernmental elements - is justified by the fact that cooperation would reduce the possibility of war among states, thus national interests would be better served institutionally.

Neorealism posits that institutions are “little more than arenas for power politics where states pursue hard bargaining tactics, push their national interest, and try to have their priorities, views, and interests prevail” (Collard-Wexler 2006:403). Neoliberalists support the idea that information-providing and issue-linking institutions provide expertise to states and reduce conflict based on the *rules* they employ thus increase cooperation as a result. Rules can create higher interdependence between states and help them determine the decision-making process. According to Mearsheimer (1995:18), neoliberals assume that rules produce mutual collaboration by increasing the amount of

²⁶ See, David A. Baldwin, 1993, especially chapters by Duncan Snidal, Robert Powell, Joseph Grieco and Robert Keohane.

²⁷ In his “regime theory”, Krasner (1983) defines regimes as institutions. As the most commonly cited, he defines them as “explicit or implicit principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actors’ expectations converge in a given issue-area”. See, Stephen D. Krasner, “Structural Causes and Consequences: Regimes as Intervening Variables,” in Stephen D. Krasner, ed., *International Regimes* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press: 1983), 1.

information available to the involved actors, more importantly they discourage cheating. Neoliberals put forth that rules “constrain the exercise of power by governments” (Keohane 1993:274), causing “patterned, or orderly, behavior” according to common norms and rules (Milner 1993:146). The underlying motivation of this is assumed that states are ready to make short-term sacrifices to get long-term gains by obeying the rules where they have to change their calculations about how to maximize gains. Institutions, as the argument runs, “are not independent political entities that sit above states and force them to behave in acceptable ways”; instead, they are “set of rules that stipulate the ways in which states should cooperate and compete with each other” (Mearsheimer 2001:17).

In this context, one can argue that the EU treaties, which are legally binding agreements based on the rule of law, set out the principles on how decisions are made and how the relationship between the EU and its member states has to be. From a neoliberal view, these principles discourage individualist thinking and acting along national interests in the EU. Neorealists, in contrast, criticize neoliberals for overemphasizing the impact of the rules. Drawing on the financial and economic crises facing the EU since 2008, Mearsheimer writes:

There is no question that the EU has done much to foster economic growth and to get European states to surrender some elements of their sovereignty and engage instead in joint decision-making. But that process has begun to break down in recent years as economic growth has slowed and EU members have shown an increased willingness to break the rules. Watching the various EU countries respond to the present economic crisis, one does not have the sense that it is a closely knit institution. Indeed, most of the countries often appear to be acting unilaterally to further their own national interest, sometimes at the expense of other members (2010:394).

Consistent with the neorealist point of view; in spite of the legal basis the rules provided, the EU members behave in a rational manner when external conditions (such as the distribution of power, both economic and military) are at issue. One can emphasize that no matter how far the EU has gone through in the area of CFSP and

ESDP/CSDP with a series of treaties from Single European Act to the Treaty of Lisbon²⁸, member states continue to act individually.

The concerns about relative balance of power notwithstanding, realists as well believe that states sometimes do cooperate through institutions and they form alliances. Jervis (1999:47) contends that it would be misleading to claim that neoliberals see more cooperation than neorealism. Rather, for neoliberals, there is much more “*unrealized or potential*” cooperation and “*unnecessary or avoidable*” conflict in world politics than neorealists would normally believe (Jervis 1999:47, italics in original). Realists argue that institutions play only a small role, yet they may still lack utility (Jervis 1999:42; Mearshimer 2001:364). The crucial point is that realism perceives cooperation as secondary. Each state has to be concerned first and foremost with power and guarantee its survival. In this, institutions are only useful for maintaining or maximizing their power. Moreover, institutions serve the interests of powerful actors, who interpret rules based on their own benefits (as mentioned earlier). Overall, they are, for realists, instrumental to national goals; which is why “states will establish an institution if and only if they seek the goals that the institution will help them reach” (Jervis 1999:54).

From the traditional neorealist perspective, one can argue that the European Union was created as an international institution in order to overcome the systemic pressures (i.e. the underlying condition of anarchy) on European nation states to ensure security through a balance of power in the aftermath of the Second World War. Neorealists posit that the launch of European integration is mainly a step towards balancing power against the US and the Soviet Union. In fact, the emergence of two superpowers provided much impetus for a change in the nature of relations between European states as they all “became consumers of security” (Waltz 1979:70). Moreover, “extensive cooperation was facilitated by the structural variable of American hegemony” (Collard-Wexler 2006:417). The “security umbrella” provided by the US and NATO (Hyde-Price 2006:225) constrained intense competitive actions of European states and created the possibility of trust between them. In due course, a core of six states formed an institutionalized process of integration in Europe, which decisively

²⁸ The 2009 Treaty of Lisbon renamed the ESDP to Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP).

transformed European scene with the disappearance of war after 1945. Given that, one can claim that the relations between European powers changed when the “concerns about relative gains were relaxed and security competition between them waned” (Hyde-Price 2006:224). So, the establishment of the EU as an institution produced a system that reduced the likelihood of war among states. It can be said that such argument is shared by both neorealists and neoliberals. Inversely, European integration provides another example for a test between the two theories with regard to the post-Cold War era. The end of the Cold War is regarded as a landmark in European history since the structure of the Union has undergone significant changes in political and economic spaces in order to respond effectively to the new challenges of European politics after 1990. According to neoliberals, “these changes have taken place within the context of well-established, long-lived institution, which have proven their worth in enhancing security and providing economic assurances in an increasingly uncertain environment” (Keohane and Martin 2010:64). However, Mearsheimer, in 1990, alleged that once the Cold War over, the EU might be headed “back to the future” within a multipolar international system. An intense security competition and military conflict might return to the European continent with the reunification of Germany and the likely removal of the US military guarantee (Mearsheimer 1990a). In his words (1990b:199):

The Cold War provided a hothouse environment in which the EC could flourish. If the Cold War ends and the stable order it produced collapses, the EC is likely to grow weaker, not stronger with time.

For him (1990a:12) the root causes of such a probable situation is the anarchical international system which would lead to an increase in the concerns for relative levels of power among EU member states as they may see each other as potential rivals again. In addition, he (1995:14) contends that with the demise of the Cold War, NATO completed its task as an American tool established to manage the Soviet threat²⁹.

In contradiction to his neorealist contentions, neoliberals Keohane and Martin (1995:40) have argued that both NATO and the EU continue to expand their

²⁹ Mearsheimer thought that “It is the Soviet threat that holds NATO together” and when taken away “the United States is likely to abandon the Continent, whereupon the defensive alliance it headed for forty years may disintegrate” (Mearsheimer 1990a:52).

memberships, and they are hardly in decline since the 1990s³⁰. It is true that the EU has provided large economic and political gains for its members and has continued to do so (Keohane 1993:289). As Smith (2004b:107) asserts, the EU, with the 1992 Maastricht Treaty, took one step further and linked the economic union to a political one (and the CFSP) under a new framework. And this is why for neoliberals the neorealist assertion that “institutions have only marginal effects” leaves itself without support since the end of the Cold War (Keohane and Martin 1995:47). According to neorealists, power politics still matters most many years after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and even after the EU has gone through various treaty changes and other reforms. They reject the argument that war among the major powers has ended by the dawn of the 21st century. Instead, war, for them, is likely to continue over the next century.

One can claim here that while neorealism could not anticipate the post-Cold War developments of the EU and NATO more precisely than neoliberalism, states are still destined to seek relative gains and power among themselves as neorealism assumes. Although there are times that the international order is stable for a while, the stability decreases once states start looking for opportunities to increase their share of power. Furthermore, anarchy still remains as the driving force behind the behaviors of states, as empirical evidence has shown after the end of the Cold War. For example, the Balkan wars, first in Bosnia (1995), then in Kosovo (1999), the Russo-Georgian war in 2008 and 2014 Russian military intervention in Ukraine (the Crimean crisis) critically put into question the weak equilibrium of European security, not to mention terrorism over the past thirty years which also poses a serious threat to European security.

1.2.4. Security and Economic Affairs

Having explained issues of cooperation with a focus on European policy cooperation from the two opposite sides of the theory, it is also necessary to show that the neo-neo debate has an additional impact on the separate expectations of the two theories about the likelihood of cooperation and relative emphasis within two realms: security affairs and international political economy (Lipson 1984; Powell 1991; Axelrod

³⁰ See also: Robert O. Keohane, *Institutionalist Theory, Realist Challenge* (1992), 284-291; in David A Baldwin, ed., *Neorealism and Neoliberalism: The Contemporary Debate* (New York:1993).

and Keohane 1985; Snidal 1991; Waltz 1979). In general, neorealism focuses on security and military issues – also called *high politics* - whereas neoliberalism ignores these, and concentrate mainly on international political economy and the environment - referred to as *low politics*. Lipson (1993:70-76) argues that international cooperation is expected more in economic issue areas than those of concerning military security. In addition, Rousseau (2002:406) stresses that when cooperating within the economic issue area, concerns over relative gains among states are important but not overwhelming, whereas they are heightened in the security issue area. Consequently, it is argued, economic interdependence between states makes war less likely. Axelrod and Keohane (1985:232) explain why; conflicts in economic areas may be settled more cooperatively than the issues of international security. States lower the perception of their self-interest in economic cooperation. That is why, concerns for absolute gains matter most in economic realm while relative gains matter most in security realm.

From a neorealist perspective, states worry about relative gains both in security matters and in the economic realm (Powell 1991:1304). Unlike neoliberals, a division between security and economics is not possible for neorealists (Snidal 1991:703). This is explained on the basis that “military might is significantly dependent on economic might” which is why “the relative size of a state’s economy has profound consequences for its standing in the international balance of military power” (Mearsheimer 1995:20). More precisely, national security is based on economic security. Since “the balance of power is largely synonymous with the balance of military power”, economic power is regarded as a “precondition” for building military power (Mearsheimer 2001:56). Therefore, neorealists accept that states have to maximize their economic welfare within the constraints of anarchy (Powell 1991:1304) in order to have political and military influence.

Being primarily a political project, the central idea in the creation of the EU, at first, was to promote economic cooperation between European countries so that there would be no conflict between the economically interdependent European states. As already mentioned, neorealism argues that powerful states always seek to maximize their power as well as to ensure their own survival and security. Under the structural conditions of the early 1990s (i.e. the end of the Cold War, the German reunification

and fears of German economic hegemony) powerful member states of the EU started to worry more about their economic or political relative power positions. Integration began to amount very quickly spanning different policy areas, in particular the realm of 'high politics'. As a result, the EU, throughout the 1990s, has seriously involved into the security and military business as well as the deepening of economic and monetary union (i.e. the creation of a single currency). Neorealists expect that "even in economic relations among allies, relative gains concerns will not be completely absent" (Mastanduno 1993:256). EU member states therefore act for their own interests in economic areas, even "at the expense of other members" (Mearsheimer 2010:394). One neorealist explanation for France and Italy's support for economic and monetary union in 1990s, for example, is considered not as a balancing act against Germany, but rather as bandwagoning with a potentially economic hegemon in order to gain influence and improve their relative power positions in the Union (Grieco 1996:286).

The same applies to the current Eurozone crisis began in the early 2009, where most of the member states have jumped on German bandwagon in the solution of the economic problems. The sovereign debt crisis appears to have shattered the perception of "economic giant" Europe to a great extent, with Germany having the greatest burden of responsibility. Yet it has been thought that the members of the Eurozone, even the Union as a whole, might fall apart sooner or later. The crisis has led to a great divergence between the member states, and the "ever closer" convergence of European economies has perished for now. Such evidence confirms the assumptions of neorealism that self-interested states fear for their own survival under anarchy and rationally pursue individual (whether economic or political) goals in their cooperative behaviors. This, therefore, automatically leads to assume that European governments followed their own agendas based on what they perceived to be their own national and political interests when responding the Eurozone crisis. As their interests are diverging, it has been very difficult to produce a common response to the economic crisis. Layne (2006a:153) emphasizes that "economic strength is the foundation of hegemonic power". His words are certainly grist for neorealists' mill in Germany's superiority in the process of European financial crisis. The lack of coherence between European states gave a lead role to Germany in dealing with the crisis because of its economic power.

On the other hand, Germany has mainly acted unilaterally during the crisis through using its relative economic strength. As such, the fears over Germany's being a 'hegemonic power' amongst the large EU states are justified. While this is a clear sign of relative gains-seeking behavior appeared in German policy process centered on national interests, it also reflects a relative weakness of other member states, in particular France and the UK. Consent to German economic hegemony by the others indicates that Germany holds the power, making them dependent on its decision. This context is also well-matched with Mastanduno's hypothesis that "as relative economic power declines and external security threats diminish, a hegemonic state is likely to pursue relative gains more forcefully in economic relations with its allies" (1993:258). While Germany's economic strength in Europe's sovereign debt crisis shows that it is a preeminent power in Europe, it is also clear that German economic power, in relative terms, has also declined over the course of Eurozone depression. On this occasion, coupled with the constant security environment that the EU provided, a neorealist might expect that Germany is more sensitive to relative gains in rendering its economic strength much more influential.

Such analysis given above has important implications to investigate the EU's actions towards North Africa, since its foreign and security policy behavior is affected by powerful member states' decisions like Germany. In keeping with the example of Germany (which also has important implications for the whole argument of the thesis), Ciechanowicz and Gotkowska (2011) claim that German government seeks to increase its economic and diplomatic activities in countries such as Libya, Egypt and Tunisia through bilateral relations with new governments as well as EU engagement in the region. They believe that Germany wants to be more influential in North Africa than it has ever been before since the region's importance for German economy has been growing systematically in recent years³¹.

³¹ Ciechanowicz and Gotkowska give noteworthy reasons for Germany's inspirations in constructing a stronger relationship with the region, as follows: "**Firstly**, Germany wants to take over the initiative of establishing EU policy in the region from, for instance, France, whose policy pursued in North Africa so far and whose Union for the Mediterranean project which it has been pushing for in the EU have proven to be a failure. An important condition that acts in favour of Germany in comparison with France, the UK and Italy is the fact that Germany's actions do not provoke negative associations with colonial times. **Secondly**, Germany's objective is to gain greater access to natural resources, to secure opportunities for economic expansion that is important due to the region's development potential [...] **Thirdly**, another objective that is important for Germany is supporting stability in the region.

From the neorealist perspective, all the circumstances during the Eurozone crisis underpins that under anarchy concerns about relative economic gains along with political and military capabilities remain as an important aspect for individual member states, as illustrated above. It must be noted that the Eurozone crisis is only one of the temporary impediments within the changing international environment, which may affect the EU and its members at any given moment as a result of the anarchic structure of the international system. In other words, such international events will continue to change the European distribution of power as they are not static.

1.3. Variants of Neorealism and Europe from the Defensive Neorealist Perspective

European integration is considered to pose serious ontological challenges to the explanatory power of state-centric neorealism. In neorealism, the ultimate aim is to protect national interests and survive. Furthermore, within an anarchic international system characterized by zero-sum self-help competition, states in cooperative arrangements worry that their partners might relatively gain more (Grieco 1988:487). So, they fear that continued cooperation may increase their dependence on others, which is why they “seek to control what they depend on or to lessen the extent of their dependency” (Waltz 1979:106).

On these premises, neorealist theory has largely been viewed to be hardly conducive with the continued supranational development of the European integration as long-lasting interstate cooperation and intergovernmental bargaining between the members of the Union is considered not possible under anarchy due to concerns over relative gains and the balance of power. Thus, many, if not most, of those engaged with neorealism see integration and the continuity of cooperation –especially after the Cold

Germany fears the consequences of long-term instability in North Africa for its own economy (growing oil prices), for the EU's security (problems with immigration) [...] **Additionally**, bearing in mind that it is performing the function of a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council in 2011 and is seeking to obtain permanent membership, Germany wants to demonstrate that it is committed to solving crisis situations in the world...”. See: Artur Ciechanowicz and Justyna Gotkowska, “Germany and the Revolution in North Africa” (2011) *The Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW)*, Retrieved 01 April 2014 from <http://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2011-03-09/germany-and-revolution-north-africa>

War era— a puzzle and hard to achieve (Collard-Wexler 2006:400; Krotz and Maher 2011:557; Howorth 2007:26). Neorealists have expected that all reform efforts were likely to fail over the course of European integration. Even so, European integration — once established— evolved gradually on the path of economic integration (via the EEC), hence challenged neorealist predictions by amounting very quickly in many policy areas³². This prompted scholars, for example Simon Collard-Wexler to comment that “the depth and breadth of inter-state integration, the central role played by the institutions of the EU in promoting and sustaining cooperation, the asymmetric payoffs of cooperation, the bandwagoning behavior of states within the EU [...], and the pacifying effects of functional interdependence all question neorealist predictions about state behavior” (2006:427). Moreover, integration has rapidly expanded in developing a role in the international arena, albeit constrained by the limitations imposed largely by the member states’ nationally defined interests and policies. Although member states act collectively over the Union, the control is in the hands of national governments (Wæver 1995:426). In this context, neorealism, as a way to test the EU under the constraining effects of anarchy on inter-state cooperation, is found faulted for failing to materialize its predictions, thus far treated with great skepticism. Yet, it should be noted that the EU, with its own institutional structures, is unique, hybrid and complex in nature. By means of a systemic level of analysis, the EU could be considered as a *sub-system* in neorealist perspective so that it can be evaluated in its own dynamics, as discussed in detail below.

Mentioned previously, neorealism is purely a systemic-level theorizing of international politics. Waltz develops his structural theory to explain international politics by using a “levels of analysis” approach in his seminal book *Man, the State and War* (1959)³³. He classifies the causes of war into three “images”, or levels of analysis

³² With the mere exception in the domains of “high politics” that expanded relatively slow over the course of the past twenty years.

³³ It must be noted that after reviewing Kenneth Waltz’s *Man, the State and War* (1959), J. David Singer, a prominent scholar of international relations, developed his own conception on the level of analysis approach in his 1961 article, in which he identified two level of analysis in international relations : the international system and the national sub-systems. He (1961) argues that while systemic level provides a more comprehensive and total picture of international system, sub-systemic or actor-oriented system is more detailed and fruitful because of its richer descriptions. See: J. David Singer, “The Level-of-Analysis Problem in International Relations”, in Klaus Knorr and Sidney Verba, (eds), *The International System: Theoretical Essays* (Princeton, 1961), pp. 77-92.

(individual, unit/state, system), in order to be able to explain international outcomes associated with peace and conflict. The third image perspective, in particular, should be taken into account to understand Waltzian neorealism.

The third image (or the interstate system level) denotes “the framework of world politics” (Waltz 1959:108). It refers to the anarchic structure of the international system whereas the first image points to human behavior of key individuals or leaders, and the second image to the domestic political character of individual states, as the underlying causes of war. By dismissing the first and second images, Waltz believes that the major cause of state behavior can be best explained by the third image which can be found in the “structure” of the system. Putting structure in the center of his theory, his purpose is to advance the systemic theory “by showing how to differentiate clearly the system from the unit level” (Buzan *et al.* 1993:22). Waltz (1979:71; 2000:27) states that his theory deals with what structural pressures are exerted on states but not with how states will respond to these pressures. As his approach ignores unit level dynamics (i.e. the characteristics or attributes of individual states), it is labelled not as a theory on foreign policy at the national level, but a theory of international politics at the systemic level. Waltz endeavors to enlighten this point through his publications (1979; 1988; 1990; 2000), in one of which he states that:

A theory about foreign policy is a theory at the national level. It leads to expectations about the responses that dissimilar polities will make to external pressures. A theory of international politics bears on the foreign policies of nations although it claims to explain only certain aspects of them. It can tell us what international conditions national policies have to cope with (1988:619).

Waltz asserts that a system is basically “composed of a structure and of interacting units”, yet for him, “definitions of structure must leave aside, or abstract from, the characteristics of units, their behavior, and their interactions” (1979:79). He defines the reductionist approach as understanding the whole “by knowing the attributes and the interactions of its parts” (1979:18). And, in order to avoid reductionism and to gain parsimony, he asserts that “structure includes only what is required to show how the units of the system are positioned or arranged” and “everything else is omitted”

(Waltz 1979:82). This, as well, clearly indicates that unit level is not a part of his structural-level analysis.

On the other hand, one might argue that significant interaction takes place among the units of the system which are structured according to the ordering principles. These interactions are referred to as *processes* whereas structure encompasses the distribution of capabilities (Keohane and Nye 1987:745). While Waltz ignores the processes at the unit level, some other scholars think that he fails to establish that unit level of analysis is “important” because it is “the interaction of the units that cause change at the systems level” (Tatum 2002:7). Buzan *et al.* (1993:24) also criticize Waltz’s focus on system structure by stating that “he took structure to represent the system level of analysis and he defined structure in highly restrictive terms and by this method he could not avoid pushing a vast array of causes and effects down to the unit level”. In short, for opponents, structure is only a part of the story. They believe that the unit and structural levels should be linked hence “a system theory must logically incorporate both levels” (Buzan *et al.* 1993:26). If not, the analysis might be fallacious.

In the systemic view, there is a sequential progression from structure to process to the outcome, all in one direction. Put differently, systems cannot be understood “by summing up the characteristics of the parts or the bilateral relations between pairs of them” (Jervis 1997:34). In this light, neorealist theory is considered as a deductive, causal and explanatory one as opposed to an inductive approach. It treats structure as an independent variable. To clearly depict in Waltz’s words “structural change begins in a system’s unit, and then unit level and structural causes interact” (1993:49). Here, “Waltz’s purpose is to explain why similarly structured international systems all seem to be characterized by similar outcomes, even though their units (i.e. member states) have different domestic political arrangements and particular parochial histories” (Elman and Jensen 2012).

One could argue that while Waltz opposes a unit-based theory of international politics, at the same time he seems to recognize that structure of the system arises from the interaction of states and this, in turn, influences the outcomes that their interactions produce (Waltz 1990:29). In that, unit level interactions are regarded as the causes of

structure which sequentially stimulates new actions of these units finally creating a conditional impact on the international outcomes. However, for critics, Waltz provides no satisfactory account of how structural and unit level variables interact as well as how states respond to structural pressures. According to them, “he appears to bracket, and then ignore, the process at the unit level” (Buzan *et al.* 1993:61). As such, they argue, his structural theory generates limited and distorted explanations.

In a nutshell, Waltz explicitly defends a boundary between system and unit level analysis whilst he takes notice that unit causes (of state behavior) may as well play some important role in the international outcomes³⁴. Christensen and Snyder (1990:138) argue that Waltz's theory “must be cross-fertilized with other theories before it will make determinate predictions at the foreign policy level”. By synthesizing Waltz's insights with other elements such as “perception”, they believe that his “specification of the state's position in the international system” can be complicated, as that 'knowing the polarity of the system and the perceived offense-defense balance will theoretically suffice to predict the alliance behavior of states” (1990:139).

This is actually where defensive neorealism comes in. Contrary to the above limitations of neorealism, it could be argued that defensive neorealism allows exploring the effects of intervening unit level variables –such as perceived domestic intentions, the polarity of the system and perceived offense-defense balance– to overcome these shortcomings. So, defensive neorealist theory can be regarded as a reformulation of the neorealist theory as new variables were included. As Rose (1998:146-150) contends, although defensive realism is taken as a systemic theory by its proponents, in practice scholars take both systemic and domestic variables into consideration to explain foreign

³⁴ It is widely thought that he has always been well aware of the limitations and difficulties this boundary creates for the application of his theory and analysis in international relations. Some of his statements reveal his awareness on this point: "The weight of systems-level and of unit level causes may well vary from one system to another"(Waltz 1979:48);"One must ask how and to what extent the structure of a realm accounts for outcomes and how and to what extent the units account for outcomes (Waltz 1979:78)" ;)"Structure operates as a cause, but it is not the only cause in play" (Waltz 1979:87);To view international politics from the systems level is meant "to keep open the theoretically interesting and practically important question of what, in different systems, the proportionate causal weights of unit level and of systems-level factors may be" (Waltz 1979:49);"I would be surprised if many different sorts of unit level changes did not alter systemic outcomes” (in Keohane 1986:327).

policy behavior. By this way, it is believed that defensive realism corrects “deductive” arguments in the Waltzian approach (Glaser 2003:267; Taliaferro 2000:138).

Yet on this vital front, by building upon a defensive neorealist approach, it is more functional to take the EU as a *system* as the theory allows the consideration of unit level variables by which the unit of analysis becomes “the state” (i.e. the member states). While the focus will be on the variations in EU strategies by the third image, a combination of the effects of both systemic and regional factors will have a greater explanatory reach with regard to balancing behavior facing the EU. In the context of the system structure, the EU can be seen as a “vehicle” of member states to maximize their own security and relative gains in an anarchic international system. In this respect, both European balance of power and the aspirations, concerns and calculations of individual EU member states, along with their responses to the structural pressures (by pursuing their own national foreign policy preferences), can be emphasized.

Bull and Watson (1984:1) define *systems of states* as a situation that “the behavior of each [actor] is a necessary factor in the calculations of the others”. This is similar to what Wight (1977) defines as “a system of relationships for certain common purposes”. Hill (1993:322) takes the EU “as a system of external relations”, rather than describing it as a single actor. In view of this, it can be said that sovereign European nation states unify, interact, and operate in a system within which they exist. And so, they engage in international relations “collectively, individually, economically and politically” (Hill 1993:322). As a result, the EU, which is made up of interacting units operating within a closed system, could be identified as a “sub-system” of the international system, which is relatively autonomous. To provide such an analysis, it is important to be clear about the idea of the sub-system EU. Barry Buzan, Ole Weaver and Jaap de Wilde (1998) explain the international sub-systems as follows:

[...] the meaning groups of units within the international system that can be distinguished from the entire system by the particular nature or intensity of their interactions with or interdependence on each other. Sub-systems may be territorially coherent, in which case they are regional or not, in which case they are not regions but simply sub-systems (Buzan *et al.* 1998.6)

It can be argued then that EU sub-system is different from the international system as it attests to state interaction developing from the institutionalization of the integration processes. Such an understanding then draws the attention to the EU's international relations, discussed as driven from three levels, in general: the international system; the European integration process; or the preferences of individual Member states. Through these categories, the EU can be determined as both a sub-system of international relations and an independent actor. Hill and Smith (2005:8-14) identify the first one –the EU as a sub-system of international relations– in the way “in which it has dealt with its internal ‘foreign’ relations, but also its capacity to generate external collective action”. And, the latter –the EU as a major power– in the way as “impacting upon contemporary international relations, [...] to assess the extent to which the EU shapes its external environment, is perceived by other actors as so doing, and occupies a certain position in the international hierarchy of power” (2005:8-14). Conceived this way, the EU as a sub-system, in this thesis, shall be considered as a bipolar system in which France and Germany are the two poles as the great powers of the European regional system³⁵.

Having highlighted, first, that neorealism offers a limited understanding of European integration, and then clarified the place of the EU as a sub-system of the international system, the definition of defensive neorealist approach, its similarities and differences from the offensive version, and defensive perspective to the EU will be explained more in detail. While neorealist theory cannot answer all the relevant questions about European integration, it could be argued that defensive branch of it has a broader explanatory reach to integration question. In fact, offensive and defensive neorealism, based on whether states aggressively seek power or they only seek enough power, have provided different answers to the questions for more than two decades, in which “realists disagree over issues such as the future of Europe” (Walt 1998:37). As this thesis will explore the extent to which European foreign policy behavior in North Africa can be explained by defensive neorealism, this part will focus on a deeper view

³⁵ It could be contended that the decision of the UK to leave the EU after June 2016 referendum left France and Germany the two most important powers of the Union, although Brexit decision is expected to increase the challenges they face.

on the defensive version of neorealism. Yet, it is important, beforehand, to show a clear break on the subdivisions within the neorealist paradigm in search of a theoretical interpretation for European foreign policy.

According to defensive neorealism, states merely aim to survive (1979:91) which is considered as a defensive motive³⁶. It highlights that states do not continuously attempt to increase power but maintain moderate and reasonable security-seeking policies. Security is the primary concern in the international environment rather than power and expansion. Any foreign policy beyond that is unreasonable. On the other hand, states might consider expansion only to achieve security. As Taliaferro (2000:152) asserts, only “under certain circumstances, defensive neorealism expects states to pursue expansionist strategies as a means to achieve security”.

This point represents the break where defensive neorealism departs from offensive/aggressive neorealism³⁷ which argues that states constantly pursue aggressive and expansionist policies to obtain security. Mearsheimer (1995:10), as an offensive neorealist, holds that “states begin with a defensive motive, but are forced to think and sometimes act offensively because of the structure of the international system”. He argues (2001:50-51), states cannot pursue a peaceful world order, first because they cannot agree in a general formula to sustain peace (such as the Treaty of Versailles), and:

Second, great powers cannot put aside power considerations and work to promote international peace because they cannot be sure that their efforts will succeed. If their attempts fails, they are likely to pay a steep price for having neglected the balance of power, because if an aggressor appears at the door there will be no answer when dial 911. That is a risk few states are willing to run. Therefore, prudence dictates that they

³⁶ Note that Robert Jervis's *Cooperation under the Security Dilemma* (1978) provided much of the inspiration and theoretical basis for defensive neorealism, in which “security dilemma” is labeled as the core assumption of the theory.

³⁷ The terms "offensive/aggressive realism" and “defensive realism” were first articulated in Jack Snyder, *Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1991), 11-12. Some authors use different terminology; such as "neorealist" for "offensive" and "postclassical" for "defensive"; see Stephen G. Brooks. Dueling Realisms. *International Organization*, 51(3), 1997, 445-477. Charles Glaser labels defensive neorealism as “contingent realism”, see Charles L. Glaser. Realists as Optimists: Cooperation as Self-Help. *International Security*, (19)3, 1994/1995, 50-90.

behave according to realist logic. This line of reasoning accounts for why collective security schemes, which call for states to put aside narrow concerns about the balance of power and instead act in accordance with the broader interests of the international community, invariably die at birth (Mearsheimer 2001:50-51).

On the other hand, both offensive and defensive neorealists do share fundamental similarities. Regarding the first similarity, both camps emphasize the survival motive and believe that the maximization of security is the primary goal of states. Second, two sides agree that the structure of the international system is important (Waltz 1979:73-78). Third, both take a state-centric focus. Waltz (2000:24) contends that “a state [...] can decide for itself whether to conform its policies to structural pressures and whether to avail itself of the opportunities that structural change offers”. From the point of two branches, self-help is the basic principle of action under the structural pressures of anarchy. Last and most important, both theories agree that states strive for power whereas they disagree over the amount of power required to assure their survival and increase their security. As Mearsheimer (2001:21) claims, “offensive realism parts company with defensive realism over the question of how much power states want”.

Going beyond the similarities to a more precise conception of each variant of neorealist theory; offensive neorealism, to start with, predicts that all states continuously search for opportunities to gain and maximize power because the structure of the international system promotes conflict and aggression (Mearsheimer 1990, 2001; Zakaria 1992; Layne 1994; Gilpin 1993; Schweller 1994, 1996; Wohlforth 1995). In this view, “security is scarce, making international competition intense and war likely” (Lynn-Jones and Miller 1995: ix). Coupled with anarchy as a causal factor, offensive neorealists contend that “the world is condemned to perpetual great power competition” (Mearsheimer 2001:2). This concern results in security dilemmas which are “produced not by their wills but their situations” (Waltz 1979:187). Accordingly, states constantly worry about each other’s future intentions and relative power (Taliaferro 2000:129). They develop military capabilities to constrain other states regardless of whether or not they pose a threat. Brooks (1997: 447-455) asserts that offensive neorealists adopt a

worst-case/possibilistic focus under a suspected security-dilemma and favors immediate military preparedness over economic capacity to increase security.

From an offensive neorealist standpoint; the outbreak of World War I in the European continent, for instance, is frequently given as an example of offensive dominance. One other example of offensive neorealism is demonstrated through the concept of *preventive war* which depends on a worst-case assumption over others' intentions, hence in fact caused by a security dilemma (Copeland 2000; Tang 2010). Jervis (2003:365) points to the Bush Doctrine, by stressing the notion of *preventive war* as “a willingness to act unilaterally when necessary” to deal with the perceived threats. That said, with the 2003 invasion of Iraq after the attacks of 9/11, a notable shift in the overall US defensive neorealist posture to an offensive neorealist mindset – after decades of containment policy which is mainly considered as a defensive leaning – labeled “preventive war” in response to the terrorist challenge “global war on terror” by the Bush administration.

One might expect, at this point, that Europe has decisively evolved from an offensive nature to a defensive structure. European great power competition and conflict during the interwar period represents offensive neorealism, whereas integration which is regarded as an *antithesis* to its tragic history of bloodshed and the very *raison d'être* of the postwar peace project, represents a defensive neorealist way forward. Ole Waever, from the field of security, contends that European project in the period after 1945 has been “shaped as a revolt” against its past, signifying “Europe’s Other is Europe’s own past” (1996:122). As such, it could be suggested that European Union, since its initial birth, decisively aspires to pursue a reasonable and moderate foreign policy in its broad role in global governance as opposed to war-oriented aggressive solutions, hence it is firmly guided by defensive neorealism.

Contrary to what offensive neorealism identifies the inherent goal of states to be a hegemon, defensive neorealism pinpoints the ultimate goal of states as survival. Jervis (1999:49) contends that states are willing to settle for the status quo, and they are driven more by fear instead of making gains. That is, states are status quo powers and security-maximization suffices for them. Basically, states seek power to the extent that it creates

a balance. Moreover, those in the defensive neorealist camp believe that security is relatively plentiful among states (Walt 1987:49). They are conditioned by the probability rather than the mere possibility of conflict which is also why they are considered less pessimistic than offensive neorealists about the likelihood of war (Brooks 1997:447).

As argued above, defensive neorealist variety does not assume inherent aggression. War and expansion is thus hardly beneficial for the greater part of defensive neorealists (Jervis 1978; Waltz 1979, 1981, 1988, 1993; Walt 1987, 1979; Posen 1984, 1987; Snyder 1991; Lynn-Jones 1995, 1998; Van Evera 1998, 1999; Glaser 1995, 1997; Copeland 2000; Kaufmann 2004; Taliaferro 2000; Snyder 1990, 1991; Mastanduno 1993, 1997). Especially, it is rare in history that preemptive wars have been waged by states that pursue defensive goals. An aggressive and expansive rationale is unreasonable as it aggravates the security dilemma, eventually leading states to war. Additionally, aggression is considered to be *self-defeating* and *counterproductive* in the pursuit of security. Snyder (1991:11) asserts that “at least in the long run, the balance of power that arises out of international anarchy punishes aggression; it does not reward it”. As Van Evera (1998:5-43) exemplifies the historical record, “Wilhelmine and Nazi Germany, Imperial Japan, Napoleonic France and Austria-Hungary were all destroyed by dangers that they themselves provoked with their efforts to escape from exaggerated or imaginary threats to their safety”. These states in history are also associated with the doctrine of preventive war, recognized by offensive neorealism.

The balance between offensive and defensive weapons is also regarded as an important factor. Defensive neorealist variety assumes that aggression does not succeed owing to defensive superiority and balancing behavior. Many defensive neorealists draw this benign picture as they mostly consider that the anarchic state of the international system and the prevalence of defensive weapons – especially nuclear weapons – drive states to behave moderately in favor of the defense (Toft 2005; Lynn-Jones and Miller 1995). Waltz (1988:627) argues that the probability of a war between states with nuclear weapons greatly decreases. 2014 Russian military intervention in Ukraine provides a striking example. As many scholars and professionals have discussed, if Ukraine had not removed its nuclear weapons between 1994 and 1996 with

the Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances, Russian aggression against Ukraine would have been deterred. For a further example, Iran's emerging offensive nuclear posture over the years is mostly discussed either as a means to pursue its power ambitions and enhance its regional influence or as a security arrangement against external security threats taken as a defensive rather than an offensive actor.

From the defensive neorealist perspective, peace is maintained by a delicate balance of internal and external factors. Balancing and bandwagoning are regarded as the typical strategies of major states for security and survival. Wivel (2008:292) argues that "states maximize their chances of security and survival by strategies of balancing and bandwagoning". Wohlforth and his colleagues (2007:157) describe the balance of power theory in that states in anarchical international system have "an interest in maximizing their long-term odds on survival (security), they will check dangerous concentrations of power (hegemony) by building up their own capabilities (internal balancing), aggregating their capabilities with those of other units in alliances (external balancing), and/or adopting the successful power-generating practices of the prospective hegemon (emulation)". Based on these theoretical proposition of balance-of-power theory, they (2007:159) come to a conclusion that processes within a given multi-state system generally prevent hegemony.

As a follower of defensive neorealist school, Stephan Walt's *balance of threat theory* – considered as a modification of Walt's *balance of power theory* – argues that states balance by allying against threats, rather than power (Walt 1987). His theory claims that states respond to threats defined as aggregate/relative power (e.g. population, industrial and economic capabilities), geographic proximity, offensive power, and (perceived) aggressive intentions (1987:21-28). He states that a rising state possessing these combined potentials may pose a threat to others thus provide a motive for balancing and bandwagoning (1987:22-23).

As with Walt's balance of power theory and Walt's balance of threat theory, defensive neorealism adds the offence–defence balance to the neorealist theory as a distinct and composite variable (Lynn-Jones 1995; Van Evera 1999). The offense defense theory plays an important causal role in international conflict and war (Lynn-

Jones 1995: 661). Remarkably, defensive neorealists accept the assumption that when states are confined under the vicious security dilemma in the anarchical and unpredictable international system, they can be attracted to aggression and war. Security seeking states can be uncertain about the intentions, motivations and preferences of other states. So, “structural uncertainty”³⁸ may result in competitive power politics to a degree. Nevertheless, the international environment provides incentives for aggression and territorial expansion albeit only under certain conditions. Waltz (1979:126) contends that “only if survival is assured can states safely seek such other goals as tranquility, profit and power”. Defensive neorealists mostly refer to these causes of aggression as “material factors” or “structural modifiers”, namely offense-defense military technology (balance) and geography.

According to Taliaferro (2000:131):

[...] defensive neorealism proceeds from four auxiliary assumptions that specify how structural variables translate into international outcomes and states’ foreign policies. First, the security dilemma is an intractable feature of anarchy. Second, structural modifiers—such as the offense-defense balance, geographic proximity, and access to raw materials—influence the severity of the security dilemma between particular states. Third, material power drives states’ foreign policies through the medium of leaders’ calculations and perceptions. Finally, domestic politics can limit the efficiency of a state’s response to the external environment.

On the one hand, defensive neorealism holds that states tend to focus on their own security and survival, therefore they accumulate power only for the purpose of self-preservation. On the other hand, the theory accepts that structural modifiers may increase the likelihood of conflict (Taliaferro 2000:137; Brooks 1997:446). However, defensive neorealists focus more on defense rather than offense. In fact, they argue that offense-defense balance tends to favor defensive capability over offensive capability. To elaborate more on that, it can be said that the offense-defense theory essentially

³⁸ For a theoretical discussion on the phenomenon of structural uncertainty about state motivations, see: Andrew Kydd. Sheep in Sheep’s Clothing: Why Security Seekers do not Fight Each Other? *Security Studies*, 7(1).1997.114-155.

explains the level of threat arising from the security dilemma. Jervis (1978:187), by introducing the concept of offense-defense balance, aims to show that:

When the defense has the advantage, it is easier to protect and to hold than it is to move forward, destroy, and take. If effective defenses can be erected quickly, an attacker may be able to keep territory he has taken in an initial victory. [...] But when superior defenses are difficult for an aggressor to improvise on the battlefield and must be constructed during peacetime, they provide no direct assistance to him (Jervis, 1978: 187).

Similarly, Waltz holds that “in the anarchy of states, improving the means of defense and deterrence relative to the means of offense increases the chances of peace” (1988:626). So, from the perspective of the offense-defense theory, one can conclude that when the defense has the advantage, states are more likely to feel secure and behave moderately hence peace and cooperation are more probable (Lynn-Jones 1995:662; 2001:8). Otherwise, they feel threatened and become aggressive, which eventually intensifies insecurity.

Yet, a fundamental question remains as to how can the distinction between offensive and defensive capabilities be made? And, Defensive neorealists suggest that a state’s offensive or defensive security strategy can be monitored through various criteria (Glaser 1994-95; Kydd 1997). *Signaling* is thus seen as an effective mechanism that conveys states’ benign motivations in order to overcome security dilemma. Glaser (1994-95:68) points out that states can signal their defensive military intentions to potential adversaries via arms control, unilateral defense, and unilateral restraint. According to Kydd (1997:139-147) security seekers can reveal their benign foreign policy intentions which may reduce the security dilemma as they will be sending reassuring costly signals. He (1997:141-144) indicates the following measures to differentiate whether a state holds offensive neorealism or defensive neorealism: ideology, policy toward domestic minorities, policy toward weaker neighbors, and military and arms-control policy. He suggests that:

A state might be considered aggressive because its leadership propounds an extreme and intolerant ideology. Such states are often feared by their neighbors because of the suspicion that they might want to impose their ideological system upon neighboring states, or because the ideology justifies conquest or domination of other peoples [...] A related issue area is policy toward domestic minorities. A nationalistic leadership that discriminates against or oppresses domestic minorities might feel little constraint against dominating other states or conquered nationalities. Even relatively democratic states that are based on national groups and do not accord the same rights of self-determination to other national groups can be viewed as threatening by other states[...] Moving into the international realm, a state's policy toward weaker states can be used as a signal of its motivations. Aggressive states often want to dominate, if not conquer and annex their surroundings [...] the security-seeking great power signals that it is uninterested in conquest and domination for its own sake [...] A final field for costly signals is military policy and arms control. In general, the signal must consist of lowering or failing to increase one's level of military preparation. Failing to increase one's stock of weapons has been shown to act as a costly signal of benign motivations in formal analyses of the spiral model (Kydd 1997:141-144).

On this front, it can be said that the EU, under the existence of security dilemma, embraces defensive neorealism by mainly exercising hence signaling self-restraint and pursuit of security through reassurance and cooperation. The EU has largely projected *soft power* in its neighborhood during the past few decades. It has followed moderate “force for good” strategies in dealing with its neighbors through involvement in multilateral regional mechanisms and strategic alliances/partnerships (such as ENP, EMP, UfM) rather than the exercise of military power. In this sense, it could be argued that the signals about multilateral cooperation and partnerships sent by the EU beyond its borders by underpinning civilian or normative dimensions of its foreign policy for years might be regarded as benign and reassuring regional motivations indicating no intentions of becoming a *hegemon* in its wide neighborhood. The EU’s approach of stabilization and the creation of a “ring of friends” surrounding the Union –within the concept of a “wider Europe” accompanied by ENP– can be viewed as a reflection of these ambitions.

In contradiction to these impressive efforts of the Union, however, one can look at the 1990s’ Balkan crisis and the war in former Yugoslavia, a decade before the

launch of the ENP, to see how the EU's slow and ill-equipped reaction to these crises featured the limitations of its soft power, and more importantly how its general weak impact on its next-door neighbours has revealed the prevailing tendency in the EU to preserve the "status quo". One might suggest here that this tendency can also be found in the EU's relations with its southern neighbours both before and after the Arab Spring. For example, Attina (2003) claims that the low performance of the EU in the Southern Mediterranean highlights "the structural asymmetry between the Northern and Southern partners" and in fact the intention of the European states is "to exercise all the power resources they have to dominate the region and defend their interests" in both political, economic and security areas although the result is a failure. Several years after the events of the Arab Spring, in a period of North Africa's stormy transition and "descending into ever greater levels of chaos and violence, the EU and its member states have been largely reduced to being bystanders, dealing with the symptoms of crises rather than impacting –let alone shaping– the path of developments" (Asseburg 2014:1). One could argue that behind the contradictory and somewhat apathetic behavior of the EU –especially whenever turbulences arise in its close vicinity– lays the fact that the Union essentially pursues an interest-driven foreign policy approach with the mere aim of security maximization at its borders, consistent with defensive neorealist assumptions. At the same time, the EU can easily and cheerfully offer close partnerships to its southern Mediterranean partners for the sake of its own interests with the relief of knowing that there are no prospects for these countries of becoming part of the EU in the foreseeable future. What conclusion can be drawn from the above argument is that the EU's apparent desire to cooperate with these countries stems from a defensive motive in order to respond properly to the challenges surrounding it, albeit inspired by a hegemonic nature to a certain extent, by way of boosting its capabilities to be able to increase its impact on the future rules of the game in a troubled and uncertain region prompted by the upsurge of a multipolar regional order and new security concerns to European interests.

Given that, a motto, often ascribed to Niccolo Machiavelli would be viable to spotlight here to locate European approach in the case of EU-North Africa relations.

Ovid, a Latin poet, suggests in *Heroides*³⁹ that “the ends justify means” implying that any means can be used to achieve the intended results. Based on this assumption, it could be said that although the EU has never intentionally threatened its southern neighbors’ security (not even by sending costly signals), it has, in line with the expectations of defensive neorealist prescriptions, pursued varied objectives for its security interests related to migration flows, secure energy supply, counterterrorism and market liberalization in an idealist, normative and institutionalized manner (through active efforts at ‘democracy promotion’), which have been provided via the alliances/partnerships it has formed with these countries. This being said, the EU appears to be using legitimate means to achieve realist ends in order to justify its strategic purposes in North Africa, as the region matters substantially for Europeans both in security and economic terms as well as historical terms. This can be, as a striking example, easily observed in neo-colonial tendencies in the French-led intervention in the 2011 Libyan crisis.

All in all, neorealism places an emphasis on changes in international power distribution. Its defensive branch, in particular, is primarily concerned with maintaining the balance of power and/or balance of threat to bring more security. Accordingly, cooperation is possible to achieve and maintain in resolving conflicts of interest before states end up in severe armed conflicts. Evidence suggests that changes in strategic economic and security interests and intentions of the EU have resulted in changes of its preferences for global strategies over the years. For example, the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) was established when the EU needed to strengthen its military capabilities in 1990s in order to give its policy a security dimension and improve its role as an international actor (European Commission, 2009). Considering these arguments of defensive doctrine, one can argue that the EU is defensively-oriented in its motives and security interests towards its southern Mediterranean neighbors. Therefore, the role of European foreign policy should be examined in a wider context under the premises of defensive neorealism.

³⁹ The *Heroides* II.85; probably written between 25 and 16 BC.

1.4. European Foreign Policy through a Defensive Neorealist Lens

Having surveyed the realist and neorealist traditions - in particular the defensive strand of neorealism - this section will now analyze how European foreign policy is guided by defensive neorealism over time in the case of its Mediterranean south, both in a theoretical and empirical manner. Using defensive variant of neorealism, this section suggests that anarchy has encouraged the EU, particularly after influenced by the security imperatives of the Cold War, to collectively maximize its security as an alliance, whilst preserving its status-quo power by using multilateral means that tend to be defensive practices (e.g. EMP, ENP and beyond). It is also argued that although the EU has maintained its security interests and objectives through active engagement in North Africa –by consistently using normative means and rhetoric of democratic promotion– the Union’s shift to a more assertive approach to its Arab neighbors in the post-2011 period reveals that its previous policy was in fact “a temporary outburst of idealistic enthusiasm of the post-Cold War years, which now moves ‘back to normal’” (Kausch 2010). Perhaps, more remarkably, “the EU failed to foresee the coming of the Arab Spring –in its own backyard– and was slow and fuzzy in its response, thus missing a spectacular chance to contribute to the democratic development of the area” (Bindi and Angelescu 2012:28). The outcome of this drawback might be that it severely hampered the EU’s long-term holistic vision in the pursuit of expanding a zone of stability, security and prosperity beyond its borders, whilst it challenged Europe’s previous regional status-quo toward a step backward into Peter Seeberg’s (2009) description of the “EU as a realist actor in normative clothes”.

On the other hand, in a defensive neorealist mindset, states first and foremost seek for security, not for power. As such, external environment is of critical importance hence has profound impact on the EU’s foreign policy. That said, the EU, pressured by new security concerns in the last decade, has many reasons to fear instability located in close geographical proximity including North Africa. Here, it can be seen that a range of safety/threat dimensions to the security of the EU has had an impact on its policies over time. From this perspective, the development of European foreign policy towards its peripheries can be said to have been primarily motivated by security-seeking behavior (particularly in the post-Cold War era) due to gradual emerging security threats at the

Union's southern borders in time, coupled with the uncertainty of the roles of various actors shaping regional order in the wider Mediterranean context. Regarding that, the EU's motivation can be most notably seen in the 1990-1991 Intergovernmental Conferences which led to the Maastricht Treaty (1992) as well as in European Security Strategy (2003) laying out that:

Even in an era of globalisation, geography is still important. It is in the European interest that countries on our borders are well-governed. Neighbours who are engaged in violent conflict, weak states where organised crime flourishes, dysfunctional societies or exploding population growth on its borders all pose problems for Europe [...] Our task is to promote *a ring of well governed countries* to the East of the European Union and on the borders of the Mediterranean with whom we can enjoy close and cooperative relations (emphasis added).

It is therefore widely believed that the EU's interest in the creation and widening of 'ring of friends' around its borders, especially since 1995 (by launching the Barcelona Process), is based on strengthening and extending its security around its periphery whereby North Africa region becomes "the EU's southern buffer zone" within the notion of "EU borderlands" (Del Sarto 2010). However, in the light of the changes in its security environment –such as the Arab Spring– the EU has become more sensitive to the threats surrounding it. Moreover, since the region experienced a wave of revolutions, considerable instability has prevailed in the southern bank of the Mediterranean. As a result, defense-oriented policies gained much prominence in the EU's policy-making agenda. In this sense, the sub-case of Arab Spring provides an ongoing laboratory in order to see if defensive neorealism tells much about anything on the case of EU-North Africa relations.

In the face of all this, in order to be able to evaluate the EU's capacity and will in North Africa, an attainment of the main drivers and understanding of the evolving foreign policy of the EU is very important through an examination of the creation of CFSP and CSDP. Hyde-Price (2006:223) argues that neorealism can explain "both the Cold War origins and post-Cold War development of the European Political Cooperation (EPC) and CFSP". Accordingly, the theoretical aim in this part is to establish

an evolutionary explanation of the foreign policy of the EU from a defensive-neorealist posture. At the same time, a systemic synthesis of empirical evidence that falls within a defensive neorealism approach with particular focus on the post-Cold War phase is offered in an attempt to be able to discuss external impetus behind the observable behavior of the EU in its distinctive international role. For this aim, an insight on why and how a brand-new organization like the EU was exercised in the pre-Cold War timeline will be mentioned very briefly in the first part. Then, in the second part, the motivations and auspices of policies adopted by the EU in Southern Mediterranean, since the 1990s in particular, will be hinted from the lens of defensive neorealist paradigm by exposing underlying representations to be discussed in the next Chapter in detail.

1.4.1. The Origins of European Integration and Foreign Policy Cooperation

In order to attain an understanding of the drivers behind a European common position in North Africa, the underlying ambitions of creating a political community since the formation of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1951, and the formal mechanisms adopted for the coordination of foreign and security issues must be elaborated shortly. To do this, it is necessary to look at the *fin de siècle* and the post-war period in order to understand the very evolution of European integration moving further down the path to intensify foreign policy cooperation.

Prior to the twentieth century, the colonial empires of European states covered much of the world. European great powers - namely Britain, France, Italy, Germany and Austria-Hungary - headed the global pattern of international relations with a concentration of military power and domination of world trade. The birth of a unified Germany, simply put “the German Problem”, disrupted the balance of power in Europe causing imperial, nationalist and economic tensions ultimately leading to war (Baylis and Smith 2001:55). In the end, Europe of 1945 turned out to be totally different than the beginning of the century. The continent lost its predominant place in the world within forty-five years marked by the experiences of the two Total Wars. A shift was set off in the dominance of world politics from Europe towards the US, with post-war

Europe left in a state of ruin. In due course, the US emerged as one of the two chief arbiters of the new world order - the bipolar world - along with the USSR, and both have struggled for global supremacy and sought to expand their spheres of influence in Europe.

With the collapse of the European balance of power, “the United States, no longer merely an observer of European foibles, had accepted the burdens, along with the heady privileges, of becoming a hegemonic power – one with both the willingness and the ability to make and maintain rules for world politics” (Keohane 1986:9). Yet, as mostly argued, the key reason behind the US support for European integration was based upon its own strategic, political and economic reasons driven by the aims of spreading its power while at the same time providing stability in the European continent in the wake of the Cold War.⁴⁰ For the meantime, a tired and devastated Europe in the post-War period was destined to accept American hegemony on the continent, which was initially created with the design of European Recovery Program that is also known as the Marshall Plan. This followed the formation of the structure of European cooperation for mutual benefit towards an “ever closer union” started with the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) established in 1951.⁴¹

For a closer look at European integration through a theoretical lens, neorealist propositions seem to verify empirical evidence of such an instance. Stephan Walt (1987), in the defensive neorealist camp, postulates that states form alliances to protect themselves against threats in anarchy. His theory also extends to *perceptions* of aggressive intentions (to wit ‘perceived state intentions’) as one of the sources of external threats. According to him, states estimate threats by one another’s intentions as well as material capabilities. Here, one could say that since there were no aggressive

⁴⁰ Most realists, such as Layne (2006b) believe that the US, since the 1940s, has pursued “a grand strategy of extraregional hegemony” toward Western Europe, fearing that the continent might return to destabilizing multipolarity, and that a potential “re-nationalized” Europe could bring more nationalism which might in turn threaten America’s security and prosperity in the long term. See: Christopher Layne, *The Peace of Illusions: American Grand Strategy from 1940 to the Present* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006).

⁴¹ In the Cold War timeline, the Treaty of Paris (1951), the Treaty of Rome (1957) and the Single European Act (1987) gradually identified the European Union based on economic, social, monetary, environmental, and common foreign policies of the Union for a deeper economic and political integration. As a result, all these developments brought new institutional and political reforms to the Union through a range of changes.

intentions to fear each other after 1945, “the alliance among postwar Western European democracies [...] reflects in large part the perception that they posed less of a threat to one another than did the Soviet Union and its allies—which helps reverse the impact of material variables” (Legro and Moravcsik (1999:38). As a result, a *defensive alliance* against a potential Soviet threat was formed —where Western European states chose to pursue a policy of self-restraint under the US security guarantees— to overcome the systemic pressures in the aftermath of the Second World War.

Here, it must be indicated, defensive neorealism accepts, as a fair assumption, that states may *cooperate* for security and survival when they are collectively faced by an external threat. Based on this, defensive neorealist approach, somewhat ironically, appears to hold a neoliberal orientation as well, associated with the significant role of institutions for cooperation. Jervis (1999:49), for example, argues that defensive variant of neorealism has important similarities with neoliberalism except by different perspectives of institutions and cooperation. In any case, defensive neorealists treat institutions as secondary elements. Simply for them, international and regional institutions are of increasingly important and useful *tools* of states in dealing with both global and regional challenges in order to achieve national goals. This correlates with Tang’s claim that “institutions do not contradict defensive realism’s understanding of cooperation at all, because institutions are merely a means toward the ends” implying that institutions serve the interests’ of the actors on the world stage (2010:167). After all, today the international system is increasingly interdependent and integrated. As in the words of Kenneth Waltz, the world is no longer “composed of clearly specified friends and well-defined enemies”, but one “where partnership has become a necessity” (Cox 2012: 381). In this context, “the example of the European Union serves as one demonstration of how such institutions for cooperation may emerge even when the participating members share a history of conflict” (Hoddie and Hartzell 2005:27-28). Notwithstanding the pressures of competition towards self-help behavior, European states have eventually *institutionalized* their motivations to share broader common interests, and then cooperated under certain common threats coming from outside.

In the area of ‘high politics’ (foreign/security/defense), however, “cooperation emerged from an incremental process of change over many years” (White 2001:71).

That is mainly because the EU has relied heavily upon NATO as the main security guarantee of the European continent provided by the US. Moreover, notwithstanding some common interests in defence and security field, diverse political interests and geographical priorities of the member states have always mattered more, thus their decisions have very much had an impact on the incremental development of the security and defence policies. As neorealists would expect, these policies were essentially driven by the interests of its most powerful member states under the circumstances of regional bipolarity, which can also be seen from the context that “Franco-German axis has provided the motor for the integration process, and embodies an implicit contract between the two countries to cooperate in shaping their regional neighbourhood” (Hyde-Price 2007:108-109).

Certain political and security initiatives drawing upon the ECSC model –even earlier than the establishment of the EEC– were designed with the aim of developing a common approach to defence and security issues that enabled further establishment of other bodies in that area. According to the precepts of defensive neorealism, it could be argued that these collective efforts and integrationist dynamics of Europe towards the convergence of defence and security affairs were actually driven by nation states’ search for protecting their relative gains in an uncertain international system. This raises a theoretical question: how can one use defensive neorealism to explain increased cooperation in *European foreign policy, security and defence affairs*, and in what ways, upon an environment of divergence between EU member states that stands as an obstacle to a common policy?

Defensive neorealism addresses this puzzle by positing that relative gains concerns lead states to *defensive cooperation* in a multilateral world in order not to fall behind other relative gains maximizers that cooperate among themselves (Snidal 1991). In fact, it is the realm of ‘high politics’ that has made neorealism useful for explaining European cooperation in that area. Grieco (1988:500) points to *defensive positionality* and argues that relative gains problem for cooperation under uncertainty makes states

worry about how cooperation might affect relative capabilities in the future⁴². Indeed, the Second World War had altered the structure of the international system. Later in the Cold War bipolar balance in Europe, European states, as defensive positionalists, made a trade-off between short-term and long-term objectives and accepted short-term losses for long-term priorities (Brooks 1997; Gilpin 1993). It can be assumed that this tendency continued upon the uneven patterns of cooperation between European states in the course of the creation of defense and security policies as well as in the domain of European foreign policy⁴³. Although EU member states tended to take different positions according to their differing national interests, it could be seen that since they acknowledged structural constraints in the new international security environment, a direction towards a shared security and foreign policy stance with the aim of a “common European interest” ultimately enabled a convergence over time. Consequently, their deployment of an international institution like the EU helped build a new security framework in the broader region as a tool for balancing member states’ pursuit of security in the form of an alliance to act as one.

Smith (2004b:99) argues that EU states have behaved rationally in their pursuit of institutionalized cooperation to accomplish joint gains in external policy. “The general path of institutionalization in this domain can be explained as a rational way for EU states to intensify their cooperation without delegating more authority to EC organizations (the supranational solution) or to the most powerful EU member states (the intergovernmental solution)” (Smith 2004b:99). While the EU has been regarded as a protective mechanism for nation-states against external security threats, national sovereignty has principally remained above EU prerogatives (i.e. member states protect their sovereignty with the formal opt-outs). Nevertheless, every progress can be considered as a “reflection of the extraordinary nature of this relative pooling of sovereignty in the security field” (Howorth 2013). As elaborated in the official website of the EU, “the countries that make up the EU (its ‘member states’) remain independent sovereign nations but they pool their sovereignty in order to gain a strength and world

⁴² Grieco(1988) has coined the term “defensive positionalists” in which he claims states are more concerned about security rather than power. This is why they are *defensive*. They first calculate their gains and losses in relative to others’, and that is why they are *positionalists*.

⁴³ Note that cooperation rather than integration is regarded as the prevailing rationale in the area of external affairs of the EU.

influence none of them could have on their own” (Europa, 2016). In that sense, under the impact of the regional and international system, foreign policy cooperation has been considered to be beneficial for every member state in the sub-system of Europe, without any limiting conditions or restrictions of sovereignty. Subsequently, in an era of allegedly “post-sovereign” engagement of European states, further integration in political unity has developed over central institutions where they exercise their own authorities mutually⁴⁴. Given this background, the most prominent events in the structural and legal development of foreign, security and defense policies in the Cold War period are examined further below.

Earlier efforts to cooperate were initially made in 1947 by the Treaty of Dunkirk, a Treaty of “Alliance and Mutual Assistance” as a first step in establishing a defense framework for Europe between France and the UK against Germany which was a military power that time. As the Treaty was the first initiative taken on foreign policy, it can be said that European integration actually started in the defense realm. Later, the Brussels Treaty (amended in 1954) was signed in 1948 for a commitment of mutual defense. Following the failure of the European Defense Community (EDC) in 1950, which aimed at the formation of a European army, the establishment of a new defensive alliance –namely the Western European Union (WEU) originated from the 1948 Brussels Treaty– provided a basis for the creation of European defence and security policy. With no military function, WEU operated in coordination with North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) for the discussion of security matters amongst European states.

⁴⁴ Yet, it is important to keep in mind that the unique structure of integration in Europe of 1950s and later periods meant a different kind of sovereignty compared to Westphalian sovereignty (the doctrine named after the Peace of Westphalia signed in 1648). While Westphalian sovereignty was connected to territorial integrity of nation-states and national independence, European sovereignty meant sharing some part of national sovereignty with the institutions of the EU. States needed to take global concerns into account which is why they have become a part of international community. With the trends of globalization, interdependence, and regional integration, the power of sovereign states and self-sufficiency weakened. For further reading on sovereign or post-sovereign Europe, see, for example: Stephen Haseler, *Is the Nation-State Over? European Integration and the Issue of Sovereignty*, *World Affairs*, Vol. 155.(1992); Hadii M. Mamudu and Donley T. Studlar, “Multilevel Governance and Shared Sovereignty: European Union, Member States, and the FCTC.” *Governance: An International Journal of Policy, Administration, and Institutions*, Vol. 22: 1; pp. 73–97 (January 2009). Michael Keating, “Plurinational Democracy in a Post-Sovereign Order*”, *Queen’s Papers on Europeanisation*, No 1, (2002). Stephen D. Krasner, “Who Gets a State, and Why? The Relative Rules of Sovereignty”, *Foreign Affairs* (2009), Retrieved from <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/64872/stephen-d-krasner/who-gets-a-state-and-why>

After 1970s, a gradual change in policy adaptation on certain foreign/security/defence matters has facilitated a more institutionalized policy-making system driven by the desire of the EU to project its power more on the international scene. Following the Luxembourg Report of 1970, the European Political Cooperation (EPC) was introduced on an intergovernmental basis as the first decisive step towards a political unification, which long after formalized with the Single European Act came into force in 1987. Remarkably, EPC only involved foreign policy consultation among member states and did not include security or defense related issues as were matters of national sovereignty. “It emerged as a response to the perceived need for common approaches to milieu-shaping, and provided a forum for limited policy coordination towards the Middle East, the CSCE and the UN” (Hyde-Price 2007:109). The EPC, in that sense, was thoroughly manifested as a ‘civilian power’⁴⁵. Nevertheless, while it provided a common ground during the first years, it did not reach a pivotal role in important foreign policy matters like the crises took place in the Middle East between Israel and the Arab Community and the subsequent events –the October War and the following oil embargo.⁴⁶ It was after a long time when it “gained ground from 1999 and were further accentuated from 2003 with the start of the civilian and military crisis management operations” (Regelsberger 2007:24).

Given the above, history has shown that integrated more and more deeply since the 1970s onwards, Europe’s ascent onto the world stage considerably changed most especially after the 1990s’ global power redistribution. After the Bosnian conflict, 1999 Kosovo crisis was a turning point that revealed the military weakness of Europe as well as the “military gap” in comparison with the US. Consequently, the climate of the security challenges of the 1990s stimulated an interest in adopting the notion of ‘military power Europe’ linked to new threats facing the EU, its neighbors and the wider world. As Whitman (1998:135-136) suggests, with TEU, “the Union had signaled the intent of the Member States of the Union to move beyond a civilian power Europe

⁴⁵ See: F. Duchêne, “Europe's Role in World Peace,” in *Europe Tomorrow: Sixteen Europeans Look Ahead*, edited by R. Mayne (London: Collins, 1972), pp. 32-47.

⁴⁶ Smith notes that “While EU states could discuss defense policy in the NATO framework, they took only two notable multilateral foreign policy actions between the 1957 Rome Treaty and the creation of EPC in 1971— the imposition of economic sanctions against Rhodesia (1965) and Greece (1967). Actions grew to slightly less than 20 during the first decade of EPC, then expanded to 50 during its second decade to well over 100 during the 1990s” (2004).

and to develop a defence dimension to the international identity of the Union”. Accordingly, the development of conflict prevention and crisis management mechanisms were raised in the TEU as well as in the European Security Strategy (ESS 2003), as outlined further in the thesis. At that point, a brief look at the academic work and the discussions regarding various characterizations of the EU’s global presence over the years will help portray and enlighten a general view of the EU as an international actor so as to be able to further analyze how it exercises its power in its relationship with its south. This will also help understand how the EU legitimizes its political interests explainable by defensive neorealist propositions.

Numerous studies have examined the EU’s global role in order to characterize its distinctive identity on the world stage by relating it to the concept of *power* over different terms and arguments (i.e. civilian, civilizing, military, normative, etc.). Since François Duchene’s 1972 definition of “civilian power Europe”, the role representations of the EU have been argued and developed further. After the 1980s, some argued that the EU is no longer or merely a civilian power while some argued that the EU finds itself between the two types of civilian and military power, in that, it can utilize both military and soft means in its external relations. Alternatively, the notion of “normative power Europe” was termed by Ian Manners (2002) based on the EU’s hybrid character on a particular political system that is able to shape the norms in the world through non-military means and reflect its own values in its international relations. Richard Rosecrance further argued that “Europe’s attainment is normative rather than empirical [...]. It is perhaps a paradox to note that the continent which once ruled the world through the physical impositions of imperialism is now coming to set world standards in normative terms” (1998:22).

Christopher Hill, as a key advocate of the notion of “civilian power Europe”, stressed that it provides the best explanation of the EU’s role (1990) whereas Hedley Bull, a sceptic of the concept, referred to it as a “contradiction in terms” as he believes that under European free-riding on the US security guarantee and NATO for decades, “the power of influence exerted by the European Community and other such civilian actors was conditional upon a strategic environment provided by the military power of states, which they did not control” (1982:151). He pointed out that the EU should

enhance the development of its defence capabilities in order to be a military power (1982:152). Hanns Maull (1990/91) made an important contribution on this issue suggesting that military means could be used to safeguard civilian ends. Other views like those of Hanns Maull have been grounded on the idea of the compatibility of the civilian power and military means. At the beginning of this century, Stelios Stavridis (2001:43-44) contended that military means can be required at times to defend civilian values. In the same vein, Henrik Larsen (2002; 292) signified the EU of the 1990s – since the inception and further development of CFSP/CSDP– a turning point for militarization proposing that “military means are embedded in a civilian power context”. Maull (2005:781) argued, a civilian actor can use military force collectively with international legitimacy in quest of ‘civilizing’ international relations. Karen Smith first alleged that efforts in developing military and defence dimensions of the EU signal the end of the Union as a civilian power (2000:15), and subsequently reached the conclusion that civilian power Europe henceforth became “dead” (2005:76).

As the above analysis indicates, there is no clear break within the civilian and military power discourse of the EU. Although each approach has brought diverse interpretations and additional contributions to the EU’s international role over different time periods, there is still “considerable fuzziness in the literature over where to draw the line between civilian and military power” (Smith 2005:1). On the one hand, the developments of the 1990s in the defence field and the new provisions that the Treaty of Lisbon introduced in 2009 strengthened the EU’s ability on military and defence capabilities. On the other hand, there are limitations to identify the EU as a complete and credible military power on the international stage since the notion has its own share of reservations (i.e. the dilemma of the EU’s supranational entity and the subjection to US and NATO pre-eminence in the security field or the so-called ‘protective umbrella’). It cannot be disregarded that the EU has actually started to enjoy more self-confidence towards further political and institutional integration over the time, it should be stressed, however, that in an environment where European member states were aware of that they rely on the US and NATO for their own security, European defense cooperation stayed limited to take effective actions. So, it can be said, just because the Union has attempted to develop military capabilities does not make it a military actor internationally, not even “without traditional military and political power to back up that role” (Mastanduno

and Kapstein 1999). After all, the EU has given little consideration to high politics since its inception, and that is why it has long been regarded as a ‘political dwarf’ concerning to its international role despite referred to as an “economic giant” due to its rapid achievement as an economic power in global economy.

In the meantime, the new world order increasingly created the necessity for the Union to develop better foreign policy instruments in its relationship with the third countries like coercive diplomacy (in other words, carrots and sticks) rather than only persuasion and negotiation⁴⁷. As a result, a serious military capacity became very important for the EU to undertake the responsibilities of the new crisis management tasks of the post-Cold War environment (Howorth 2007:98). The Union aimed at developing a broad defense capability, and strengthen its military capabilities in order to give its foreign policy a security dimension (Smith 2000). Upon this objective in achieving a common defence (policy), a legal basis was clearly framed by the TEU and declared in Article J.4 (1) of the 1992 version of the Treaty: “the common foreign and security policy shall include all questions related to the security of the Union, including the eventual framing of a common defence policy, which might in time lead to a common defence”.

Various efforts have then been carried out for deeper integration in foreign and security policy to improve the EU’s role as an international actor. In a nutshell, the decade of the 1990s is regarded as a major breakpoint in the EU’s new foreign policy arrangements. That is also why it is mainly considered by defensive neorealists that the prospects for a “Back to the Future” scenario for post-Cold War Europe have declined. Waltz, instead, appears to have assumed a positive effect on supranationalism contrary to the predictions of Mearsheimer. He holds an evolutionary explanation concerning the transformation of supranational organizations into the international system by arguing that “supranational agents able to act effectively, however, either themselves acquire some of the attributes and capabilities of states [...] or they soon reveal their inability to

⁴⁷ Schelling (1966) identified coercion as the “diplomacy of violence” to affect the cost-benefit calculations of the opponent, which he compared and contrasted with ‘brute force’ strategy. Similarly, Hyde-Price (2004:17) describes coercion as “*the use of threats of force, or the limited use of force with the threat of further escalation, to change the decision-making calculus of the target actor*” (italics in original). In the civilian power model, the EU mostly preferred to rely on persuasion and negotiation rather than coercion in its relationship with the third countries to resolve conflicts.

act in important ways [...] (1979:88). Indeed, resolute steps towards European foreign policy cooperation have been taken even further and yet, CFSP was first proposed when the role of the EU in the new world order also came to the agenda within the concept of “the end of history” (Fukuyama 1989, 1992). In 2007, Fukuyama remarks, in the *Guardian*, that “the European Union more accurately reflects what the world will look like at the end of history” because of its “attempt to transcend sovereignty and traditional power politics by establishing a transnational rule of law is much more in line with a "post-historical" world” (Fukuyama 2007).

Conceived this way, it can be contended that the development of CFSP/CSDP demonstrates an event-driven and contingent progress traceable over the course of history. Jervis (1991-1992:45) brings forth Stephan Jay Gould’s *Time’s Arrow, Time’s Cycle* (1987) to differentiate, “the ways”, after the Cold War, “in which international history resembles a cycle or an arrow”. Jervis (1991-1992:46) claims that time’s arrow is at work in the developed world since it is hard to predict future conflicts, such as one involving the US and the EU. Considering the structural constraints of the Cold War that neorealism emphasizes on anarchy and security dilemma, historical generalization (in other words, *cyclical thinking*) indicates a reversion to old patterns, which appear to have remained relatively constant for most neorealists. However, as the post-Cold War era evolves, defensive neorealists would predict that European integration fits easily into the *time’s arrow* category. This may well be the case especially during the revolutionary changes over time both in economic and political realms of the EU. As Jervis (1991-92:47) claims, “specific events sometimes send history into a different path” and “these changes in the developed world are so deep, powerful, and interlocked that they cannot readily be reversed by any foreseeable event”. Accordingly, the constant processes of the redefinition of EU borders (with each successive enlargement), where Bigo (2001:112) defines “the external of today is the internal of tomorrow” obviously indicates that continuous progress is accelerating the political integration processes of Europe. In addition, every Treaty has reformulated the CFSP/CSDP. Over the time, Europe’s developing foreign policy cooperation with some military capacity, along with the economic and monetary union, has consolidated its stance in that area, like it changed the state of affairs by turning EPC into CFSP/CSDP.

Above considerations place Europe's integration in defense and foreign policy in a broader context, and raise the question on why and how the Union has transformed European political scene and prepared itself to strengthen its foreign policy establishment in the post-Cold War era as read by defensive neorealism. An understanding of these questions, in the next section, will enable to better analyze how the evolution of European foreign policy under certain structural conditions has influenced its attitude towards the Southern Mediterranean.

1.4.2. Post-Cold War European Security Order into the Realm of Defensive Neorealism

The 1990s was an important decade in the EU's foreign policy and security arrangements. Dyson (2013:387) points out that "neorealism has been applied extensively to explain the rise of post-Cold War defense cooperation under the auspices of the EU". In that sense, an analysis of the breakthrough in European foreign policy coordination, since the beginning of the 1990s, is crucial to evaluate European behavior in North Africa and to determine its response to the challenges of the Arab Spring in the next chapter. Following a brief account of the EU's first construction of security and defence architecture within the Cold War circumstances in the first part, this part aims to answer the question on the evolution of European security behavior under the new world order of the post-Cold War era in a defensive neorealist viewpoint: What are the main drivers that shape European foreign policy over the past few decades? Theoretically, the question will exclusively be examined in the light of balance of power and balance of threat variants of defensive neorealism. The answer will give hints of the EU's determination in its relations to its southern periphery.

Specifically, the external incentives and the pressure of the new international system contributed to European states' cooperative efforts in the emergence of a foreign policy in a more uncertain world as defensive neorealism would assume. In that, the EU has consistently drawn a defensive orientation in developing its own declaratory defence, foreign and security policies within the new emerging global order. With the systemic shift of balance of power from bipolar to unipolar order after 1990s, the EU has started to experience new security concerns, both internal and external –including

the spheres of illegal migration, terrorism, organized crime, and trade/market liberalization (with the stimulus of the Single Market)– in the circumstances of the post-Cold War era. This unipolar systemic structure under de facto control of the US ultimately led the EU to develop in the domains of ‘high politics’ with greater *autonomy*. In a systemically anarchic environment, European powers have acted together and balanced against others confirming aforesaid time’s arrow conception of neorealism. Regesberger (2007:2) explains that following the fall of communism in 1990, “the creation of the Single Market, German unification and political changes in Eastern Europe” caused the creation of CFSP in the late 1980s. In particular, the prospects for a united Germany and Russia’s transition to democracy became the principal concerns of Europe, eventually changing perception from threat to security. As a result, former patterns of intra-Europe balance were elevated on to a deeper and higher level of foreign policy cooperation. As argued by Vasconcelos (2002:4), “the post-Cold War strategic thinking [...] has evolved from the pre-eminence of territorial defence to the predominance of security interests”. Empirically, four factors –1991/95 Balkan Wars, US determination to expand NATO eastward, 1999 Kosovo crisis during 1998 and 1999, and growing US unilateralism– have shaped the new era of EU foreign and security policy cooperation.

As the 1990s progressed, the Union has made momentous efforts in the political area steadily gaining impetus. Smith (2004b:99) puts forward that “although EU foreign policy was established along strict intergovernmental lines on the basis of a grand bargain, it has become far more institutionalized (i.e. rulegoverned) than its architects had intended or even expected”. In due course, the Treaty of European Union (TEU), agreed at Maastricht in December 1991 (signed February 1992 and finally entered into force on 1 November 1993) “proudly claimed” the creation of the CFSP (Zielonka 1998:2). Moreover, the institutional deepening of the EU’s 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam laid out the foundation for deeper integration in the security and defense realms as well as future waves of enlargement. The Treaty included Petersberg tasks⁴⁸ within the scope

⁴⁸ The Petersberg tasks were first formulated by the Western European Union (WEU) in 1992 and then incorporated in the Treaty on European Union. The tasks covered humanitarian and rescue tasks; peace-keeping tasks; tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking. Note that 2009 Treaty of Lisbon (TEU Art. 42) further expanded these tasks to include: humanitarian and rescue tasks; conflict prevention and peace-keeping tasks; tasks of combat forces in crisis management,

of CFSP to operate against European security threats (for example, former Yugoslavia). Nevertheless, in order to carry out these tasks the EU would “avail itself of the WEU to elaborate and implement decisions and actions of the Union which have defence implications”. That is to say, although Amsterdam Treaty had more impact on the security front, it marked less significant impact in the defence realm by restating the institutional primacy of NATO in the defence field, reinforced in Article 17 (ex Article J.7) of the Treaty: “The policy of the Union in accordance with this Article shall not prejudice the specific character of the security and defence policy of certain Member States and shall respect the obligations of certain Member States, which see their common defence realized in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), under the North Atlantic Treaty and be compatible with the common security and defence policy established within that framework”. As such, Amsterdam Treaty reaffirmed the continuing importance of NATO to the defence of Europe and emphasized strengthening the evolving NATO-WEU-EU relationship. Certainly, contrary to realist expectations that NATO would weaken in the post-Cold war environment, the alliance turned out to be an important element of US hegemony in Europe (Posen 2004:9). As a matter of fact, although the Union wanted to go beyond just being a regional power, its limited tools for responding to the crises in Balkans and Kosovo revealed its weakness and inability of an international role that stimulated a reconsideration of its security needs. “That until 1999, joint European foreign, security and defense policy was not represented by a single authority, and that the instruments to be employed were not all controlled by one entity has come at a terrible price, especially in ex-Yugoslavia” (Vallet 2014).

With the intention of improving the EU’s role as an international actor, various efforts have been carried out in foreign and security policy. The Union needed to strengthen its military capabilities and give its policy a security aspect. For this purpose, since 1999, the EU has enhanced its ability to act autonomously in these matters and gradually accelerated the process launched by the Petersberg tasks. In the aftermath of the Kosovo War, the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) was set forth

including peacemaking; joint disarmament operations; military advice and assistance tasks; post-conflict stabilisation tasks. See: The Treaty of Amsterdam, <http://www.eurotreaties.com/amsterdamtreaty.pdf>

within the overall framework of CFSP in 1999 Cologne European Council. Helsinki European Council, the same year, set a 'headline goal' of up to 60.000 troops to deploy within 60 days by 2003. Although it was widely discussed that the Union finally became a "military actor" with the adoption of the so-called Petersberg Tasks (Treacher 2004:49), the heads of state or government at the Helsinki Summit emphasized that the processes did not imply the creation of a *European army*. As the former NATO Secretary General and EU's High Representative Javier Solana stated in a speech (Council of the European Union 2000):

The Union already has considerable influence in the commercial, economic and financial fields, and is the world's largest provider of humanitarian aid and development cooperation. But recently we have begun to take measures to build up an effective Common Foreign Security and Defence Policy, in order to place the full range of humanitarian, diplomatic and military means at the disposal of the EU's own crisis management structures...The military tasks to be performed are what we call the "Petersberg tasks": peacekeeping, humanitarian operations. We are not talking about collective defence. *Of course, NATO remains the organisation responsible for collective defence of its members. Nor are we talking about building a European army, or "militarising" the European Union.* But we cannot continue to publicly espouse values and principles while then calling on others to defend them, when the occasion arises. In the final analysis, as a last resort, after all possible instruments had been tried; the Union has to have the capacity to back up its policies by the use of military means. (emphasis added)

With the imbalance in the distribution of capabilities among major powers in the new era, the EU has made attempts to respond to the new international environment. Howorth (2007:52-57) pinpoints the driving rationale behind the launch of ESDP by four central reasons rest upon the "exogenous factors" in parallel to a defensive line of reasoning: (1) a decreasing level of US interest in Europe followed by the end of the Cold War, (2) the necessity of the EU to become a part of the 'international community' after the start of the 'new world order' to stabilize other regions as well as its own periphery, (3) the severe experience of the Balkan crises and (4) the enthusiasm to develop military capacity as well as strengthen defence industry. From another

perspective, Hyde-Price (2006:226) posits that the end of bipolarity had some consequences for the EU: first, German unification became one of the impulses behind the Maastricht Treaty on European Union (TEU); second, TEU motivated the Union on the completion of the economic agenda of the 1980's in its rivalry with the US and Japan; third and last, the EU had a new role of providing stability in Central and Eastern European countries.

It is important, at that point, to highlight that the EU's foreign policy actions cannot be detached from the transatlantic context including NATO-EU relations. A vast majority of the literature dealing with neorealist explanations on post-Cold War European foreign policy has emphasized various theories on whether Europe tends ultimately to adopt "balance of power" strategy against US hegemony and/or "balance of threat" strategy against disengagement and entrapment by the US within its geopolitical neighborhood as America still has the role of Europe's primary security guarantor.

With regard to balancing strategy, many scholars stress that when the US as the evident international power engaging in the struggle for global authority turned out to be the key player in wider Europe, the EU wanted to interfere to rival the US and balance its influence by formalizing an independent foreign policy. In this manner, for example, when MENA region has become the arena where the US has become the dominant actor, the EU desired to counterbalance the primary and active role that the US has endeavored in the region in order to be perceived as an international actor. After the Balkan crises that dominated the entire decade of the 1990s, this desire was further reinforced by growing faster from 15 to 27 countries in the following decade coupled with subsequent treaty revisions made in order to operate more effectively and functionally in international affairs. In that context, the emergence of ESDP and the following initiatives, from balance of power perspective, is mostly considered an attempt of the EU to balance against US unilateralism and hegemony in a unipolar international system (Art 2004; Pape 2005; Posen 2004; Walt 2005). As such, all balancing variations of European foreign policy must be explained from different causal factors that brought about changes in EU behavior from the post-Cold War to the post-9/11 era, as elaborated below.

First of all, it is worth noting that European defence and security integration was initially driven by Anglo-French aspirations from which the ESDP emerged as a new political project that grew incrementally by the period starting in December 1998 with the Franco-British Summit in Saint-Malo ultimately creating a combined “autonomous” European defence capability. Gegout (2002) believes that the decisions of the UK and France were relevant in the security and defence field as they “possess nuclear weapons, are part of the UN Security Council and are the world’s number two and three biggest military powers”. In this context, it is worth mentioning that the Summit constitutes a critical date for the unification of the division between the “Atlanticist” (member state in favor of NATO security and defence policy for Europe) and the “Europeanist” (member state in favor of European security and defence policy for Europe).

Moreover, Saint-Malo was the turning point for the Union concerning militarizing. The Summit Declaration by France and the UK clearly states that “the Union must have the capacity for autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces, the means to decide to use them, and a readiness to do so, in order to respond to international crises” (Joint Declaration on European Defense 1998). As is evident within a neorealist approach, powerful European actors have wielded considerable influence on the EU’s approach to security and defense issues as well as the future ESDP-NATO relations. This then leads to the question: What are the primary motives of these two pivotal member states to promote an “autonomous” European defense and military capability that is linked to NATO?

From a theoretical perspective, it could be suggested that relative gains considerations of the most powerful members within the EU regional sub-system have affected inter-state bargaining processes across European member states towards an emerging ESDP within NATO’s European pillar. Within the context of the evolution of ESDP, the attitude of the UK, as the most Atlanticist member of the Union (due to its close historical relationship with the US), was largely considered to be based on its strategy of acting as a bridge between the EU and the US. It has mainly aimed at: (1) playing an important role in defense and security field –another important area other than economy of the Euro-zone in which the UK does not have a role because it

preferred not to be a part of it, (2) preserving NATO's primary position in European security, (3) enhancing Europe's influence within the Alliance, and (4) increasing the military capabilities available in Europe in order to overcome new security threats regionally and globally, rather than describing the ESDP within an equal competing and complementing framework with NATO (Art 2004, Howorth 2007).

France, as the most "Europeanist" however, had different objectives than those of the UK. On one hand, European defense and security integration for France was "a long-term strategy to embed Germany in an international security institution and promote peace in Europe" (Jones 2003:115). On the other hand, the French essentially desired to have a greater say in the world affairs since the time of General de Gaulle. In that manner, the country withdrew its armed forces from NATO's integrated military command structure in 1966 so that it would assert its own military autonomy and influence internationally. Moreover, ever since the country proposed the EDC in 1950, it has coveted an independent European military and defense structure, arguably with no ties to NATO. In this respect, it is largely discussed that the rapid development of ESDP, for France, would help act as a counterweight to the growing US military superiority and influence in the Alliance as well as increase the Union's standing in NATO. For example, "Operation Artemis" –the very first autonomous EU-led peacekeeping military mission outside Europe which was executed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo just a few months after the beginning of the Iraq war in 2003– was considerably supported by the troops and aircraft of France as the leading nation. In this specific case, consistent with defensive neorealist theory, it is argued that France aimed at using the EU as an instrument of its national foreign policy, hence with operation Artemis, it "wanted the EU to balance the USA" and "prove the capacity of the EU to act without the USA" (Gegout 2005: 437-8). On the contrary, others argue that in the climate of the post-Cold War, especially after NATO's intervention in Bosnia, France believed that the emergence of ESDP in partnership with NATO would become a "mutually reinforcing" instrument for regional and global security, instead of a scheme allegedly designed to "weaken" the Alliance (Howorth 2007:44). In Art's words, "for all parties, including the French, ESDP was meant to supplement NATO, not supplant it" (2004:197). The very fact that "France has played a key role in all NATO's military operations since the end of Cold War" (Howorth 2007:45) seems to

support this last contention. As seen therein, it could be said; France had finally come to the realization of the high-level necessity for a greater French role in NATO's military structures and accordingly took some initial steps through the end of the 1990s although these efforts stayed limited. Finally, in 2009, after more than four decades, France announced its full reintegration in the military structures of NATO with the intention to increase its influence in NATO as well as to enhance European security and defence policy through cooperation with the US⁴⁹.

To this end, it is possible to say that over time the international environment of the post-Cold War, consistent with the fundamental neorealist proposition of anarchy, has changed the behavior of European powers, and Europe in general, from free-riding on the US towards a restructured and burden-sharing approach in which the balance of the relationship has also shifted constantly. In this context, it is considered that ESDP – as rather a premature project then– was Europe's early signs of balancing behavior, despite there has been no perceived military threat from the US side. In Posen's words (2006).

[] the EU is preparing itself to manage autonomously security problems on Europe's periphery and to have a voice in the settlement of more distant security issues, should they prove of interest. It is doing so because Europeans do not trust the United States to always be there to address these problems and because many Europeans do not like the way the United States addresses these problems. They want another option, and they realize that military power is necessary to have such an option. The EU is balancing U.S. power, regardless of the relatively low European perception of an actual direct and imminent threat emanating from the United States (Posen 2006:150).

Significant modifications in the EU's position and counterbalance efforts were largely made after 9/11 as a response to the new era of unilateral US foreign policy as well as to the arrival of the new world order posing immediate security threats in a

⁴⁹ For a broader overview of the explanations for the evolution of ESDP including the aspirations of France and the UK, also see: Barry Posen, "ESDP and the Structure of World Power", *The International Spectator*, Vol. 39 No.1, (2004), pp.12-15, and Philip H. Gordon, "French Security Policy After the Cold War: Continuity, Change, and Implications for the United States" (Santa Monica CA: RAND, 1992).

broader sense. These threats have eventually changed the EU's existing vision of security understanding and behavior beyond its borders, too. As Waltz significantly asserted a decade after the fall of the Berlin Wall "balancing tendencies [were] already taking place" (2000:27). Certainly, this was the case for transatlantic relations. So, from the balancing perspective, what kind of tendencies has structural imperatives of the new international system fostered in the EU's foreign, security and defense policies? And, how has the EU developed arguably much stronger security and defense cooperation in the upcoming periods than it had in the past?

Since 1998, "ESDP began to crystallize with increasing speed" (Selden 2010:410). At the outset, some progress to shape ESDP took place immediately after Saint-Malo through a series of further EU Council meetings and summits in the pursuit of the design of a more *independent* European defense capacity⁵⁰. First, it was decided, in June 1999 Cologne Council that WEU's capabilities would eventually transferred to the EU (European Council 1999a). Second, in December 1999 Helsinki Summit, the 'Headline Goal' of the ESDP was developed to enhance military and civilian capabilities (European Council 1999b). Finally, in June 2000 Feira EU Summit, non-military mechanisms of crisis management were decided to be developed (European Council 2000a). With these, it could be argued that the EU has obtained a security objective. As a matter of fact, it is the fundamental extracts from the key official documents that this could be found⁵¹. Yet, all these assertions were culminated in the

⁵⁰ Note that although there were some initial reactions and discussions on the hierarchical roles and decision-making processes between NATO and ESDP structures after Saint-Malo (e.g. Madeleine Albright's famous December 1998 '3-Ds' article asserting that the EU should avoid duplication, decoupling, and discrimination), NATO eventually recognized the necessity of Europe's contribution regarding further developments in security and defense issues in an era of global geopolitical change.

⁵¹ "The European Union needs to be in a position to play its full role on the international stage" (Saint-Malo Declaration, 1998), "To this end, the Union must have the capacity for autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces, the means to decide to use them, and a readiness to do so, in order to respond to international crises without prejudice to actions by NATO. The EU will thereby increase its ability to contribute to international peace and security in accordance with the principles of the UN charter" (Cologne European Council 1999), "The European Union underlines its determination to develop an autonomous capacity to take decisions and, where NATO as a whole is not engaged, to launch and conduct EU led military operations in response to international crises" (Helsinki European Council 1999), "[...] The Union will improve and make more effective use of resources in civilian crisis management in which the Union and the Member States already have considerable experience" (Helsinki European Council 1999), "All these measures will be taken in support of the Common Foreign and Security Policy and they will reinforce and extend the Union's comprehensive external role. With the enhancement and concertation of military and crisis response tools, the Union will be able to resort to the whole range of instruments from diplomatic activity,

Nice Treaty Presidency Report signed in 2001 and came into force on 1 February 2003 on the European Security and Defense Policy, as below:

The aim of the efforts made since the Cologne, Helsinki, and Feira European Councils is to give the European Union the means of playing its role fully on the international stage and of assuming its responsibilities in the face of crises by adding to the range of instruments already at its disposal an autonomous capacity to take decisions and action in the security and defense field. (European Council 2000b).

Apart from these, the EU, in order to play a more active role on the global stage, introduced the Battle Groups concept, and adopted a new Headline Goal for the ESDP in the years 2004-2007. Since 2003, the EU's civilian and military crisis management troops have been deployed in several parts of the world. The Union established European Defence Agency (EDA, the Agency) within the ESDP framework, under Art. 2(1) of EDA Joint Action of the Council of Ministers, with a mission "to support the Member States and the Council in their effort to improve European defence capabilities in the field of crisis management and to sustain the European Security and Defence Policy as it stands now and develops in the future" (European Council 2004:1). The Agency was expected to coordinate existing armament bodies involved in European armaments cooperation, such as the Organisation Conjointe de Coopération en matière d'armement-OCCAR, Western European Armaments Organization-WEAO and Western European Armaments Group-WEAG. But more remarkably, previous failure of the efforts to coordinate procurement and armaments cooperation and the increasing need to link capabilities to armaments production through the ESDP were the main reasons for EDA's launch (Howorth, 2007: 109-111). So, EDA, it should be said, was intended to become a tool for effective defense cooperation.

Following the declaration of US National Security Strategy (NSS) of 2002 to 'fight against terrorism' after the events of 9/11, the EU, too, declared its first joint European Security Strategy (ESS) 'A Secure Europe in a Better World' in 2003 (updated in 2008) as a critical evaluation instrument for all the EU's external actions,

humanitarian assistance and economic measures to civilian policing and military crisis management operations" (Helsinki European Council 1999).

including military objectives⁵². Simply put, US-led military operation in Iraq triggered the development of a common European strategy emanated from the structural pressures in the continent's periphery.

However, contrary to the tendency of NSS to stress unilateralism and hard power, ESS is best known for the EU's support for an international order based on crisis management and conflict prevention through *effective multilateralism*, as a soft power tool, which is also reflective of the EU's security culture and identity guided by defensive neorealism. As Bandeoglu (2014:86) points out, the ESS associates with common threats “with ‘state failure’ stemming from bad governance, corruption, abuse of power, weak institutions, lack of accountability, and civil conflict, and by underlining the ‘structural causes’, it offers a more comprehensive solution to these challenges as an extension of its traditional culture of ‘conflict prevention’ and ‘crisis management’ within the contexts of ‘multilateral and multidimensional activism’, combining political, economic, and military aspects, whereas in the US NSS, the solutions to these threats have been overshadowed by references to ‘rogue states’, ‘military power’, and the right of the US to ‘act unilaterally’ under a concept of ‘pre-emption’”. Then, one might expect that “multilateral management is more likely to be ‘defensive’, that is, a status-quo oriented” (Miller 2012:353). This is because, multilateral mechanisms which impose certain constraints on the freedom of action have the tendency of being defensive through maximizing security by protecting the current status-quo, instead of maximizing power by adopting a revisionist strategy aiming at changing the status-quo (Miller 2012:352). Therefore, the EU's memberships/initiatives through international institutions or organizations can be read as part of its inclination and self-restraint to be constrained by others, demonstrating the hallmark of defensive neorealism. The multilateral cooperation frameworks of the EU through engagement with strategic alliances/coalitions or international/regional mechanisms, such as European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) that coincided with the launch of ESS in 2003 aimed at the realization of the objectives of the Strategy Paper, illustrates further codification of the

⁵² ESS declares that “as a Union of 25 states with over 450 million people producing a quarter of the world's Gross National Product (GNP), the European Union is inevitably a global player [...] it should be ready to share in the responsibility for global security and in building a better world” (European Security Strategy 2003:1). See: “A Secure Europe in a Better World—European Security Strategy,” Brussels, December 12, 2003, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/30823/qc7809568enc.pdf>

Union's protection of the status-quo within a defensive neorealist approach. For the given example, it is important to note that ENP, created in anticipation of the EU's biggest 2004 enlargement, is the first effective foreign policy tool of the Union designed to handle its relations with the neighboring countries as well as to extend the zone of security and stability in its periphery. So, it is argued that "the security rationale for the ENP is further mirrored in the ESS" since they were organized as "interrelated initiatives" under the single agenda of effective multilateralism (Magen 2006:383). In that sense, the concurrent developments of ESS and ENP in 2003 are seen as multiple tools of the EU based upon ambitious 'defensive' attempts to enhance its security and survival aims through cooperation.

ESS is based on five security threats concerning terrorism, regional conflicts, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, state failure and organized crime (European Union 2008: 3-6)⁵³. And, it was no surprise that these declared threats in ESS are similar to those identified in NSS of the US as both sides of the Atlantic have had the same threat perceptions (Haine 2008:22). Yet, this similarity has been perceived, by Europeans, to be normal to the extent that ESS openly affirms; "the transatlantic relationship is irreplaceable" and "acting together, the European Union and the United States can be a formidable force for good in the world" (p.20). In that, the EU meant and hoped that they would act jointly for common challenges and tackle the pressing security threats together, most certainly in MENA region.

However, by 2003 US-led military intervention in Iraq, it came as quite a surprise for European states that US approach and foreign policy instruments to various threats, under President Bush, turned out to be substantially different than the approach of the EU. Three key structural factors explain the worries of Europe concerning US unilateralist turn in foreign policy. First, by the end of the "decade of Europe" (the 1990s), the concerns and interests of the EU became less of a priority to the US and changed its direction from Europe towards other regions by the start of the new

⁵³ The second ESS, drawn up in 2008, was also similar to the first one in which similar threats as those in 2003 Strategy Paper were reviewed and re-summarized with an implementation report within the context of ESDP. The Report (European Union 2008), adds piracy, cyber security, energy security, and climate change to the list. See: "Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy- Providing Security in a Changing World," from https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/reports/104630.pdf

millennium (Art 2004:201-202). In the 1990s, Europe was significant to the US in many ways. “Germany’s unification, Russia’s transformation, NATO’s enlargement, the Balkan wars were of central importance to the United States” during the 1990s (Art 2004:201). According to neorealists, following the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq; the prolonged turmoil in the wider MENA region which involves security threats such as terrorism and the use of WMD, the global financial crisis of 2007-2008, energy security, the economic and political rise of the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), etc. have all become some of the systemic pressures that propelled the US in this direction. So, in a sense, the war in Iraq showed Europeans that the US started to pay too little attention to their views in global political problems (Layne 2004:63). Relatedly and second, the enjoyment by the US of its ‘unipolar moment’ created an environment in which the Union started to feel concerns and uneasiness about abandonment and entrapment by the hegemon along with a gradual American disengagement from Europe (Dyson 2013:388). Especially since Kosovo War (1999) demonstrated European weak military capability, Europe has not only found itself dependent on American power and NATO, but also understood that the US might not be willing to get involved in the next European crisis (Art 2004:196). The withdrawal of 7000 US combat troops from Europe in 2012 represents an evident example of the diminishing importance of Europe for the US (BBC News 2012)⁵⁴. Moreover, a seemingly greater interest of the US in Asia-Pacific region, the so-called “Asia Pivot” (Campbell and Andrews 2013), signals a gradual military withdrawal of America from Europe and MENA, thereby intensify European worries. Under the circumstances, while other great powers, such as Russia and China in the forefront, have found a common ground in the context of an emerging alliance against US hegemony by supporting a multipolar world (Layne 2002:239), Europe has perhaps been the most dissatisfied with American unilateralism since the continent has long been dependent on US security umbrella to solve the crises on its periphery. Lastly and third, US unilateral foreign policy instruments and preemptive military actions in tackling terrorism in Iraq revealed not only transatlantic rifts in the perceptions of

⁵⁴ However, note that since 2014 invasion of Crimea and ongoing military pressure on Ukraine by an assertive Russia, the US has gradually been trying to strengthen its political influence across Eastern Europe to deter any acts of aggression on European territory by means of NATO’s military build-up toward Russia’s borders, such as the latest deployment of thousands of US troops in Poland in January, 2017 (Euractiv 2016; the Guardian 2017).

security between the EU and the US, but also wide divisions in the positions of European countries over US policy in Iraq at the EU-sublevel. European powers were split into two camps, once again determined by Franco-German axis and the UK (Gnesotto 2003)⁵⁵.

Taken together, from a theoretical perspective, Iraq War and its aftermath could be interpreted as a crucial reference point that has largely challenged the EU's defensive posture, since the issue of survival and security for the future has become much more important, both militarily and physiologically. As Robert Kagan's (2002) well-known characterization that "Americans are from Mars and Europeans are from Venus" debatably underpins, perhaps the source of the distinction between the EU and the US was not a direct result of 9/11, but rather of the military gap between the two. The EU has indeed recognized the critical implications of the pessimistic picture of the dominant hegemon, the US, under a unipolar international system, which encouraged it to become more determined to develop defensive capabilities, in spite of the fact that Europe was unlikely to be "a global competitor to America's military machine" (Art 2004:206). But perhaps, as argued by Wivel (2008:296), "the European states would need to considerably increase both defence spending and intra-European military cooperation were they to challenge US military pre-eminence". At this critical juncture, questions arise as to how did all this affect the forthcoming decisions of the EU in the security and defense sector in the following years, despite all the setbacks and damaging intra-EU splits over Iraq? And what were the responses of a threat-driven EU to the new security environment from a defensive neorealist viewpoint? The answers will also help better grasp the causes of the EU's foreign policy behavior in the 2010s within a theoretical lens.

After the gradual deterioration of the new security environment in Europe's periphery by the emergence of the unipolar international system that followed by a shift towards a multipolar stage, the responses of the Union to the new environment have gradually involved more responsibility for addressing stronger security and defense

⁵⁵ Along with the UK, Italy, Spain, Poland, Portugal, Denmark, the Netherlands, Ireland and most Central and Eastern European countries supported the invasion of Iraq in 2003, while others like France, Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg, Greece, Austria, Sweden and Finland opposed the war (Wivel 2008:295).

dimensions in the following decades. Through the post-9/11 era, the EU endeavored to shape its milieu and meet the demands of “a rapidly changing geopolitical environment characterized by an overall retreat of Western power globally, a weakening of America’s commitment to European security, an increasingly tumultuous European neighborhood, and Europe’s financial troubles” (Simon 2012:100).

Despite an increasingly unstable setting for the EU, European states found a common ground by reviewing and revising the foreign policy with the aim to develop the will and capacity for a distinctive European approach on security considerations in particular, and to increase the global role of the Union, in general. The Lisbon Treaty that came into force in 2010 –and renamed the ESDP to ‘Common Security and Defence Policy’ (CSDP)– brought changes in the area of CFSP and on ESDP to redesign the effectiveness and cohesion of the external policies of the EU as well as to give the Union a stronger and coherent voice in world affairs. In the Treaty, the field of security and defense has held the most important place as the aim was further increasing the defense and military capabilities of the EU to be a full spectrum security actor both in international conflicts and in the emerging security challenges within its geopolitical neighborhood –notwithstanding the existing status of the Union as a civilian power. As CSDP became an integral part of CFSP, a new fund was also provided for the CFSP operations. The aim in bringing about this change was to acquire an operational capacity in using military besides civilian means. In connection with this, the scope and range of the Petersberg Tasks, which form the most important part of CSDP and previously updated by the Headline Goal 2010, were extended by the Lisbon Treaty to include:

[] joint disarmament operations, humanitarian and rescue tasks, military advice and assistance tasks, conflict prevention and peace-keeping tasks, tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peace-making and post-conflict stabilization. All these tasks may contribute to the fight against terrorism, including by supporting third countries in combating terrorism in their territories.” (Article 42(1) of the Lisbon Treaty).

Here, new references to “joint disarmament operations”, “military advice and assistance tasks”, “post-conflict stabilization” and “the fight against terrorism” indicate

further development signifying a new step towards ‘common defense’ as well as an increase in the development of military capabilities of the EU. Yet, it should be noted that the new provisions brought by Lisbon do not change the intergovernmental tone of CFSP/CSDP because the Treaty has left the issue of military capabilities in the national hands as the responsibility and domain of EU member states, where decisions are still, by and large, taken by unanimity. In that sense, “the rebranding of the ESDP to CSDP and the change from ‘European’ to ‘Common’ Security and Defence Policy does not imply any alteration on the predominance of the state as the central actor in defence policy formulation and implementation” (Dyson and Konstadinides 2013). Once more, the neorealist proposition that states are the main units of the international system broadly supports this highly-intergovernmental nature of European policy. In that nation-state European powers always remain the key players in that field even after the establishment of the framework of a relatively autonomous CSDP for military actions.

Under Lisbon Treaty, security cooperation has been accelerated through the ‘mutual defense’ and ‘solidarity’ clauses. The mutual defense clause resembles a commitment on territorial defense and call members to assist and aid any other member under military/terrorist attack. Along the same vein, the solidarity clause calls the Union and its member states to act jointly if a member state was the target of a terrorist attack and to increase cooperation between national diplomatic missions with respect to the EU delegations (Duke, 2008). On this basis, it could be said that whereas “crisis management” was the main tool under ESDP, the EU’s engagement with security through the new mutual defense/solidarity clauses under CSDP stepped up to a new level after Lisbon Treaty.

In keeping with the propositions of defensive neorealism, all these developments mark the EU’s adoption of more power-projection capabilities to have greater influence over security issues around the continent and on the international arena. The rapid evolution of ESDP, and of its successor CSDP, towards ‘common defense’, albeit with a desire for NATO’s continuance in European security, may be considered to hold a dual approach within the logic of defensive neorealist theory: from both balance of power and balance of threat perspective. That said, one can expect that European security and defense policy in cooperation with NATO via CSDP represents both a

process of “soft balancing” behavior against the US to enhance the Union’s global role and cope with security problems, and of “bandwagoning” behavior for a balanced strategic partnership with the US, in that regard, as explained below.

From the balance of power perspective, ESDP/CSDP is broadly regarded as an instance of balancing behavior on the US power as mentioned in brief previously. Indeed, abovementioned defense and military integration mechanisms, plus many other significant changes and innovations brought about by the Lisbon Treaty –such as the new provision of Permanent Structured Cooperation in defense (PSC), the establishment of the European External Action Service (EEAS), the new posts including the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the extended version of the Petersberg Tasks⁵⁶– aimed at enhancing European security and defense competencies to close the so-called “capability gaps” with the US in order to counter Europe’s influence.

Alternatively, ESDP is termed as a “weak” form of balance-of-power behavior by Posen (2004:17). The debate then shifts to the question whether the EU is engaged in “soft-balancing” to counter US unilateralism (Pape 2005; Paul 2004, 2005; Walt 2005; Lieber and Alexander 2005; Brooks and Wohlforth 2005; Layne 2006; Posen 2006). Soft-balancing could be defined as an addition to balance of power theory, in which states do not directly or physically challenge a unipolar state’s military superiority; but rather undermine, complicate, frustrate or hinder its actions by means of nonmilitary tools like economic, diplomatic, and institutional methods to better influence its policies⁵⁷. As stated by Walt (2005:126), “soft balancing does not seek or expect to alter

⁵⁶ Under the introduction of the new EU legal personality, a new EU executive, Jose Manuel Barroso as the first European Commission president (replaced by Jean-Claude Juncker, since 1 November 2014), Herman Van Rompuy for the new post of ‘EU president’ (replaced by Donald Tusk, since 1 December 2014), and Baroness Catherine Ashton for the new position ‘the EU High Representative’ (replaced by Federica Mogherini, since 1 November 2014) were confirmed. Moreover, under Lisbon Treaty, PSC was designed to provide a platform for “those Member States whose military capabilities fulfil higher criteria and which have made more binding commitments to one another in this area with a view to the most demanding missions” (Art. 28A[6]). It is open to any member state that has political will to participate to a group of member state in order to have closer ‘structured cooperation’ for deeper defense integration.

⁵⁷ Paul (2004:3) elaborates on the term of soft balancing as follows: “Soft balancing involves tacit balancing short of formal alliances. It occurs when states generally develop ententes or limited security understandings with one another to balance a potentially threatening state or a rising power. Soft balancing is often based on a limited arms buildup, ad hoc cooperative exercises, or collaboration in regional or international institutions; these policies may be converted to open, hard-balancing

the overall distribution of capabilities”, rather, “a strategy of soft balancing accepts the current balance of power but seeks to obtain better outcomes within it”.

On this premise, many authors assert that “ESDP is not a response to a security threat posed by concentrated US power” but “it is partly a reaction to current and anticipated withdrawal of U.S. power from the security affairs of the region” (Art *et al.* 2005/2006:189). For the proponents of this approach, ESDP/CSDP is a form of soft-balancing “meant to enhance Europe’s influence within the NATO alliance; to enable Europe to act in those instances when the United States chose to sit out a European crisis that required military action, instances that the Europeans hoped would be rare; and to appear to do more burden sharing so as to keep US forces in Europe” (Art 2004:199). Moreover, the proponents of soft-balancing argue that the driving rationale beyond the EU’s motivation to emerge as an autonomous military actor lies largely in its aim at opposing the unilateral actions of US power through political and diplomatic means as well as the use of nonmilitary tools; not at, as discussed on occasion, establishing a European army, or a defense policy independent of NATO. In this vein, actions taken by some European countries’, in opposition to the U.S. military policies in Iraq War of 2003 under Bush administration, are theorized as soft-balancing by defensive neorealists. For example, Paul (2005:64-65) claims that intense diplomatic efforts of the opposing states in Europe, such as France and Germany, by threatening to veto any UN resolution that would have authorized the use of force of the US in Iraq could be labelled as soft-balancing. Moreover, according to him, “France and Germany also used NATO to engage in soft balancing against the United States by blocking U.S. attempts to gain the alliance’s involvement in the war” (2005:66).

Recent security strategy of the EU on foreign and security policy, by June 2016, could also be a significant example for soft-balancing. With the uncertainty of the twenty-first century magnified by the course of regional and global events around Europe over the past fifteen years or so, indeed “the changing environment was asking for a new strategy to replace the outdated 2003 European Security Strategy” (Zandee 2016:25). In fact, the EU’s external policy has always been limited to civilian aspects of

strategies if and when security competition becomes intense and the powerful state becomes threatening”.

security policy and narrow military instruments. It has been widely discussed that the Union increasingly needs to move from ‘only’ (soft) crisis management/conflict prevention functions towards a sense of defensive realpolitik “with the solidification of hard power as an integral aspect of European external policy” (Legrand 2012:11) so as to deal with the challenges of the contemporary global order. After all, by the revival of neorealist concept of balance of power in the new geopolitical era, the EU’s approach has still been limited to revolve around preserving the status-quo, yet with little impact on the global geopolitical agenda. According to Zandee (2016:25), simply two factors necessitated to update the European Security Strategy of 2003 towards a more global approach:

Firstly, the old distinction between the EU’s external crisis management and internal security activities has become outdated. Instability and conflicts in the Middle East and Africa (MENA) have a major impact on security inside Europe through spill-over effects such as migration, transnational crime and terrorism. Linking external and internal security policies and instruments is a necessity for countering these spill-over effects and at the same time for addressing their root causes outside Europe in a coherent manner []. Secondly, challenges to our security have become multi-dimensional or [] hybrid threats. The response to hybrid threats had to be hybrid as well. Simply strengthening military capacities — as important as it is — will not be enough. All available tools have to be brought together in a joined-up approach. As the EU, contrary to NATO, has a wide set of responsibilities across all government sectors, this requires a much wider strategy. At the same time, it has important consequences for the EU-NATO relationship, which needs to be adapted to the new security environment (Zandee 2016:25).

After all, many observers have argued that the issue of defence is the most “urgent” for Europe to discuss, since the continent has been ever more prone to instability in its neighborhood. It was even argued that the ‘ring of friends’ was turning into a ‘ring of fire’ with the challenges constantly coming from the east and the south (Legrand 2012:11; Drent *et al.* 2015:7). Yet in the face of such challenges, steps have been taken during the recent years to enhance European defence. In 2013, Federica Mogherini, the High Representative/Vice President (HR/VP) of European Commission

and responsible for external action, was tasked to assess the challenges and changes of the complex global environment in order to produce a credible new security strategy to replace the outdated 2003(2008) version (Drent *et al.* 2015:7). The striking opening sentence of the Conclusions of the December 2013 European Council was briefly stated: “defence matters”. This signified “the importance of credible armed forces in support of Europe’s role and responsibilities in safeguarding peace and security” (Drent *et al.* 2015:7). From the strategic assessment review carried out for the EU’s foreign and security policy was derived a new European Global Strategy (EUGS, in short)–‘Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe’– set out in June 2016 as the successor of European Security Strategy of 2003(2008)⁵⁸. The Report says that “the EU will step up its contribution to Europe’s collective security, working closely with its partners, beginning with NATO” (EUGS 2016:9). It was published with high level of emphasis on defence and security, with CSDP as an integral part of it.

EUGS introduces the concept of “principled pragmatism” and resilience-building that guides the EU towards a more realistic understanding of its foreign policy towards the neighborhood (Tocci 2017). According to Tocci (2019), “a realistic and pragmatic strategy meant that the EU could no longer stick its head in the sand but had to wake up to the rough realities in its neighboring regions”. She (2017, 2019) puts forward that today, with the ‘post-imperial’ character of the US, the aggressive line Russia has taken in its foreign policy, an increasingly assertive China in European neighborhood, coupled with a variety of security threats in light of developments in North Africa and the Middle East; the need for greater pragmatism has been embraced in European external action, in which the EU removes its rose-tinted glasses to see the world as it is, and not as it would like to see it.

One might argue that while the emphasis on the need for strong security and defence in EUGS does not make the EU a military alliance on its own or shifts it away from its normative identity, yet clearly makes it appear markedly defensive. Put differently, the tendency of the EU towards a new security strategy with its implications on defense offers an empirical confirmation of defensive neorealism. Among the CSDP

⁵⁸ See: “Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe—European Global Strategy,” Brussels, 28 June 2016, https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eugs_review_web_0.pdf

priorities for the EUGS, “increased capabilities, financial instruments to ensure common funding and a strong European defence industry were mentioned among the most important elements” (Legrand 2012:10). Certainly, to many, the document, along with the Treaty of Lisbon’s new provisions (such as the mutual assistance clause) is also reflective of the EU’s new ‘security culture’ demonstrating rather a holistic approach to overcome differences in national security cultures of member states. From the neorealist perspective, convergence in ESDP/CSDP edging towards a European strategic culture has long been regarded as difficult and even impossible with 28 distinct national strategic cultures inside the EU, therefore global systemic pressure is considered to be one important driver for the possible development and operationalization of a coherent European strategic culture (Howorth 2007:181-184). In that sense, EUGS of 2016 can be viewed as an opportunity seized by the Union to generate the political will towards convergence for deeper defense cooperation and a credible European security policy, hence as a soft-balancing tool. Zandee (2016:27) points out that “the essence of the Global Strategy is to bring soft and hard power instruments together in a joined up approach and to recognize that the EU has a particular role to play as a security provider in the near abroad and further away”.

In response to the above viewpoints on European soft-balancing behavior, the concept is challenged by the proponents of bandwagoning concept, which is attributed in Walt’s theory of “balance of threat” within the defensive neorealist school, by stressing on a NATO-friendly Europe. As put forward by Walt (1987), states tend to ally in order to balance against threats, not against power. “In anarchy” he asserts, “states form alliances to protect themselves”, and “their conduct is determined by the threats they perceive and the power of others is merely one element in their calculations’ (Walt 1987: x). So, “great powers could guarantee their security by forming balancing alliances” (Walt 1998:31). Walt (1997:933) further claims that when faced an external threat, states may tend to ally with, rather than balance against, even the most threatening power (bandwagoning behavior). After all, the defensive neorealist proposition that under the security dilemma cooperation between great powers is likely to reduce conflict (Jervis 1999:52) broadly supports this claim. So, one can see that bandwagoning behavior relates to a defensive motive consistent with survival and status quo reflexes against various levels of threats.

That being said, the defensive neorealist view of bandwagoning behavior posits that Europe's tendency to balance against external threats by allying with the US is a clear instance of bandwagoning strategy. Wivel (2008:296) argues that "by spending modestly on defence, working through NATO and joining the United States in ad hoc coalitions, European security behaviour is most accurately characterized as bandwagoning". To put it bluntly, Europe tends to adopt a bandwagoning strategy or alliance with the US to prevent it from abandoning the EU to its fate and continue to assist Europe with the security threats in its neighbourhood through NATO's support. In this context, ESDP/CSDP is termed as the central bandwagoning tool on US power (Cladi and Locatelli 2012; Dyson 2013; Wivel 2008)⁵⁹. On the other hand, whereas the tool functions as the "European pillar" of the Alliance in terms of burdensharing in its geopolitical neighbourhood, at the same time it enables the EU a potential autonomy from NATO, thus, "the patterns of complementarity and competition between NATO and CSDP represent the interplay of Europe's fears of abandonment and entrapment by the US and one should not therefore expect CSDP missions to always be congruent with US interests" (Dyson 2013:388). While some analysts believe that the intensified modifications under Lisbon Treaty, together with CSDP, cast some doubts as to NATO's supreme role in European security, in reality it is widely considered that Lisbon developments have delivered little in practice so far— notwithstanding some of the new provisions have paved the way for further progress and more reforms in the area of common security and defense as well as in military integration. According to Coffey (2013:12), the reason for this is that "CSDP lacks the military capability as well as the political will to act against armed aggression without NATO's support". Therefore, the Alliance is crucial for EU security to avoid abandonment by the US.

Given the intense impact of the role of the US on European foreign policy as an influential actor in world affairs, abovementioned aspects prove as evidence of the EU's survival motive concerned with security and defense interests along with a manner of

⁵⁹ According to Dyson (2013), "NATO has provided the central institutional forum for European states to avoid abandonment by the US. Hence it is within the Atlantic Alliance, not CSDP, that we see the strongest evidence of bandwagoning. For European states the US remains vital in sustaining the European balance of power and, as highlighted most recently by NATO's Operation Unified Protector, in assisting the Europeans with security threats from their geopolitical neighbourhood. Consequently European states have attempted to demonstrate a measure of support for US strategic objectives by burden-sharing within NATO in operations such as the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), as well as through key NATO capability and force-generation initiatives".

avoiding relative losses, as correlates with defensive neorealism. Looking through aforesaid theoretical lenses to the transatlantic relationship between the EU and the US, neither balance of power nor balance of threat by itself can explain the relations. A combination of two balancing theories may offer more. In that, the dual motives of soft-balancing and bandwagoning could be viewed as both Europe's concern for NATO's continuance and its leap forward political integration to defy the US dominant position in the international system (Art 2004:185)⁶⁰. By applying these frameworks to the case of EU-North Africa relations, one can argue that because North Africa region has been the central focus of both Europe and America for decades –where their interests mainly converge albeit rarely diverge– mixed patterns of competition and cooperation in transatlantic relations, from a theoretically based explanation of both European soft-balancing and bandwagoning on the US, may have a greater explanatory reach in understanding the approaches of the Union in North Africa.

However, one might also expect, at this point, that the rise of emerging powers in the world, coupled with the decline of US unipolarity, are currently reshaping the character of the international system, ultimately having a crucial impact on Europe's approach in North Africa, too. Although the US is likely to play a dominant role in global affairs for the foreseeable future, one might claim that today the conditions for the reawakening of a multipolar world are sufficiently evident. As Waltz (2000:37) prophesies “multipolarity is developing before our eyes”. Put differently, “the current international system is shaped by the interplay of unipolar and multipolar dynamics” (Roberts 2002:17). Yet, there is an alternative to unipolarity, bipolarity and multipolarity called as *tripolarity* –where ‘nuclear-weapon states’ as the US, Russia and China compete for global power politics– also being discussed within the critics of polarity (Roberts 2002; Akram 2013). Concerning Russia and China, first, are the

⁶⁰ Wivel (2006:302) also makes a general summary of European balancing behavior from a similar theoretical lens: “From the balance-of-power view, Europeans are stuck in dependence. Their best bet is to bandwagon with the United States. This allows them to continue to free-ride on American security provision and help to prolong the period of American unipolarity, which has so far been mostly beneficial to Europe. From the balance-of-threat view, Europeans should strengthen and refine their hedging strategy to reflect the dual nature of American power and intentions: the United States is willing to use its power to cooperate with the Europeans, but only to the extent that it serves its interests. This creates the need for a strong and independent Europe able to strike the delicate balance between maintaining a stable security alliance with the Americans and pursuing independent European interests when necessary”.

claims that Russia seeks to expand its power in eastern Europe (by trying to hold Ukraine within its sphere of influence) as well as in eastern Mediterranean (by using Syrian bases) for a possible revival in the international system, and second, is the fact that Russia and China share an ideal of a multipolar world, and the increasing pace of Russo-Chinese cooperation (e.g. the Shanghai Cooperation Organization or SCO) helps them take a unified stance in their vision (Chufrin 1999:480-490). As a result, Russia's and China's revisionist coalition –besides the most likely others like Iran– has important implications in the promotion of a multipolar world.

While the US and the EU have had predominant positions in North Africa for many years, Russia and China are also rapidly increasing their presence in the region, most particularly in the energy and trade domains. Indeed, a greater level of uncertainty within a changing international environment makes the role of Russia and China in North Africa a double-edged sword for Europe. From a theoretical point of view, this fast-developing systemic challenge of which Russia and China policy choices toward North Africa intimately impact upon EU policies has required the Union to reconsider its role and policies in the region. It could be argued that in the face of an increasingly threatening and unstable neighborhood, Europe has been ever more acting as a security maximizer and status-quo orientated actor, consistent with the neorealist conception of a “defensive positionalist” (Grieco, 1993). Yet, within the context of a seemingly tectonic shift in the structure of the international system, any transformation in the distribution of power in North Africa will continue to have substantial ramifications for the Union as to how it realigns itself in the renewed regional order in its south.

In this respect, the very notion of ‘polarity’ will be analyzed next as the causal variable of neorealism based upon any change in the structural distribution of power among the great actors of the international system. As the world has become ever more polarized, why neorealism depicts the world in various forms of polarity and how polarity does or might affect the foreign policy dynamics of the Union would therefore be appropriate questions to discuss. In this manner, by framing the Union as a ‘pole’ within the vocabulary of neorealism, the implications that the polarity of the international system has for the EU policies are necessary to evaluate in the next section.

1.5. The Impact of the Evolving Systemic Changes

The EU's structure, dynamics and policies have been strongly affected and shaped by systemic forces. It has been particularly felt intense in North Africa, representing the greatest shift in the region since decolonization, coupled with the broader Arab Spring sparked in late 2010. With lessened US interest and engagement resulting in a gradual withdrawal from North Africa, the tendency towards the end of American hegemony in the region has been a critical factor that has left space for potential intervention in the region by other global players, primarily by Russia and China. Since new players have involved in North Africa, the region has become a multipolar arena. On this front, it could be argued that Europe has again come on the brink of missing its chance to be the most powerful actor in the region in spite of its favorable circumstances such as historical ties and geographic proximity to the region.

1.5.1. The Spectre of a Multipolar World

According to neorealism, there are a number of great powers referred to as poles who must act within the dictates of the system to ensure their own survival. In this respect, polarity can be defined as the architecture of the distribution of power in the international system. One can claim that changes in polarity are important as the distribution of power affects the likelihood of war and peace. Neorealists believe that states in the system see each other as potential threats, and fear that they will achieve relatively greater gains. This fear stimulates them to behave in ways that create the balances of power (Waltz 1979:118), either by internal balancing (e.g. by increasing economic growth or military spending) or external balancing (e.g. by alliances), or by the combination of the two. Balancing gives order to the system in two ways: first, it may prevent war if it is formed properly; and second, through recurring balancing the behavior of states will be constrained into an orderly outcome (Milner 1993:147). At that point, it could be argued that the prospects for balance of power are largely a function of the specific polarity of the system. Neorealists contend that the polarity of the international system at a particular point of time (i.e. it may be unipolar, bipolar or

multipolar)⁶¹ has an impact on balances or imbalances of power. For instance, after WWII, the emergence of a bipolar world changed the patterns of power as it altered the distribution of capabilities in the system and reordered a new balance of power. This new equilibrium informed the actions of states in the system and changed the prospects for peace and stability.

In line with the neorealist proposition of anarchy, systemic influences after the turn of the twentieth century have brought about a profound change in the axis of the international system. Today, the international system is ever more complex, diffuse and unpredictable than before. Accordingly, increasing security aspirations and intense security competition among the actors of the international system prevail over power objectives. Many important power shifts have gradually taken place within the dynamic transition process of the global setting, in which states redefine their security needs with the prospective return to a multipolar world, from a unipolar one, leading to the rise of new regional poles. This return to multipolarization is in fact consistent with the balancing imperative of today (Waltz 2000:37). Major states or regional sub-systems in the international system have a powerful tendency to resort to balancing when they have to (Waltz 2000:38).

Notably, defensive neorealism, over the transformation and restructuring processes of the international environment, has been favored as the dominant school in neorealist thought because security-seeking behavior, a particularistic quest of defensive rationale, has become more prevalent. As previously stated, according to the rationale of defensive neorealism, states do not need to engage in aggressive behavior, but must ensure that they can provide for their security and safety on an uncertain international scene. In conjunction, in an environment where there are profound levels of interdependence and interconnectedness in global affairs, states try to avoid military conflicts, a tendency of defensive doctrine that repels aggression. In a multipolar context, despite knowing that competition or conflicts of interest among states remain

⁶¹ In much the same vein, Gilpin also identifies three forms of international system: (1) imperial or hegemonic; in which a single powerful state dominates others in the system, (2) bipolar; in which two powerful states regulate all the interactions, (3) balance-of-power; in which three or more states control the actions. See Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*, 29 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

constant fact of life (e.g. Iraq, Syria and Ukraine crises of the 2000s), one might also claim that “the world is unlikely to revert to an offensive neorealism world that had existed in the past” (Tang 2010:180).

On the other hand, neorealists are divided on the debate over which type of polarity provides more stability. Many realist scholars believe that unipolarity, embodied in US hegemony, is basically a dangerous and unstable system. Others, like Snidal (1991:721), argue that cooperation and stability is more likely in a multipolar world because relative gains problems are relaxed when there are more states. In the same vein, Grieco (1988:506) argues that under relative gains, larger numbers of states enhance cooperative arrangements. So, they believe stability is more likely with multipolarity. In contrast, some neorealists have taken another stance. They discuss that multipolarity creates rivalry but bipolarity provides stability hence the latter is more preferable. Waltz (1979:168), for instance, suggests that “in a bipolar world uncertainty lessens and calculations are easier to make”. In a similar fashion, for Mearsheimer (2009:246-250), a bipolar system has less potential conflict situations than a multipolar order has. Mosher (2003:661), in between the two assumptions points out that predictions about the polarity of the system are determined by on “what type of multipolar world is compared to a bipolar world”. It is even argued that the new international system is now both unipolar and multipolar at the same time. As Gratius (2008:1) suggests, for example, “the world is uni-polar in the military sphere on account of the clear domination of the USA, and multi-polar in all other international areas”.

Given the above analysis, one might accept the argument that multipolarity, for Europe, results in a less stable world than bipolarity and unipolarity with reference to four subsequent history-making examples of polarity throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries: (1) the multipolar European state system prior to the Cold War characterized by rivalry among the great powers of Europe, (2) the bipolar international system during the Cold War characterized by assured peace and stability for forty-five years, (3) the unipolar international system of the post-Cold War characterized by a relatively stable world and US hegemonic bandwagon, and (4) ongoing re-transformation of the world in multipolarity in the twenty-first century characterized by the fear of the new rising powers such as China, Russia, India, Japan, Iran and Brazil (or

even the so-called tripolarity between the three great superpowers: the United States, Russia and China).

In terms of the systemic changes in European integration history, the European state system was multipolar prior to the Cold War; hence unity among the great powers of Europe was imaginary. There was a zero-sum model of international politics entangled with intense rivalry. That is why, Cold War bipolarity is considered to be a catalyst in the process of European integration (Waltz 1979:70-71). As most neorealists agree, it provided a peaceful period in Europe. When the collapse of Communism and disintegration of the Soviet Union transformed bipolar international system into a unipolar system dominated by US power, the EU also became an actor of this new world order created with the redistribution of power. Kenealy and Kostagiannis (2013:226) explain these periods as below:

There have only been two systemic changes in the history of European integration. The first was the change to bipolarity following the Second World War, a change that sparked the drive to integrate. The second was the collapse of bipolarity following the collapse of the Soviet Union. (Kenealy and Kostagiannis 2013:226).

While the EU has shifted towards self-sufficiency in foreign and security policy, a state of uncertainty has also remained between the EU and the US. “The plain fact is that for Americans as for Europeans, the emergence from the Cold War has presided over an end to the aberrant relationship which obtained from 1949 to 1989 (and which persisted to 1999), based on hegemony and dependency” and “that relationship was aberrant in that the USA demanded unquestioned leadership but complained about lack of burden-sharing; and in that the Europeans enjoyed a period of free-riding (which effectively reduced their sense of responsibility for security and defense) while complaining constantly about US hegemony” (Howorth 2007:16-17). This led to considerations that the EU has barely become successful in the development of its own security and foreign policy, while markedly the US has remained as the major provider of European security, as evidenced by the presence of US military forces on the continent. In fact, the presence of US troops in Europe protects EU countries from a possible threat from outside Europe (for example, the US nuclear umbrella protects a

non-nuclear Germany). At the same time, it facilitates stability inside Europe leaving little chance for any two states in NATO to fight against each other because the US, as a “regional pacifier” would not allow it (Mearsheimer 2010:388). As Coffey (2014) notes, “forward basing U.S. troops in Europe is just as important now as it was during the Cold War, albeit for different reasons”.

Apart from the above-mentioned, “changes in polarity”, from the defensive neorealist point of view, “also affect how states provide for their security” (Waltz 2000:5). Caused by growing uncertainty, it opens up new questions as to “who is a danger to whom, and who can be expected to deal with threats and problems” resonating main problems of “interdependence of parties, diffusion of dangers, confusion of responses” that arise as the main features of great-power politics in a multipolar world (Waltz 1979;1981;1988). As Waltz (2000:5-6) makes it clear:

[...] With more than two, states rely for their security both on their own internal efforts and on alliances they may make with others. Competition in multipolar systems is more complicated than competition in bipolar ones because uncertainties about the comparative capabilities of states multiply as numbers grow, and because estimates of the cohesiveness and strength of coalitions are hard to make.

Acknowledging that the world’s new equilibrium has been altering the distribution of capabilities, one can argue that Europe strives to remain a pole in the multipolar world. Toft (2005: 402) claims that the highest frequency of power-maximizing behavior can be historically observed most in multipolar systems. This is because, multipolarity increases competition significantly. Accordingly, the new balance of power has informed the actions of the EU for the upcoming of a multipolar world especially since from the end of 1990s, and then gradually changed the prospects of its foreign policy, as mentioned in the previous section in detail. More briefly, Europe in the multipolar world first examines its security requirements and pursues power conditional upon cost-benefit calculations. European Council President Donald Tusk (Council of the European Union 2017), in his letter delivered to the 27 EU heads of state or government on the future of the EU, warns of the biggest external threat as multipolarity that the EU faces today:

The [] threat, an external one, is related to the new geopolitical situation in the world and around Europe. An increasingly, [], assertive China, especially on the seas, Russia's aggressive policy towards Ukraine and its neighbours, wars, terror and anarchy in the Middle East and in Africa, with radical Islam playing a major role, as well as worrying declarations by the new American administration all make our future highly unpredictable. For the first time in our history, *in an increasingly multipolar external world*, so many are becoming openly anti-European, or Eurosceptic at best. Particularly the change in Washington puts the European Union in a difficult situation; with the new administration seeming to put into question the last 70 years of American foreign policy (emphasis added) (Council of the European Union 2017).

Within this context of the current multipolar shifts of power, one can argue that the aim of the European foreign policy efforts is “not to maximize power but to maintain their position in the system” (Waltz 1979:126). This theoretical proposition reflects the EU’s defensive foreign policy orientation in a multipolar context. At the same time, multipolarity for the EU implies multilateralism as part of its strategic culture. After all, by developing a multilateral approach, the EU has found a solution to overcome the risks associated with multipolarity. While European integration itself was an attempt to escape power politics and multipolarity in the European continent, multilateralism, as an external strategy to deal with multipolarity, has become the “way to use power and to organise power” (Barroso, 2010). Then, one may suggest that “for the European Union to survive and to influence the outcome of the international order, it must succeed in giving a multilateral dimension to the current multipolarity; in other words, Europe must be able to define together with other world and regional powers the norms and rules that are needed to drive concerted efforts to stay clear of some future clash of competing unilateralisms” (Vasconcelos 2009:5). With this aim, article 21, 2(h) of the Lisbon Treaty states that: “the Union shall...promote an international system based on stronger multilateral cooperation and good global governance”. Moreover, the new European Global Strategy of 2016 (as did the previous European Security Strategy of 2003) strongly emphasizes the importance of multilateralism as stated: “The EU will promote a rules-based global order with multilateralism as its key principle and the United Nations at its core” (p.15).

In addition to the above multipolarity discussions, as Cox (2012:369) points out, it is now widely questioned whether “there is an irresistible ‘power shift’ in the making and that the West and the United States are in steep decline” to be replaced by the “rise of the rest” (Zakaria 2008). On the one hand, nearly all realists acknowledge that the US is still the most economically and militarily powerful state in the world. Indeed, “after the end of the Cold War, the first two decades of global politics were defined by absolute American hegemony” (Pant and Joshi 2015:28). And the US will, presumably, remain to be the most influential actor in ensuring security and stability in many regions of the world (including North Africa region) for many more years ahead.

On the other hand, it has been widely debated that the US preponderant position has begun to unravel after 9/11. Many analysts even think that American “unipolar moment”, described by Charles Krauthammer (1990/91), is in fact coming to a close resulting from the enduring patterns of structural changes and transformation in the emerging global political order. Yet, this process seems to have been accelerated with the onset of the western financial crisis in 2008, the year that coincided with the start of US presidency of Barack Obama. He pursued the path of a new US stance in the post-2009 period that has signaled a shift away from an assertive unilateral US foreign policy by Bush administration – a policy to further US interests based on military power and sanctions – to a new foreign policy landscape based on a combination of hard power and soft power by using less aggressive means of persuasion rather than sanctions. However, one may also claim that the multilateral approach of the Obama administration, with respect to international issues and global challenges, also including North Africa and Middle East regions, has evolved from necessity, of which US economic resources and military preparedness suffered a meltdown after the global financial crisis of 2008 along with the heavy impact of the global ‘war on terrorism’ and its wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. It is now considered that the failure of Obama’s promise of “a new beginning” to reverse Western misconceptions about the Islamic world and to resolve the conflicts of the region has mostly reaped disappointments. During his term, North Africa along with the Middle East, for example, continued to pose a conflict-ridden and turbulent region. Meanwhile, in late 2011, the US started to pay more attention on its interests in the Asia-Pacific region signaling a ‘pivot’ away from MENA region towards Asia, where China is of particular importance. Ultimately,

it can be said that the balance of power is shifting in favor of Asia-Pacific in the world, as a result of the “rebalancing”, or the so-called “Asia Pivot” policy of the US.

1.5.2. Increasing Interests of New Actors in the Region

While power, with the emerging multipolarity, has been shifting from the West to the rest (Zakaria 2008), “the emergence of other powers means that the traditional model of the EU and the United States acting as Western stewards of global order is reaching its limits” (Keohane *et al.* 2014). As Hansen and Jonsson (2011:461) argue, Africa is now “reemerging as a key space of interest in the geopolitics of globalization, with the EU, China, the United States and others scrambling for control over Africa’s vast natural resources and emerging markets”. It could be argued that North Africa has a high level of interest for external players thus started to become a playing field for them. Discussing on both North Africa and Middle East, Kausch (2010) argues that current trends in the wider region shows that

The forceful emergence of new regional leaders and other non-democratic international actors, who constitute attractive alternative partners to authoritarian MENA governments to advance their economic interests, decrease the EU’s weight and leverage in the region. The ever more numerous imminent collective security challenges in the MENA, including nuclear proliferation and other regional and sub-regional security crises, alter European attention and priority-setting. At the same time, the EU’s capacity to face these enhanced challenges to foreign policy making is – at least temporarily – weakened by the ongoing EU internal governance transition that the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty implies. In other words, in a more complex and unsafe world, EU power, capacity and unity have been weakened” (2010).

From the defensive neorealist perspective, one can claim that the EU has been operating in a multipolar situation in North Africa, which is by definition an anarchic and uncertain environment, to defend itself against other major powers. Among a growing number of emerging economies around the world, China and Russia are playing the major roles– along with the US and the EU– and trying to establish close political and economic relations with North African states in quest of a number of geostrategic goals. On the other hand, while new actors have (re)entered the region, this

indicates that EU policies toward North Africa intimately have, and will be, influenced by Russia and China besides US policy choices.

Although North Africa has predominantly led by US strategies for years, ironically, the policy of the Obama Administration since 2009 has been signaling the passing of the baton on to other great Eurasian powers in the region leaving them a space to extend their political depth and reach in North Africa. On this front, one might claim that Russia's and China's policies in North Africa have been motivated more by economic and energy interests. And, since they are the most likely to challenge European foreign policy in North Africa, it is important to understand how the EU relates to these great powers from a defensive neorealist viewpoint in the next Chapter.

CHAPTER 2

RELATIONS BETWEEN EUROPE AND NORTH AFRICA

2.1. The Significance of North Africa for Europe from Defensive Neorealism

The Mediterranean Africa, namely North Africa including Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya (Maghreb countries) and Egypt, with around 170 million inhabitants⁶², is Europe's immediate neighbourhood, hence is of strategic importance for European security. Euro-Mediterranean region draws this importance from a number of prominent political, security, economic/energy and strategic issues for Europe. On the one hand, illegal immigration, terrorism, organized crime, drug and human trafficking from the South to Europe have been the main security problems for the Union. On the other hand, the region plays an important role as a key commercial importer as well as one of the major suppliers of Europe's energy needs due to its critical geopolitical position and its natural resources, especially oil and gas. Yet, increasing interests and engagement of emerging actors in North Africa, such as Russia and China, besides the US who are scrambling for gaining control over the natural resources and possible markets of the region raise various concerns in Europe.



Source: Nations Online

⁶² Source: The World Bank, see: <http://data.worldbank.org/region/middle-east-and-north-africa>

From the realist perspective, the “antagonism between threatened Europe and a threatening ‘arch of crisis’ in the southern Mediterranean” explains the disparity between ‘the North’ interacting with ‘the South’ (Horst *et al.* 2013:7). Building upon the assumptions of defensive neorealism, states primarily seek for security, not for power. This is mirrored in the persisting supremacy of security and strategic considerations of the European policies towards the Southern Mediterranean since the early history of European integration. Rooyen and Solomon (2007:1) state that “from the onset of colonization, European powers have been subjugating and manipulating Africa’s people for their vast supplies of natural resources and raw materials”. Edward Said, whose work *Orientalism* (1978) holds an important role in describing the perceptions of “Occident” (meaning Europe) on the “Orient” (meaning its “Others” - the Mashriq and Maghrib), saw Napoleon’s occupation of Egypt as “the beginning of processes that dominated historical and contemporary perspectives of the “East” and West and of the Mediterranean”. Indeed, colonial practices were built up by the physical mapping of the world, separating the self and the others. Since then, the Mediterranean has been paradoxically represented as a European and non-European space. On this premise, one might expect that “the relationship between the two shores of the Mediterranean is so critical that neither side can ignore developments taking place in either” (Aghrout and Zoubir 2009:321).

2.1.1. The Legacy of a Shared History

North Africa geopolitically belongs to the European area of influence as there are strong historical ties between the two shores of *Mare Nostrum* which rest upon mutual gains at multiple levels. One can trace the shape of current relations back to the colonial past of the western European states in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. France and Britain were the two main powers in colonial North Africa along with Spain and Italy. Basically, French military and political leader Napoleon Bonaparte’s expedition to Egypt, conquering the Ottoman province in 1798, was the key in the sparking of colonization of the Mediterranean Africa⁶³. France and Britain invaded the

⁶³ Also note that early European colonization of the world began in the 15th century. During the period from the 15th century through the 18th century European imperialism was the initial reason for geographic exploration. In the 18th century Industrial Revolution brought social and technological

countries of the region and became the first dominating powers. This led to other European powers join the “Scramble for North Africa”. In the end, France controlled Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco; Britain controlled Egypt; Italy controlled Libya, and Spain controlled northern part of Morocco. The colonization of North Africa, which came to an end with the collapse of Europe-dominated imperial order after the Second World War, marked an important period of European history and relations with its southern Arab neighbors⁶⁴. Yet despite regained independence, former links have been deepened and European influence continued in the region up till today. Moreover, North Africa has not become a more integrated and prosperous region in the postcolonial era down to various reasons, in particular political conflicts, poor economy and authoritarianism. In fact, there have always been intensified tensions, security and stability concerns over the region, such as the North African Campaign of World War II, the Egyptian–Israeli war, border conflicts between countries in the region, and certainly the latest Arab Spring and its wider impact in EMEA (Europe, the Middle East and Africa). The national uprisings of 2011 in quest of political independence in the Arab world have triggered new strategic relations between the EU and North Africa. As a revolutionary event on the EU’s doorstep, new regimes have brought new dimensions to the EU’s foreign and security policy aspects, as well as European member states’. Although it is currently difficult to predict the final outcome or where it leads to as time passes, it is clear that an irreversible shift has already been underway for eight years. It is thus crucial to see that relations with the old European colonies are now being reshaped in a way affecting regional balances of power across the wider neighborhood.

As defensive neorealism would suggest, with every change in the global political environment, European states had to make strategic choices and set new priorities. As the colonial era ended, the European Communities which was founded in the 1950s with six members began to build up relations with its Southern Arab neighbors. Here,

change. Developments in manufacturing and mining along with communication and transportation systems played an important role in changing the balance of power when strategic importance of some regions increased (Hay 2003). The search for wealth, raw materials and trading opportunities led to colonialism and economic imperial expansion. “An era characterized by colonial expansionism abroad and industrial modernization at home, it was a time of tremendous technological achievement, social upheaval and cultural transformation” for Europe, (Tuathail 2006; 17).

⁶⁴ In the era of decolonization, Libya gained independence in 1951, Morocco and Tunisia gained independence in 1956 and Algeria gained independence in 1962. Egypt gained full independence from the British rule in 1936, following unilateral declaration of independence by the UK in 1922.

one may claim that the founding fathers of European integration in the postwar years were motivated to transform and rebuild Europe by integrating the African colonies and their immense natural resources into a Western European Union (Hansen and Jonsson 2014:448). In such a perspective, European integration is regarded to be related to the history of colonialism and even determined by it to some extent, under the project of *Eurafrica* rest upon the idea that “European integration would come about only through a coordinated exploitation of Africa, and Africa could be efficiently exploited only if European states combined their economic and political capacities” (Hansen and Jonsson 2014:447).

Over the years, the legacy of colonialism has continued to shape the relations creating geographical, historical and economic peripheries in the immediate neighborhood of Europe based on postcolonial links (especially to France) (Missiroli 2004:23). Moreover, after the EU enlargement southwards, security challenges in Mediterranean neighborhood –due to geographical proximity– have generated various threats and risks for the EU, which necessitated the formation of new strategies in response to these challenges. At the system level, for example, the relations fostered the continual presence of Europe in the region within the evolving geo-strategic and geo-political contexts of the international system as well as an increasingly problematic presence of *North Africa inside Europe* - notably through illegal immigration. So, the result came as a paradox: while the shared histories of North and South of the Mediterranean in accord with the *europeanization* of the region resulted in establishing historical, cultural, linguistic links and connections under the imperial order of European domination and hegemony, this also “provoked a massive two-way-migration in the Mediterranean, first from North to South in the nineteenth century and then vice versa in the second half of the twentieth century” addressed as “security threats” in Europe today (Borutta and Gekas 2012:6). Accordingly, the rising problem of mass immigration into Europe from North Africa has gradually created European anxieties about security.

In response, since the 70s, the EU has set up a wide range of arrangements with former European colonies to promote regional stability and prosperity for mostly its own economic, political and security interests in the region. In addition to several

bilateral agreements with Maghreb countries, the establishment of Euro-Arab dialogue after Arab-Israeli war and OPEC oil embargo (1973), the Global Mediterranean Policy (1972), the Dialogue 5+5 (1990), the Renewed Mediterranean Policy (1990), the launch of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (the EMP or Barcelona Process) (1995) furthered with the Union for the Mediterranean (2008) and European Neighbourhood Policy (2003) have been main tools to establish and enhance regional integration and cooperation with North African states.

2.1.2. Geographical Proximity

European Security Strategy of 2003 asserts that “even in an era of globalisation, geography is still important”. It matters because “the international system is inhabited by states located in regions” (Kluth and Pilegaard 2011:2). As a result, one of the main reasons of North Africa’s essential significance for Europe is geographical proximity. As Coffey (2014) asserts, “from the Arctic to the Levant, from the Maghreb to the Caucasus, Europe is at one of the most important crossroads of the world”. Its geographical position is unique, situated in close proximity to all manner of threats coming, most especially from the South, which is why European foreign policy formulation is greatly influenced by geography. This also correlates with Biscop’s (2005) claim that “while the security issues arising in the vicinity of the EU are global phenomena that are not specific to this region, their potential effects on the EU can still be greater because of geographic proximity”.

As underlined before, defensive neorealists posit that structural modifiers, including geographic proximity may increase or reduce aggression (Taliaferro 2000:137). According to Wivel (2008:297-298), geographic proximity is the final element of balance-of-threat theory as a secondary variable regarding power projection. It refers to the spatial distance between the actors, which may limit “the ability to project power” (Walt 1987:23). States in close proximity are likely to pose a greater threat than far away states, hence influence the security dilemma (Taliaferro 2000:152). That is why, proximate threats cause balancing or bandwagoning behavior (Walt 1987:23). Given the geographic proximity of North Africa region to Europe, it is very important for the Union to stabilize the region for security. Besides, the region holds a

very strong position as an energy bridge due to its close proximity to Europe. In empirical reality, European security concerns, such as illegal immigration, terrorism and energy security, are thus consistent with the EU's survival motive and defensive stance. As explained by Dworkin (2016:9):

Waves of migrants are passing through the region to Europe, and terrorist groups are an increasingly severe threat in several North African countries. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that the European Union's stance towards North Africa is now overwhelmingly defensive (Dworkin 2016:9).

One could argue that European states have been driven by defensive reasoning within the theory of balance of threat by focusing on "maintaining stability in its proximity, reducing migration flows, securing energy supplies and ensuring cooperation and an ongoing security dialogue, including combating terrorism and weapons proliferation".

2.1.3. Major Interests and External Threats in North Africa

As already mentioned, European foreign policy agenda towards North Africa is profoundly characterized by the protection of its interests (such as oil reserves that the European states depend on) combined with the concerns about regional security. Coupled with important oil reserves that the European states depend on, North Africa is critical for Europe. There is a growing concern about energy security in Europe, which generates a high interest in the oil and gas reserves of Algeria and Libya as the largest energy producers in Africa therefore important suppliers for Europe. Indeed, North Africa is very important as an energy bridge due to its geographic proximity to Europe. Heavily dependent on Russian oil and gas, as a threatening factor for the EU, energy imports from North Africa is crucial for Europe's diversification of energy sources and routes. In that sense, Algeria, Libya and Egypt are important routes and varied sources of energy imported to the EU, including renewable energy. Considering the fact that initial concerns on energy security for Europe began by the energy crises of the 1970s, one should admit that initial frameworks for EuroMed region –most specifically EMP–

were designed in such a way to also tackle the question of energy security and serve as a means to develop an integrated energy market in the region.

Moreover, EU's policies towards the region must be read in terms of security issues. Defensive neorealism assumes that the EU acts as a status quo power in North Africa, influenced by the anarchic structure of the international system, and primarily motivated by security-seeking behavior. It thus seeks enough relative power, not necessarily additional power, to achieve security. Since the 1990s, the EU has started to experience new security concerns, both internal and external in the circumstances of the post-Cold War era. And, this has been much evident in its relations with North Africa (as well as the Middle East), most particularly evident in the role played by geographical linkage that was mentioned above. The region has been one of the focal points where the EU has mostly faced enhanced collective security challenges. "Consequently, an increasing number of interactions in fields such as trade, energy supply, migration, security, environment and terrorism, created the need for reforms of the relationship between the EU and its Mediterranean neighbours on a stronger and broader basis" (Bernidaki 2006:2). These challenges, as defensive neorealism refers to, can be equated with causal variables (to wit, structural modifiers) which determine the EU's external policies in its neighbourhood under the umbrella of CFSP. Accordingly, defensive neorealist assumption that states seek security rather than power is consistent with the context of EU's conditionality-based regional policies (such as the ENP and the EMP that are attempts for security-seeking) dominated by its strategic priorities. On the other hand, it should be noted that although the EU has produced various initiatives to obtain stability in the region and boost its economic capabilities, these are considered to be a disappointment so far due to unsatisfactory and weak progress they have showed. Coupled with the events of the Arab Spring in the region, today the way in which the region is understood by the EU has become less clear.

2.2. EU Frameworks towards North Africa Prior to Arab Spring

Northern Africa –named as *Jazirat al-Maghrib* by the early Arab geographers/invaders of the region– was the "island of the west" implying the narrow strip of land between the two seas; "the sea of sand" (the Sahara desert) and the

Mediterranean Sea (Hall 2002:16; Naylor 2009:2). It is thereby seen as the main back door into the rest of the African continent and the Middle East. Besides its distinctive geographical circumstances, over the long duration of historic ages from the ancient Greek (Hellenistic), Roman, Byzantine, Islamic, Ottoman to the colonial, post-colonial and contemporary periods, North Africa has been shaped by various Mediterranean-European influences. This has caused the emergence of a number of prominent political, social and economic dynamics that shapes the way Euro-North African relationship has evolved over time.

From the era of decolonization in the aftermath of WWII, by hosting some unstable and fragile states, North Africa has been an area of insecurity for Europe, while at the same time remained a strategic geopolitical space to protect and advance postcolonial interests of major European powers. The launch of an integrated Europe in the early 1950s coincided with the independence movements of North African countries and the process of decolonization through the Cold War years, as shown in Table 1. Meanwhile, Europe was losing ground in the wider region at the time of signing the Treaty of Rome in 1957 (Khader 2013:12).

Table 1: Colonization and Independence in North Africa

Country	Colonial power	Start of colonization	Independence year
Libya	Italy/ Britain/France	1911	1951
Egypt	Britain	1882	1922/1936/1953
Tunisia	France	1881	1956
Morocco	France/Spain	1907	1956
Algeria	France	1830	1962

Saleh (2007:77) underlines that “by the 1950s, the Mediterranean had become the staging ground for superpower competition”. More specifically, as Khader (2013:12) points out, “after the Suez War in which France, England and Israel took part, the new superpowers (the US and the USSR), acting in unison, indicated that times had changed and it was they who would be laying down the rules from now on and filling the strategic vacuum”. And yet, Europe, left with little leverage, became a lot less

effective in regional events until the time the 1973 War between Israel, Egypt and Syria brought them into a direct confrontation. Driven by the intense course of events unfolded in its backyard, the EU took new measures to protect its interests. The development of European Political Cooperation (EPC) by then six members of the European Community –explained in detail earlier– can be considered such an attempt, hence the first formal step taken against the stipulation to establish a foreign policy cooperation forum for a united stance to react and respond to the Arab-Israeli conflict of the late 1960s⁶⁵. Significantly, since then, European policy towards the Southern Mediterranean has been very much dependent on the development of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The conflict followed the outbreak of the first energy crisis and led to an oil embargo in 1973⁶⁶ (then second in 1979) against several countries in the West including the EU member states. This highly challenged the EU’s Mediterranean policy in general and the newly-established EPC in particular. Consequently, regional stability became of greater importance due to heavy reliance on Arab oil and increase in migration from South to North, thence gave an extra impetus to carry out important reforms to advance European political integration and come closer to a common stance in that area, what, after years, turned into a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and then constantly renewed in response to internal and external stimulus within the regional and global order.

Apart from the above, Satloff (1997:7-8) draws attention to the fact that despite Europe’s important links and geographical proximity resulting in a set of initiatives and policies developed towards its North African neighbors, the EU, since the 1970s, has

⁶⁵ In 1967, Arab states involved in the Six-Day (June) War against Israel, caused by the ongoing unresolved conflicts, since the state of Israel that was established in 1948 had begun to occupy the entire territory of the former British Mandate of Palestine. By the end of the War, Israel captured the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip (from Egypt), West Bank and Old City of Jerusalem (from Jordan) and the Golan Heights (from Syria), which became the main points of Arab-Israeli conflict over decades. Israeli forces completely withdrew from the Sinai in 1982 following various negotiations and agreements that began in 1975, including the 1978 Camp David Accords signed between Israel and Egypt despite strong opposition from other Arab states.

⁶⁶ Arab-Israeli (October) War in 1973 (also called Yom Kippur War) resulted in an energy crisis and economic problems in Europe. The Arab members of OPEC (the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) cut down oil exports to Europe and the US so that Western countries would pressurize Israel during the Yom Kippur War, which was taking place between Israel and the Arab states (Urwin 1991:160; Dinan 2004:145). The oil embargo brought an intense economic world recession, badly damaging the EU’s solidarity. The oil prices were enormously increased by Arab producers. Recession occurred in Western Europe alongside other economic problems such as rising unemployment, high inflation, decreasing growth rate.

been in a “secondary status” in the region where the Union and the US have maintained “an informal division of labor”, with the US being the leader of the Western efforts and the EU having limited roles such as supporting and financing US initiatives, simply pursuing political and economic interests in the region. Although both have shared common threats in the region, the perceptions and the strategies on how to deal with these threats, have widely differed (i.e. American military instruments versus European civilian means). The US has intensively begun to involve in the region since the 1973 Arab-Israeli (October) War, with a particular interest for peacemaking and conducting other military interventions in the wider region (Miller 2012:346)⁶⁷. The EU, on the other hand, has taken a divergent path from the US, using multilateral means and institutions, reflecting a defensive foreign policy orientation, which involves maximization of security by protecting its status-quo in the management of regional balance of capabilities as a way of projecting its soft power.

Historically speaking, the EU, since the early 1970s, started to make efforts to develop and further deepen relations with its southern Mediterranean counterparts encompassing non-military security concerns. On this front, there are six successive – sometimes overlapping– phases in Euro-North African policies; the Global Mediterranean Policy (1972-1990), the Euro-Arab Dialogue (EAD, 1973-1989), the Renewed Mediterranean Policy (1990-1995), the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP –also known as the Barcelona Process of 1995-2008), the European Neighborhood Policy (launched in 2003 and reviewed in 2011 after the Arab Spring) and the Barcelona Process: the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM, launched in 2008 as a continuation of EMP of 1995, which is still valid today). All these initiatives and tools, along with several other cooperation forums between the specific countries of both shores of the region, such as the 5+5 initiative (1990) and the Mediterranean Forum (1992, a co-initiative by France and Egypt) have been “launched, tested, and re-launched by the European Commission, the Council, and the EU Member States, resulting in a tangle of policies” (Wouters and Duquet 2013:231-232). In the long run, “the EU considerably refined these tools and repeatedly adjusted the shape and content of its Mediterranean

⁶⁷ Even long before that, in 1956, the US had brokered the Suez Crisis to end the conflict as an influential power over regional politics, ending the remaining colonial credibility of Britain and France as the only European powers left to intervene into regional conflicts but considerably weakened after WWII (Saleh 2007:77).

policies” (Behr 2012:76). Overall, it is considered that “the Mediterranean has been on and off the agenda” for the EU (Bicchi 2003:1).

In 1972, the Global Mediterranean Policy (GMP) was launched at the Paris Summit, addressing the Mediterranean countries, including North African states. It basically included trade and aid negotiations, covered by bilateral association agreements. However, due to the events of 1973 Yom Kippur War and the resulting oil shock, it became ineffective. As laid out above, the newly-established EPC was challenged by the Arab-Israeli conflict, requiring the EU to develop new initiatives. Then immediately, in 1973, the Euro-Arab Dialogue was developed within the framework of EPC, in an intergovernmental fashion based on a multilateral relationship between the two regions.

As laid out above previously, taking into account the limits at the sub-systemic level of analysis in a defensive neorealist approach, the EU with its own dynamics may be considered as a sub-system and the unit-of-analysis is its member states. In this respect, the fact that France, being a major power in the European sub-regional system along with its past strong strategic linkages and the realpolitik interests in the Mediterranean basin –essentially regarded as a special zone of French influence for decades and even for centuries– has allowed it to create, lead and promote most of the initiatives for EU-Mediterranean regional cooperation from the 1970s to the present. In that sense, the Euro-Arab Dialogue, EMP and UfM are relevant examples that were initiated and led by the French at the EU level. As Musu (2007:118) points out:

It is France that has most often taken the lead in European Initiatives in the Middle East. Since the late 1960s, France’s policy has been characterized by a clear pro-Arab stance and its priority has clearly been the promotion of closer relations with Arab states [] French governments have promoted the EU’s international activity as a vehicle for those initiatives France alone cannot accomplish, and which are intended to supplement French efforts at a national level. The European presence is particularly useful in those areas of the world where French influence is weak and American hegemony is strong [] France has sought to project a strong European political voice, to complement and amplify its national voice (Musu 2007:118).

Certainly, France was largely the driving force for the Euro-Arab Dialogue, as well. It orchestrated the Dialogue in relation to its colonial legacy with an eagerness to assert its influence over its former colonies in the Arab World (Gfeller 2011). Nevertheless, the Dialogue, despite many efforts, eventually lost its significance following the Camp David Accords in 1978 and ultimately failed for many reasons, but mainly for the exclusion of political issues, such as the Middle East peace process. Miller (1992:7) synthesizes these reasons below:

Different perceptions of both sides related to the nature and purpose of the dialogue; Inability to deliver results due to institutional weaknesses and a lack of consensus and political will of both sides; Inability of both parties to insulate their relationship from the negative influence of external events and political interference, which leads to hold up progress in political areas of cooperation because of the disagreements in the political side of the dialogue (Miller 1992:7).

With the gradual ineffectiveness of the Euro-Arab Dialogue, new ambitious policies were structured for the region to reinforce the past efforts. Following the EU's Mediterranean enlargement of the 1980s (through the accessions of Greece in 1981, Spain and Portugal in 1986) and the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union, the relations between Europe and Mediterranean countries continued within the framework of Renewed Mediterranean Policy of 1990. However, the Policy did not provide a coherent and holistic approach towards southern neighbors either, as it was mostly, once again, restricted to financial co-operation.

After the end of the Cold War and bipolarity, the EU had to face a range of new security challenges (e.g. illegal migration, terrorism, state failure, organized crime, drug trafficking and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction) that were interlinked with each other causing insecurity and instability in its close vicinity which might critically cause major disruption in the flow of oil, as well. These perceived security threats coming from the south—later highlighted in ESS 2003— led to the creation of broader instruments for Europe's periphery. In line with defensive neorealism, the EU has sought security through more effective cooperation initiatives to ensure safety in its borders as well as reinforce its regional status and influence across the region. The

instruments were established through multilateral/regional as well as bilateral policies under the frameworks of EMP (1995), ENP (2004) and UfM (2008), as explained in detail below.

Bringing together the then Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the 15 EU member states and the 12 Mediterranean countries –including Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia– the Barcelona Declaration⁶⁸ was signed at the Euro-Mediterranean Conference and Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) was initially adopted (European Commission 1995). The League of Arab States and the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA) were also invited to the Conference. EMP was designed as a multilateral framework of regional integration and cooperation between the EU and southern Mediterranean states. Important for Europe, it would reinforce the authority and increase the influence of the Union in the region. The intention was to strengthen and shift the relations with the Mediterranean countries across a variety of economic, cultural, social as well as political and security issues. For this purpose, the Partnership has concentrated on three baskets as follows:

The political and security aspect aims to establish a common area of peace and stability; the economic and financial aspect hopes to allow the creation of an area of shared prosperity; the social, cultural and human aspect aims to develop human resources and promote understanding between cultures and exchanges between civil societies (European Commission 1995).

The Political and Security Partnership had the aim of creating a ‘Euro-Mediterranean Charter for Peace and Stability’. It meant to be a politically-driven process providing a unique framework “for deepening political dialogue, thus enabling EuroMed partners to strive towards the establishment of a peaceful, secure and stable EuroMed region, underpinned by sustainable development, rule of law, democracy and human rights” (European Commission 2006a). The Chapter also included seminars and networks related to the fight against terrorism, ESDP, crisis management and conflict prevention, civil protection, good governance, parliamentary cooperation, political

⁶⁸ Final Declaration of the Barcelona Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference, 27–28 November 1995, Bull. EU 11/1995.

reform and promotion of human rights. *The Economic and Financial Partnership* aimed at the enhancement of economic and financial cooperation as well as the creation of an area of shared prosperity through sustainable and balanced socio-economic development. One of the important areas of the Partnership has included the creation of a Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area by 2010 to support economic transition in the partner states in the region that have problems in economic restructuring. *The Social, Cultural and Human Partnership* has involved social, cultural and human affairs. Main priority areas cover culture and intercultural dialogue, gender and civil society. This component of the Partnership also deals with activities concerning justice and migration.

As mentioned above, one of the EU's fundamental objectives in EMP was strengthening security issues from the South Mediterranean to Europe. The strategic and normative orientation of the EU towards the region then could be read as defensive, as EMP instrument "rather served as the foundations for a long-term exercise in soft power projection" (Tanner 2004:137). Through EMP, the Mediterranean countries would control the aforementioned security problems while assisting the EU in opening up South Mediterranean market, and receive aids in return. For this aim, the EU utilized the MEDA Programme (financial cooperation package) to strengthen its relations with its Mediterranean Partner countries⁶⁹. As a result, the expectations were high both on the Mediterranean side and the EU side when the EMP was first introduced. Main expectations were peace and stability in the region, economic growth, integrations of different cultures and people. In order to achieve and meet these expectations; free trade, financial aid and knowledge transfer were intended to be offered to the Mediterranean countries⁷⁰. Ultimately, the creation of 'a zone of shared prosperity' has been targeted based on below elements (Nsouli, 2006):

⁶⁹ The MEDA Programme was the major financial instrument of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership. There has been noteworthy financial assistance from the EU to the Mediterranean partners through MEDA I and MEDA II development assistance programs within EMP. MEDA I continued from 1995 to 1999, and MEDA II began in 2000 and ended in 2006. In 2007, the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) replaced MEDA. All the MEDA Partners have also become part of the new European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP).

⁷⁰ This could be also seen as the reason of why the EU has gradually become the major economic player in the region.

the acceleration of the pace of sustainable socio-economic development in the Euro-Mediterranean countries, the improvement of the living conditions of their populations, the increase in the employment level and the reduction in the development gap in the Euro-Mediterranean region, the encouragement of regional cooperation and integration

Despite these high expectations, after a ten-year long progress, critics on different grounds expressed that the Barcelona Process has failed as a result of being “a border-drawing rather than a region-transformation and boundary-eradication exercise” (Tzifakis 2007:50). In addition, combined with the reluctance of the EU to involve actively in the Middle East Peace Process, it was mainly thought that “persisting trans-Atlantic differences over the Mediterranean and the Middle East, as well as the re-emerging gap between processes of integration and stabilization north and south of the Mediterranean have clearly exposed the danger of the EMP becoming weak and irrelevant” (Aliboni and Said Aly 2000:212). On this front, 2003 and afterwards witnessed strong competition between the EU and the US that led to clashes of interests and policy divergences, over who would dominate the region, most specifically in the economic realm (Cavatorta 2009).

Even though the partnership has increased to 43 members⁷¹ following the historic EU enlargement of 2004 (by mainly Central and Eastern European countries), it was considered that EMP could not produce a fulfilling result for the region particularly in the development areas of regional security, the rule of law, human rights and democratization. In fact, democratization might be a key word for European imperialism, yet seemingly no transition to a more democratic political regime has occurred for the citizens of EMP southern members. Consequently, coupled with the southern countries’ perception on the legacy of European colonialism and imperialism, this resulted in them feeling that the EU was more concerned with its own security and interests by the policy, rather than creating effective results in the prosperity and development of the region. Put another way, the EU’s normative claim on democratization of the Mediterranean partners was exclusively perceived “as a means of

⁷¹ 28 EU member states, 15 Mediterranean partner countries from North Africa, the Middle East and Southeast Europe.

extending the EU's influence in the south" (Pace 2007:660). Moreover, the Arab-Israeli conflict (today's Israeli-Palestinian conflict) has added another reason to be the utmost obstacle to EMP cooperation in the politico-security areas, where the EU has played only a limited mediation role –as the US being an acceptable mediator by the Arabs and Israelis– which has weakened the credibility and authority of the EU at the regional level (Satloff 1997:30; Tanner 2004:139-140).

2004 was also the year that European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) was launched furthering EMP, which applied to 16 Southern and Eastern neighbors of the EU including all North African states. At the same time, Cardwell (2011:231) explains, EMP has remained as “the central structure of the system of governance in the Mediterranean with ENP playing a supporting, albeit important, role”. In terms of the differing dimensions of both strategies, it could be said that while EMP –and its renewed version UfM of 2008– are based on a multilateral, region-wide thus collective institutional framework, ENP is a policy framework operating on a bilateral basis with each partner state who wish to further deepen and pursue specific reforms on an individual level (Cardwell 2011:231). The Policy was designed to deal simultaneously with trade, aid and migration flows between the two sides (Tovias 2007:2). Importantly, the EU launched ENP as a ‘new’ framework for relations (Cardwell 2011:227). As Tovias (2007:5) describes, ENP should be taken as a supplement, not a substitute to EMP, because new incentives are added to the framework of relations for a more active engagement of the EU instead of a more passive one. Indeed, it was stressed by EU institutions at the launch of ENP, through the speech of Margot Wallström (the then Vice President of the European Union responsible for Institutional Relations and Communication Strategy) that the Policy was designed to complement rather than renew or replace EMP:

[T]he Barcelona Process remains key to relations between the European Union and the southern Mediterranean [] The action plans already agreed with the first signatory Mediterranean countries contain differences. But they are also a bedrock of shared values and objectives which the Commission deems indispensable if we are to avoid diverging paths [] The European Neighbourhood Policy does not replace the process

launched ten years ago in Barcelona. It adds to it and make things happen (Wallström, 2005).

In that sense, ENP, complementing the Barcelona Process, has provided additional bilateral opportunities to each neighboring country, supplemented by Action Plans (Wouters and Duquet 2013:237), although not each neighbor's specific expectations have been taken into account by the EU. These bilateral plans, based upon relevant country reports, are the core elements of ENP, hence taken as the main reference point for the implementation of the Policy. Regarding to North Africa region, the action plans were agreed and implemented with Morocco and Tunisia since 2005 and with Egypt since 2007⁷².

Under one of the three main objectives of 2003 European Security Strategy was 'building security in our neighborhood', which stated that: "it is in the European interest that countries on our borders are well-governed", and also that: "our task is to promote a ring of well governed countries to the East of the European Union and on the borders of the Mediterranean with whom we can enjoy close and cooperative relations" (ESS 2003:7-8). Following the same agenda with the same related discourse –and along with the intention to establish an EU-led economic hegemony on the wider neighborhood (Attina 2003) – the objective of ENP has accordingly been to create a 'ring of friends' in Europe's southern periphery, while the actual policy of the Union has been to support the political status quo through continued presence of authoritarian regimes (Pace 2006:106; Pace 2010:432). This very objective of ENP, reflecting a truly defensive survival motive, might also be read "as an attempt to buffer, and with it to blur, the EU's external borders". Therefore all of the motivation for the EU's concept of wider neighborhood and its related policy may have been designed to develop rather impervious borders to keep the threats out of the gates of a 'fortress Europe', while at the same time to extend European systems of governance beyond these borders through a variety of measures, albeit not to address socio-economic problems in the EU's periphery in the first place, but very much to promote its own interests and security (Del Sarto and Schumacher 2005:19; Browning and Joenniemi 2008:524). This also caused a

⁷² ENP Action Plans for Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt could be found at:
https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/8398/%20ENP%20Action%20Plans

problem of legitimacy for EU initiatives undermining the sustainability of them in the eyes of Arabs. Overall, in spite of a promising start, the result was finally that ENP with a combination of EMP has been found unsatisfactory regarding to the low progress it has made. Yet, this may be also the reason why following the Arab Spring, in 2011, ENP was reviewed with additional reform efforts, ironically with the inclusion of the so-called “more for more” approach⁷³. Costalli’s analysis (2007:43) broadly supports the above from a realistic view:

[] according to a realist preliminary interpretation, the EU, considered as if it was a unitary actor, after the end of the cold war and the collapse of the bipolar system decided to engage in the stabilization of its neighborhood through the creation of the enlargement policy towards its eastern partners and of the EMP towards the Mediterranean area. However, even if the EU is far more powerful than any other Mediterranean actor and the EMP/ENP can be understood as a hegemonic strategy in broad terms, neither the EU could become a real hegemon, at least in the medium term, nor the EMP could be a real and successful hegemonic action, due to several reasons which, as realism usually repeats, have to do with power. First of all, some preconditions were not favorable to the establishment of hegemony in the Mediterranean, beginning from the fact that the EU in the security field has not the same remarkable power, authority and autonomy it has in the economic field, with the consequence that it is neither able to threat punishments, nor to promise rewards, nor to decide clear and reliable policies with a long time horizon (Costalli 2007:43).

In February 2007, Nicolas Sarkozy proposed the idea to create *Union de la Méditerranée* during his French presidential election campaign (Toulon speech)⁷⁴. The ‘Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean would be the new basis for relations between the two sides of the Mediterranean sea as well as a new stage of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (European Commission, 2008a). It aimed at giving a new impetus and vision to the EU’s relations with its partners in the region⁷⁵. The name of

⁷³ Revised European Neighborhood Policy will be further discussed in the following sections.

⁷⁴ This notwithstanding, France’s standalone role and direct involvements in the Mediterranean region were challenged by Germany in 2008. With the so-called ‘Hannover compromise’ and the resultant recovery of the Franco-German motor leaned them towards promoting major decisions together at the European level, what is known as the ‘Franco-German axis’ (Lecha 2009:162).

⁷⁵ UfM covers 43 countries (28 EU members and 15 non-EU members), regions in Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, including Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt, except from Libya. According to European Commission (2019a), Libya has no Association Agreement with the EU and thus remains

the Initiative was later replaced to just ‘Union for the Mediterranean’ (UfM) at the Marseille meeting held in November 2008. Importantly, UfM was intended be complementary to EU bilateral relations with the partner countries to be continued under existing policy frameworks, such as the Association Agreements and ENP Action Plans.

The new initiative was produced to lift up stability and economic opportunities in the region, although “it did not receive wide support, above all from European countries” (Zweiri and Pantaleo: 2008). Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighborhood Policy, Benita Ferrero-Waldner (2008b) added as follows:

The Barcelona Process has its champions and critics. While we recognize that much has been done in our near 13 years of Partnership, we are also aware that much remains to be done if future achievements are to match expectations. We are deeply committed to the Mediterranean region. Today’s proposals underline that commitment, and our desire for a more coherent partnership based on co-ownership of the process (European Commission, 2008b).

UfM also aimed to increase multilateral relations and regional integration by focusing on regional and trans-national projects. It was intended to produce better capabilities in three ways as in the Joint Declaration of the Paris Summit for the Mediterranean (Council of the European Union 2008:13):

By upgrading the political level of the EU’s relationship with its Mediterranean partners
By providing for further co-ownership to the Euro-Mediterranean

outside most of the structures of the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP). It only has observer status in the Barcelona process and the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM). However, it is eligible for funding under the new European Neighborhood Instrument (ENI) and the ENI’s regional programs. Libya also benefitted from funding under the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) for 2007-2013. The ENI is the main EU financial instrument for the Neighborhood countries during the financial period 2014-2020. As Wouters and Duquet (2013:234) explain the reasons: “EU relations with the country primarily developed in a bilateral way, the main reason being Libya’s subjection to both UN and EU sanctions. The Union lifted its arms embargo against Libya and included it in the ENP. Libya would have been granted full partnership in the EMP framework had it carried out its intention to accept the Barcelona acquis. In 2008 the Commission made a final attempt to close this gap through opening up negotiations for a Framework Agreement. This dialogue was suspended due to the outbreak of the Arab uprisings”.

relations By making these institutions more concrete and visible through additional regional and sub-regional projects, relevant for the citizens of the region (Council of the European Union 2008:13)

Hopes for this new project, too, brought new expectations. On the positive side, the EU has become an essential player in the Mediterranean through its financial aids to the region. Therefore, financial baskets of all the Mediterranean initiatives were the core of partnerships. On the negative side, however, achievements of Europe in the region have generally not been constant. For instance, while UfM was intended to be also a platform for regional disputes, continuous disturbances and tensions in the region have eventually overshadowed the EU's efforts to create a security identity there.

EU's policies on the Mediterranean seem to have focused more on the meetings rather than the concrete projects and results. Instead of advancing political, economic and social capabilities with the Mediterranean policies, the EU's capabilities have mostly been limited in negotiations which led to further meetings, agreements and list of programs albeit intangible outcomes. Step by step, the EU's policies towards the region have been a dilemma so far, even in the post-Spring period. There is still not a holistic mechanism of the EU to deal with security issues in the region, as will be discussed further in the next parts. Moreover, the EU member states' interests and opinions have mostly diverged since the initial start of the first policy towards the region.

Consequently, actors in the region have not perceived the EU as playing a major role in their concerns. For example, ENP was thought as an instrument to serve the interests of the major powers of Europe only, in order to maintain their status quo and survival. In that sense, as Goral (2015:173) suggests, "a tailor-made design of ENP may be useful in terms of increasing European security as long as it takes into account the interests of other major powers".

On top of all, it must suffice to notice that since the very beginning of a multifaceted relationship from the 1970s to the years leading up to the revolutionary Arab Spring, the most important factor under the EU's decades-long ineffective and

dubious past Mediterranean policies lies its inability to craft and promote political reforms and democracy in the countries of the region other than merely support deep economic reforms that have been based mainly on Europe's own political agenda and interest-calculus within the aforesaid fast-changing geopolitical environment of the region. In this vein, it could be argued that while the EU desired to increase the political and economic cohesion of its south with the aim of avoiding the militarization of political disputes or preventing their recurrence through supporting the ruling autocrats as well as by the formation of bilateral and multilateral structures of economic cooperation, North African and Middle Eastern regimes who have undertaken these partial economic reforms through European resources did not see deep political change at all. As a result the EU's "normative rhetoric" of democracy promotion and its results mainly "promoted the assumption that the European Union was an interest-driven actor, concerned primarily with securing energy supplies and migration control, taming political Islam and fighting against international terrorism by cooperation with authoritarian Arab partner countries" (Bauer 2015:30).

So, in an attempt to assess these aspects of Europe's policies on its south within the theoretical framework of defensive neorealism, Walt's balance of threat theory requires attention as the EU seemingly perceives the region more from a security perspective rather than economic. Therefore, after the end of the Cold War, regional threats have been the catalyst for the EU to launch and adopt new policies. As Walt (1987) puts forwards, 'in anarchy, states form alliances to protect themselves' and "their conduct is determined by the threats they perceive and the power of others is merely one element in their calculations". He (2000:200–201) suggests that states estimate threats posed by other states by relative power, proximity, intentions, and the offence–defence balance. From this perspective, it could be argued that the EU has aimed to pursue an offshore balancing strategy towards its southern periphery, in which the regional balance of power is maintained by partner countries (in that case, North African states), providing the security of their own region and sharing the burden through bilateral and multilateral frameworks with Europe.

2.3. The Evolution and Impact of EU Policies since the Arab Spring

The Arab Spring not only surprised, but also posed a variety of major challenges to the EU. Most significantly, it has shown the limits of European power in North Africa. In that sense, it came “as a wake-up call for the EU, forcing it to reconsider past policies and to readjust its policies to the new reality emerging in the Mediterranean and the Arab World at large” (Khader 2013:31). It is therefore essential to determine the roots, underlying causes and challenges of the Arab Spring, as it has, on the systemic level, led to long-term political changes and a redistribution of power within the existing regional balance of power, hence given an important impetus to the regional security agenda of the EU in questioning its position and the strategies it has thus far used to balance its interests by searching, questionably, for an appropriate policy response to the unexpected events after the first hesitation.

2.3.1. The Arab Spring in Perspective

On December 17, 2010, the tragic self-immolation of Mohamed Bouazizi, a young university-educated street vendor, triggered mass demonstrations and protests against the government of Zine El Abidine Ben Ali in Tunisia, which followed by protests in Libya and Egypt on a large scale, and in Algeria and Morocco on a smaller scale⁷⁶. Between December 2010 and July 2013 –within the timeframe for the analysis of this thesis– various regime transformations have irrevocably taken place across the countries of North Africa, which eventually led to the ouster of Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali (after 23 years in power), the deposition and execution of colonel Muammar al-Qaddafi of Libya by rebel forces (after 42 years in power) and the overthrowing of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak (after almost 30 years in power). Although Algeria and Morocco have as well been affected by the turmoil that spread in the region, the protests in these countries did not transform into serious and violent upheavals. Unlike neighboring country leaders, the long-standing authoritarian rulers of Morocco’s King Mohammed VI and Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, both who

⁷⁶ Note that although this thesis focuses on North Africa with an emphasis on the five countries of the region affected by the Arab Spring, the events hit more than fifteen countries throughout MENA including Syria and Yemen where its impact still continues to reverberate with armed conflicts and brutal civil wars.

came to power in 1999, managed to stay in power after the Arab Spring, arguably by promising further reforms and pursuing proactive policies in the face of the wave of protests and afterwards, instead of becoming more stubborn and resistant to removal and the preservation of their existing power.

The Arab Spring has raised considerable controversy in terms of its indicators, both internal and external. Some scholars contend that the fundamental goal of the events was seemingly a political transition towards a more open and democratic system involving electoral and constitutional reforms, which eventually marked the beginning of a new era transforming the authoritarian regimes. Some others take a wider perspective discussing that while the Arab Spring substantially has a political dimension challenging the status quo ante, significant socio-economic hardship was in fact the major catalyst in fueling the protests (Dalacoura 2012; Wouters and Duquet 2013). In such a perspective, coupled with the rapid population increase in the Arab world doubled from 1980 to the time of the Arab Spring, considering 60% of that population were under 25 years old with high levels of unemployment (Foreign Affairs Committee 2012), it could be said that important social factors for transition with economic implications had existed before the uprisings. It is therefore considered that deeply rooted socio-economic discontent, linked to the demands of people (mostly the young), harbored the widespread feeling of inertia, the loss of dignity (*karama*) and individual worth, along with a growing sense of injustice ultimately fueling the protests among populations (Janning and Frontini 2013:17; Dalacoura 2012:67; Behr and Aaltola 2011:6).

In Dalacoura's words (2012:66), "an explosive mix of socio-economic problems and widespread and deepening political grievances constituted a common causal thread behind all the uprisings". In the same vein, Dworkin (2016:10) highlights that "marginalization, lack of opportunity, and the absence of basic human dignity are powerful drivers of unrest". Even more broadly, mal-governance, repressive and violent nature of the Arab regimes (i.e. the dictatorial practices and extensive corruption), economic mismanagement resulted in high rates of (youth) unemployment, inflation, middle-class poverty in addition to corrupt judiciary system, lack of functioning institutions, militarization of public sphere, human rights abuses, gender and income

inequality have been generally cited as the underlying structural factors of the public intolerance for autocrat regimes which led to the Arab Spring (Idris 2016; Janning and Frontini 2013; Dalacoura 2012). Overall, the root factors that slowly prepared the eruption of the Arab Spring merge into a set of deficits as Behr and Aaltola (2011:2) clearly puts together; “a combination of deteriorating living standards and growing inequality (an economic deficit), a lack of political freedoms and public accountability (a political deficit), and the alienation of the demographically dominant age cohorts from the political order (a dignity deficit)”.

On the other hand, while above-mentioned internal dysfunctions of all kind have been shared in similar ways by most North African countries prior to the events, the size, intensity and most notably the outcomes of the reactions have differed in each country in three years of time ranging between a smooth transfer to democracy (as in the only successful albeit incomplete and precarious case; Tunisia), restored authoritarianism and reversion to military regime (as is the case with Egypt), increasing presence of Islamism at the political level, radicalization of militia groups and political shift into tragic civil war (such as the case with Libya) (Dworkin 2016:13; Behr and Aaltola 2011:2; Abushouk 2016:65; Janning and Frontini 2013:5-6). In Algeria and Morocco, however, not the governing regime but only some changes in economic and social policies have taken place.

In essence, despite some similarities, such as language and religion, or more precisely the belonging to the Arab-Muslim world, North African states should not be considered homogeneous. And yet, the *sui generis* variety in their internal capabilities and the experience they each had during the protests have also affected the magnitude of the 2010 events throughout the region as well as the external relations with Europe. Both before and after the Arab Spring, intra-regional differences have shaped the EU's priorities and approach towards each North African state, involving distinct strategies via balancing strategy, either by burden sharing with regional partners or soft-balancing/bandwagoning engagements against other actors in the region, as will be discussed with further details within relevant sections.

Equally important, given the course of the events, major reasons that led to the turmoil in the Arab world should not only be sought in internal causes or inside the North African states, but also in external regional and international dynamics, as neorealism purports. Under Waltz's level of analysis perspective mentioned previously, third image of analysis provides the most insightful explanation for the actions of states that leads to conflict, and yet, first and second images of analysis for him are incomplete and flawed. As Waltz (1959:122-123) puts it, "the international political environment has much to do with the ways in which states behave". This implies that internal conflicts can arise from international conditions at the systemic level. Thus, from the third image analysis of the case of the Arab Spring, it could be said that external conditions, such as the long-term impact of European colonial and post-colonial era on North Africa, the 2008 world financial crisis, and the emerging multipolar world order in which other great powers have also been determined to enhance their share of economic and political presence in the region represent the third image perspective in explaining the underlying causes of the political crises in North Africa. Moreover, as Jamoul (2013) discusses, the international causes of the Arab Spring can also be found within the wider regional landscape and political balances of power in MENA, such as "the failure of the war on terror, the Iraqi war and the U.S.A-European strategy of the imported democracy" as well as "the failure of the peace process in the Israeli-Arabic conflict".

Apart from the impact of regional conflicts and the role of external actors, as for external destabilizing factors concerning economics, one might argue that the first oil boom in 1973-82 resulting in the decline of oil prices eventually triggered stagnation, high indebtedness and high levels of unemployment in the northern Arab states of the Mediterranean and pressed the governments to lend from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) in the 1980s and 1990s to overcome these difficulties through macroeconomic programs (Colombo 2011; Posusney 2003). These measures including liberalization and privatization reforms created structural obstacles in these countries such as increased wealth inequality, unemployment among the young, impoverishment of the low-to-middle class and insufficiency in social welfare services, which in time led to continuous unrest (Colombo 2011:44-46). As a result, "worsening economic governance causing unrest and crises of formal politics epitomised in

electoral disaffection are evidences that the actual reform process, much wanted and vaunted by the EU and the US, has arguably not contributed to solving the main problems of the Mediterranean countries” (Colombo 2011:46).

In the light of the overall analysis made above, in an effort to take an integrated view of the causes of the Arab Spring, Waltz’ second image of analysis, the state, also seems contributing. According to it, state behavior is determined by causal developments at the domestic level. From this perspective, internal structures of North African states, such as national systems of governance and economic systems, are worth mentioning in explaining the causes of domestic political outcomes as in the Arab Spring events. Thus, applied to the case at hand, one might exemplify that longtime autocracy as the form of government in North African states triggered the people to revolt and led to the erosion of domestic political systems. It may be therefore useful to briefly have a close look on different characteristics and structural variables (e.g. historical trajectory, regime type, oil wealth, colonial heritage, domestic market size, elite power structure, role of military/armed forces and the institutionalization of Islamism) wherever applies in North African states of political disorder, which are in part linked to the scope of partnership between Europe and its neighbors. This will help reveal the EU’s and its key member states’ concerns in each case, thereby assist in making further assessments on defensive actions of the Union towards the region (according to its own changing preferences and interests) during the evolution of cooperative strategies between the two regions.

“When colonial rule was rapidly coming to an end in the 1950s and 1960s, it was hoped that independent African countries would adopt some form of democracy, be it liberal-democratic or socialist or some indigenous variant” but instead “various forms of autocracy appeared” (Jackson and Rosberg 1984). In effect, since the 1980s they have experienced significant, albeit insufficient, change (Hussey and Rose 2014:9; Zoubir and Amirah-Fernandez 2008:1). However, this was not only in the political arena, also in the economic sphere. This period of change, which later concurs with the fall of communism, also encompasses the EU’s supportive and economic restructuring efforts in the region based on the rhetoric on democracy promotion albeit with a strong link to the colonial past (mainly with France). In that, France has always aspired to

maintain its influence and retain its colonial ties with its former protectorates, namely Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco, for more than 50 years after a long period of colonization⁷⁷. Within the EU-North Africa relationship, on the other hand, France tried to secure the region's resources and products to penetrate to the European markets with a privileged access.

Meanwhile, North African states of the Mediterranean have gradually become vulnerable, both regionally and worldwide, to various threats in terms of “political stability, social cohesion, cultural integrity, and economic viability” (Entelis 2008:9). As has been seen in most cases during the post-Spring period, top-down political changes did not allow a bottom-up transformation process, hence never lived up to the expectations of the Arab Spring. After all, much of the consequence has only been the change in the name of the autocrats but not in the political systems that entrenched in paralyzed structures held for decades. Consequently, in Steven Heydemann's (2007) words, an “authoritarian upgrading” in the Arab world has apparently taken place since 2010, as summarized at a follow-up of three years below.

From a broader periodical perspective, it could be said that over a period of three years since the Arab Spring events began; 2011 was the year of the mass protests, demonstrations and the removal of the incumbent authoritarian regimes for long repressed political and socio-economic reforms, which sparked the beginning of a long and tumultuous transition period changing the status quo across the region. 2012 was the year to make the move on the path from challenge to legitimacy by taking measures for building the constituent assemblies to draw up new constitutions. The first free

⁷⁷ This is what Vermeren (in Hussey 2014:66-67) refers to ‘*soft imperialism*’ as he explains in detail: “the French Republic has never loosened its strong political influence in these countries — political, economic, and social elites who were themselves influenced by France’s political and cultural model relayed that influence to the interior of each country. Furthermore the French influence over large sectors of the population through school, work, and the media, was more intense during the 1960s and ’70s than during the colonial period. At this time Maghrebins learned the French language better than when colonial rule had imposed it upon them. France has certainly worked hard to keep French a relevant language in the Maghreb. It sent tens of thousands of young people to the Maghreb until the 1980s, and has hosted hundreds of thousands of students from its three southern neighbours. The bilateral relationship between France and the three central Maghreb countries, although unequal, has remained very close, and in certain ways has become more and more intense over the course of the past half-century. France has pursued a ‘soft’ imperialism in the Maghreb, of which the principal advantage for the local elites has been its non-interference in local political and religious affairs, and indeed unconditional aid to governments in times of difficulties (whether economic, political, security, or military), and even in civil war, as in Algeria in the 1990s”.

legislative multi-party elections were conducted within a pluralistic political system that was contested between several political parties where power competition reached out to an unprecedented degree during the year. Three years on from the start of the Arab Spring, however, 2013 was the year for the start of the breakdown of the initial success and the following victorious changes reversed by periods of political chaos and the subsequent deteriorating security situation and even civil war as in Libya.

Certainly, the critical breakpoint was the removal of Mohammed Morsi (a member of the Muslim Brotherhood⁷⁸, as Egypt's first democratically elected president in June 2012) from power in July 2013 with the reinstatement of military-led rule by General Abdul Fattah al-Sisi and the suspension of the Egyptian constitution, which led to a reversion of the *status quo ante* in the Arab world. While 2011-2012 elections brought victories for the long-suppressed Islamist parties across North Africa (the Muslim Brotherhood's Egyptian wing Freedom and Justice Party, Libyan wing Justice and Construction Party and Tunisian wing Al-Nahda Party), in 2013 they all slipped back out of power again either by military coups or by newer protest movements into compromise with more secular and liberal rivals. Aliboni (2012:III) draws this issue on the base of an unhealthy balance between Islamist and other non-Islamist political actors; "while the Islamist majority parties initially displayed a clear propensity toward pluralism and centrism, after a year and a half they seem to have dropped this consociational path and are tending to govern alone, partly because secularists are increasingly rejecting any Islamist governance (and even pursuing reactionary paths, as in Egypt), and partly because the centrists are trying to appease the more conservative Islamist wings, which, prompted by the secularists' polarization, have strengthened".

On the EU side, in the aftermath of the Arab Spring, the victory and dominance of the Islamists after the first free elections had become of great concern (Dandashly 2014:4). With the fears about the rise of political Islam that was principally driven by fears about terrorism since 9/11, Islamic fundamentalism has been seen as a threat to European stability and security. Consequently, how the EU would deal with the rise of political Islam was at question. The answer rests upon the context of the post-Spring security considerations of the Union in its relationship with the Arab nations on the

⁷⁸ For a more detailed analysis on the role of Muslim Brothers during the Egyptian protests, see: Husam Tammam and Patrick Haenni, "Egypt: Islam in the Insurrection", *Religious Globe* (2011).

basis of its own interests. As widely acknowledged, the EU's reaction to the Arab Spring was slow and weak when it was caught by surprise to the events in its south (Koch 2011; Isaac 2012). Even though it launched democracy-promoting initiatives through various packages to tackle security threats (Youngs 2006), these policies and initiatives became of secondary importance for the Union. Put differently, the EU's response to the fall-out of the Arab Spring, "confirmed the continuing primacy of security concerns" (Wolff 2013:18). Theoretically, this shows that the EU positioned itself in a defensive posture against the prevailing threat perceptions through soft power mechanisms such as ENP, as underlined before. In practice, Europe's simply incentive-based 'more for more' principle for democracy promotion in Southern Mediterranean as a response to the Arab Spring, which states that "the more a country progresses in its democratic reforms and institutional building, the more support it can expect" (European Commission 2011c), along with the emphasis on 'more money, more market and more mobility' underline stability over democracy (Biscop, Balfour and Emerson, 2012:6). Yet, this implies the kind of an authoritarian stability.

In the light of the analysis made above, while there are different arguments whether the EU has thoroughly engaged with the Islamist political groups and supported the new governments in the aftermath of the events, it is widely believed that Europe performed poorly in the dialogue and engagement with Islamist parties who won the most seats in the parliamentary elections of the North African nations as of September 2012 (in Tunisia, Egypt and Morocco). It is therefore debated, from a wider perspective, that the failure of the West, and the EU in particular, to engage with Islamist groups in the aftermath of the Arab Spring created new worries that North Africa might have become less amenable to Western interests in ensuring security and stability (Kausch 2009; Hamid 2011; Wolff 2013).

Yet, in any case, along the transition path in 2013, evolving disruptions in the political shape of the region once more transformed the trajectories unexpectedly towards a restoration and reshaping of authoritarianism. So, given that the overall course of events has become more complex, it could be argued that all this has finally caused failure in keeping up with the expectations of the Arab societies. At that point, the rapid changes in the region put into question what aforementioned different

characteristics of North African countries –each in its own way, particular story and structure– might have impinged on the evolution of the political transition they have experienced affecting Euro-Arab relations in the Southern Mediterranean. By having said that, it is important to identify, in brief, the prevailing patterns in North African states over the last several decades, to possibly link those, later, to the EU’s regional strategies, interests and goals as well as the means it has adopted towards the region as the major explanatory factors in its defensive regional involvement.

2.3.1.1. In the case of Tunisia –which is officially a (semi-presidential) representative democratic republic irrespective of its authoritarian political system– in essence, since the beginning of Ben Ali's presidency in 1987⁷⁹, various reforms, including measures with a combination of systematic repression besides notable socio-economic development, were set forth in transforming the political system with an aim to ensure some level of stability as well as regime sustainability. While no meaningful political change towards good governance came about in the end, the reasons for the rampant corruption are manifold. As emphasized by Paciello (2011:60-73), although the elections in Tunisia have been held periodically, the electoral system constantly favored the ruling party of Ben Ali, where the regime systematically repressed political opposition which is why each time he could run almost uncontested. Consequently, Tunisia is mostly defined as a “single-party regime” (Geddes 1999:47), because Ben Ali’s strong political party and personalist style leadership gave him a great amount of power by which he also intentionally weakened the influence and power of the military as well as the legislature (Ezrow 2015:2). It is further claimed that under his rule, Tunisia was a police state, in that he chose security and intelligence forces in the Interior Ministry himself to retain his power (Henry and Springborg 2011). On the other hand, during the 2010-11 events, the military, in response, sided much with the protesters, supported the elections and backed the new government for a democratic transition, whereas it has neither involved directly in politics nor changed its structure afterwards. Anderson (2011:3) emphasizes the limited role Tunisian armed forces played during the 2011 protests and demonstrations, as below:

⁷⁹ His predecessor, Habib Bourguiba, who was the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Tunisia before proclaiming Tunisian Republic in 1957 following independence from France, led the country as the first president of the Republic during a long period as well, from 1956 to 1987, before he was overthrown by his prime minister Zine El Abidine Ben Ali.

Tunisia's military also played a less significant role in the country's revolt than the armed forces in the other nations experiencing unrest. Unlike militaries elsewhere in the Arab world, such as Egypt, the Tunisian army has never experienced combat and does not dominate the domestic economy. Under Ben Ali, it existed in the shadow of the country's domestic security services, from which Ben Ali, a former military police officer, hailed. Although its refusal to support Ben Ali's regime contributed to the country's revolution, the military has not participated meaningfully in managing the transition period and is unlikely to shape the ultimate outcome in any significant way (Anderson 2011:3).

Apart from the above-mentioned, elite power has been an important structure in Tunisia, given the persistent links between the government and the ruling elites creating a system of cronyism, predation and widespread state corruption. To put it bluntly, Ben Ali's network of family and close friends within three ruling circles of authority (the core, the intermediate and the subelite groups), known as 'the family' and his entourage, was an important part of his regime (Diwan 2014:64-66; Anderson 2011:3). These governing elites, in other words the cronies surrounding Ben Ali, mostly managed through adjustments to their ruling strategies to dominate their political and economic power⁸⁰. What is most important, the privilege of Ben Ali clan was clearly a source of frustration for Tunisian public in the eruption of the protests. Notably, his clan has always been closely associated with the international community, especially with the EU as an influential and attractive international actor for the country. As Dandashly (2014) points out, "the effectiveness of EU policies is heavily dependent on the cooperation of the elites in the targeted country" across North Africa, as an advantageous domestic environment for European policies on the region. However, it is claimed that at the outset of the Arab Spring, "faced with a choice between removing

⁸⁰ According to a policy research study by the World Bank, "Ben Ali's extended family captured the privileges and rents created by the existing set of laws and regulations to their benefit—and they even manipulated the laws to suit their private interests. 220 firms confiscated to the Ben Ali clan by the end of 2010 accounted for less than 1% of jobs but were capturing an astounding 21% of all private sector profits (more than 0.5% of GDP, or USD233 million in 2010 only)" (Rijkers et al. 2014). In addition, for a more detailed analysis on cronyism in the case of Tunisia, see: Antonio Nucifora and Bob Rijkers (2015), "Cronyism, Corruption and the Arab Spring: The Case of Tunisia", in Terry Miller and Anthony B. Kim (Eds.), *2015 Index of Economic Freedom Promoting Economic Opportunity and Prosperity*, pp.47-56.

their leader and imminent regime collapse, Tunisia's elites and their Western sponsors hastily and unceremoniously forced Ben Ali out of the country" (Rabbani 2011:11).

After the resulting collapse of the government of Ben Ali in 2011, moderate Islamist *Al-Nahda* Party, pursuing a relatively liberal-democratic political stance, won the *first free elections* for Constituent Assembly with plurality⁸¹. It re-entered the Tunisian politics after being absent for two decades before 2011⁸². Nevertheless, the Party, after three years of leadership, was perceived to be insufficient to enact reforms and facilitate a democratic transition in meeting high and thorough post-Spring expectations. Moreover, the assassination of opposition figures and the rise of radical Islamism in the post-Spring period deepened political crisis in the country. Ultimately, following the adoption of the new constitution in 2014, Al-Nahda lost its parliamentary majority in legislative elections, the same year, to the secular opposition party Nidaa Tounes (*Tunisia's Call*) whose founding chief Beji Caid Essebsi became the President of Tunisia almost at the age of 90. Consequently, Tunisia is considered to have had the most successful transition among North African countries.

⁸¹ Al-Nahda (*Renaissance*) was originally established as an Islamist political organization in the early 1970s, whose members strongly opposed the first Tunisian President Habib Bourguiba's secularist policies that included the use of French as the official state language and a ban on headscarves. Instead, they advocated the use of Islamic ideas and the Arabic language as a basis for political thought. The Al-Nahda Party, inspired by the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, was founded in 1981 by its leader Rachid Ghannouchi, and known both as a moderate Islamic political party and a religious movement in Tunisia. It is also contended that "unlike other Islamist movements with a similar intellectual pedigree, Al-Nahda supported democracy and political pluralism from its founding and has never advocated that Tunisia break ties with the West -- policies that led many to label the party "moderate" (Hayward 2011).

⁸² The party was absent before 2011 elections, as Paciello (2011:63) explains the reason why; "since the early 1990s, Ben Ali's regime pursued a repressive and violent policy against the Islamist al-Nahda party. Accused of being linked to violent Islamist movements, by the mid-1990s the organisation was dismantled, their leaders were forced into exile and many activists imprisoned and tortured. Over the years, the regime continued to refuse legalising al-Nahda as an official party and to repress its activists, using the Islamic threat to secure the support of the population and of the West, and justify its repressive methods".



Source: U.S. Library of Congress

As far as economics is concerned, the EU is Tunisia's largest trading partner, accounting for 65,5% of its trade in 2015, whereas Tunisia is the EU's 32nd trading partner representing 0.6% of the EU's total trade with the world (European Commission 2017a). As the smallest country of North Africa, Tunisia has an estimated population of 11.5 million people. As Dworkin (2016:15) draws attention, "Tunisia is in many ways the country where Europe's interests can most easily be defined or met". Yet, the most important priority of the EU is to combat security threats. On the Tunisian side, however, the oil-poor country has largely been dependent on the European connection in terms of economic relations (Joffé 2014:10). On this premises, Tunisia became the first North African country to sign association agreements with the EU both in the context of EMP in 1995 leading to the creation of a free-trade area by 2008, and in the form of bilateral association agreement in 1998 (European Commission 2017a).

The above notwithstanding, it should be emphasized that privatization and liberalization, caused mainly by the aforementioned macroeconomic programs by IMF and WB, resulted in a great amount of (youth) unemployment in Tunisia. As Posusney (2003:279) emphasizes “during the mid-1990s, the unemployment situation worsened as a result of trade liberalization, which subjected Tunisian firms to greater competition especially from Europe”. Although the West, especially Europe, praised Tunisia’s economic growth prior to 2011 (Human Rights Watch 2003:494), constant severe economic hardship together with food and fuel price volatility peaked over the last decade, in addition to decades of autocratic rule, failed to restore economic and political stability, driving public discontent into the eruption of the Arab Spring protests.

2.3.1.2. In the case of Egypt –officially the Arab Republic of Egypt– regime structure is different than Tunisia. In contrast to the latter’s single-party personalist regime, the country has mainly been a military regime with a powerful army since the Egyptian Revolution of 1952 that ended British occupation and intervention (Ezrow 2015:3)⁸³. Egypt, in particular, is one of the most important countries of the Arab world both politically and geographically locating at one of the most important geostrategic crossroads between two continents and several geopolitical regions with the largest population of North Africa (almost 93 million). As Bassou (2016) clearly describes it, “Asia, Africa, the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, the Middle East, and the Nile Basin are all geographic entities in which Egypt is either part of or is on the periphery of”. Moreover, the highly significant position of the Suez Canal, which was nationalized in 1956 by Nasser after the victory followed a joint invasion of Egypt by Israel, Britain and France, adds to that by linking the Red Sea and the Mediterranean, thereby becoming the shortest link between Europe and Asia as an important passageway. All these attributes make economic and political relations of Egypt with the outside world play an influential role in shaping its stability and security.

On the political front, Egypt’s foreign political stance has changed many times since the era of independence, as it has operated under several constitutions (Etheredge

⁸³ In 1952, military officers Muhammad Naguib and Gamal Abdel Nasser who successively became the first and the second presidents of the Republic of Egypt overthrew King Farouk for corruption and incompetence in the 1948 war with Israel, in particular.

2011:55). Since the termination of the 150-year-old monarchy after the revolution in 1952, the country was transformed into a republic in 1953 by Nasser, who pioneered socialism in the country along with pan-Arabism across the Arab world –the notion of Arab nationalism towards the unity of Arab nations to fully end political subordination to Western imperialism. To the contrary of Nasser’s opposition to Israel, his successor Anwar Sadat made peace negotiations with Israel in 1979, despite strong opposition from other Arab states, resulted in Egypt’s suspension from the Arab League until 1989 (BBC News 2015). Yet, the country became the first Arab state to sign a peace accord with Israel ending 30 years of war. Within this context, one could conclude that it was after Sadat that Egypt started a new strategic relationship with the West which would later affect many of the Egypt’s political decisions concerning foreign policy (Morsy 2013).

When Hosni Mubarak rose to power in 1981 (after Anwar Sadat’s assassination), his regime, similarly, positioned itself as a “trusted Western ally” (BBC News 2017c). In such a context, the country also received large US military and economic aid (Morsy 2013). Moreover, as Parfitt (1997:866) indicates, Europe has continually granted Egypt in a privileged position for its close ties with the West besides the country’s strategic geographical position; “Egypt’s politico-economic rapprochement with the West and Israel, have made it important for the West to try and support Egyptian moves towards political and economic liberalism, a stance that is perceived as being conducive to continued Egyptian alliance with the West”. Apart from these, Mubarak’s further efforts on the revival and renewal of the relations with Arab nations –after the breakdown of relations in 1979– through which Egypt hosted the Arab League and played a major role in Arab-Israeli conflict, succeeded in the restoration of Egypt’s status as a dominant power in the Arab world (Morsy 2013). Consequently, on the regional and international front, Mubarak’s long rule regime enjoyed exceptional stability for thirty years, hand in hand with the West.

However, on the domestic front, several factors started to play strong role in the years leading up to the outbreak of the Egyptian Spring. Like Tunisia, Egypt faced rising political and socio-economic difficulties, such as government corruption and high unemployment with deepening authoritarianism and strong repression (Dworkin

2016:53). Yet, the root causes of the shortcomings in the Egyptian economy dates back to the mid-1980s during the Mubarak era. Since the 1980s, Mubarak continued Sadat's *infitah* (economic opening) policies, signing agreement with the IMF and WB (Posusney 2003:272-273). Similar to that of Tunisia, structural adjustment reforms were carried out through macroeconomic programs such as privatization and trade liberalization programs. Yet, it should be noted that the EU has been Egypt's prominent trading partner for years, representing the first in both exports and imports accounting for 31,3% of its trade in 2016 (European Commission 2017b), whereas the US is the second in the country's total foreign trade.



Source: U.S. Library of Congress

As far as energy relations is concerned, Egypt is rapidly expanding its natural-gas production and exports, hence grouped together with Algeria and Libya in North Africa region to play an important role for its gas in the EU's energy supply (Kilpeläinen 2013:351). As an emerging supplier of gas in the Mediterranean region, it has become the sixth largest natural gas supplier to the EU in 2008 (European Commission 2008c)⁸⁴. Even after the negative effects through the Arab Spring events,

⁸⁴ In addition, according to World Energy Council (2013) Egypt has the sixth largest proved oil reserves in Africa, mainly in or alongside the Gulf of Suez and in the Western Desert.

Egypt's gas reserves became the third highest in Africa in 2012 (Solovieva 2013). While oil-poor Europe is heavily dependent on Russia to meet its rapidly growing demand for energy supplies, the Union searches for further solutions in sustainable energy cooperation with North African states of Algeria, Egypt, and Libya within its geographic proximity to improve its alternatives and energy security as well as reduce dependence from Russian energy supplies (Bahgat 2010). Yet, these energy relations are mostly formed under bilateral energy agreements under the frameworks, such as EMP and ENP.

Considering all the above economic relations between the EU and Egypt, it must be also contended that while supporting Egypt's socio-economic development processes, Europe at the same time has been relatively reluctant to fully promote and engage in the political reforms of the country, arguably fearing that those reforms might destabilize Egypt and the wider region thereafter, threatening the EU's regional interests (Paciello 2011:109). So, from the wider regional perspective, in an attempt to find an answer of Europe's relatively less commitment and support for political reforms, democracy and human rights in North Africa, Kausch (2010), only two months before the Arab Spring events, highlighted that with the additional reinforcement of the 2008 financial crisis, "from counter-terrorism to migration, energy to trade, the various strands of EU external action are now seen through an increasingly narrow security lense". And this indicates that a markedly "defensive bent" (Kausch 2010) has already prevailed in the EU's consideration and priority-setting in its North Africa policy, affecting Egypt, before the events of the Arab Spring.

Political reforms aside, it must be stressed that economic reforms have been made mostly in the selective sectors preserving the positions and interests of the regime supporters, the military and the privileged ruling elites in the status quo (Paciello 2011:108). Therefore, despite the fact that under Mubarak regime Egypt was the second biggest recipient of foreign aid (Ezrow 2015:9) and the country had a rapid economic growth especially during the period between 2003-2007, the large income gap between the above-mentioned elites and lower-middle class deepened destabilization as one of the root causes of 2011 protests (Dworkin 2016:53; Paciello 2011:111). Yet, again as the case with Tunisia, the governing elites within the system of cronyism who were

empowered by the regime in Egypt counteracted as a revolutionary force during the protests (Dodge 2012:65).

Likewise and markedly, during the Arab Spring demonstrations Egyptian military sided with the protestors as the case in Tunisia, but somehow differently. The factor that separates Egypt from Tunisia is the strong military presence in the country. Contrary to Tunisia's relatively weak and apolitical military under Ben Ali, Egyptian military under Mubarak was the strongest institution in the country's political and economic system hence was the key for the regime's survival. As a matter of fact, the military in Egypt has always been an important "political player behind the scenes" (Rabou 2017:95). In addition, the military has largely been dependent on the West for military aid in maintaining itself (Ezrow 2015:9). For example, the annual aid package with approximately \$1.3 billion that the Egyptian military received from the US in the aftermath of the peace treaty with Israel in 1979 increased the military's power in the domestic arena (Brumberg and Sallam 2012:4). Given that, the continued support and flow of military aid from the West, over a prolonged period of time, sheds some light on why the military in Egypt first did not act when the events started until it became clear that the public and the West approved Mubarak's removal –as in Obama's remarks (2011) stressing that "an orderly transition" must begin in Egypt. The military then pressured the Egyptian leader to resign. After the ouster of Mubarak, the council of military officers, namely the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (the SCAF), came into power for a year of interim period. This followed the first democratic presidential elections when the Muslim Brotherhood's candidate, Mohamed Morsi, was elected president under the Islamist coalition government of the Brotherhood and the Salafist Al-Nour Party, which marked a year of *civilian rule* free of military involvement. Before Morsi, all Egyptian presidents since 1952 always came from military.

Over time, however, growing dismay, public discontent and frustration at the government's policies and concerns that the Muslim Brotherhood-led government may monopolize its power grew higher. Yet, "the protesters' hoped-for transition democracy proved elusive, however, as post-revolutionary politics became polarised between the newly ascendant Islamists on the one hand and the military as well as liberal and secular forces on the other" (BBC News 2015). Gradually, the tension mounted leading to a

new mass protest movement against the government in 2013. Consequently, the military, under the leadership of the then defense minister and military chief, General Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, sided with the protestors and intervened in July 2013 to force President Morsi out of office. Subsequently, in December 2013, the Muslim Brotherhood was declared a terrorist group by the military-led interim government and banned from politics, by which its political wing would not be allowed to participate in the next electoral competition. As predicted, Sisi won the 2014 presidential elections and became the president of Egypt.

2.3.1.3. In the case of Libya—officially Socialist People's Libyan Arab *Jamahiriyah* [state of the masses], and formerly the Libyan Arab Republic, both under the rule of Colonel Qaddafi, the regime structure was, in practice, authoritarian personalist dictatorship between 1969 and 2011. The country, formerly an Italian colony after the Italian-Ottoman War of 1911-12 [Tripoli War], became independent in 1951 after the French and British control. With the end of monarchy following Qaddafi's coup d'état in 1969, the country changed into 'Libyan Arab Republic'.

Bordered on the west by Tunisia and Algeria and on the east by Egypt, Libya is a considerably large country by landmass, made up of three provinces historically – (West) Tripolitania, (East) Cyrenaica, and (Southwest) Fezzan— yet with only a population of approximately 6.5 million. A resource-rich country, Libya is notably a major energy exporter for both natural gas and oil as the holder of Africa's largest proved crude oil reserves –discovered in commercial quantities in the late 1950s (McKenna 2011:100)— as well as the fifth-largest holder of Africa's proved natural gas reserves started to be exported in 1971 (EIA 2011;2015). On the one hand, the Arab Spring events started in Benghazi that is based in the eastern province of Cyrenaica considered as the most neglected province during Qaddafi's regime among the three, regarding the fact that it basically served as the seat of power for the Sanussi monarch by King Idris before Qaddafi. On the other hand, the region critically possesses most of Libya's oil and water resources (Bassiouni 2013). However, in Tripolitania province, which contains the capital Tripoli, Qaddafi built his base of support among the tribes and elites, where there is considerably less oil resources compared to Cyrenaica (Bolling 2015).

Indeed, the discovery of large oil reserves in 1959 greatly changed Libya's future including its economy and political standing in the world arena. Before the oil boom, Libya was receiving financial support from Western countries, offering them military bases in return (Arnold 2017). However, the outbreak of the 1967 Six-Day (June) War escalated already high tensions in the region between Israel and its Arab neighbors causing a change in the political attitude of Libya from moderate towards virulent anti-Western context (Arnold 2017). After Qaddafi deposed the king and proclaimed Libya a republic in 1969, he removed the US and British military bases and then nationalized all foreign-owned petroleum assets in the country in 1973 (Bennett 2012:201). This notwithstanding, as Zoubir (2009a:402) indicates:

If, for economic reasons, Westerners tried to cooperate with the Qaddafi regime in the years that followed his coming to power in 1969, the overall relations quickly deteriorated. This was mainly due to the fact that Arab nationalism and anti-imperialism constituted the main foundations of Qaddafi's political regime. In general, Libyans believed that their country and the Arab world should oppose the colonial powers, Western imperialists and their expansionism into the region through Israel.

Even so, because Libyan strategic geographical position and oil wealth attracted Western powers, they tried to pursue close trade relations with the country despite the fact that they found Qaddafi and his intentions on the international scene 'outlandish' and 'unpredictable' (McKenna 2011:105; Zoubir 2009a:404). Actually, during the Qaddafi era Libya's relations with the international community, particularly with the West, is regarded rather fluctuated, tense and antagonistic. Qaddafi was perceived as a state sponsor of international terrorist and radical groups against Western interests, most especially seen by the 'Lockerbie case' –when the Libyan officials were accused and charged for the bombing of Pan Am flight 103 exploded over southern Scotland killing 270 people in 1988 as a revenge for Ronald Reagan's 1986 bombing on Tripoli– as well as other alleged accusations on Libya after which the UN and the EU imposed severe economic sanctions on the country (Zoubir 2009b; Khader 2013; Wouters, and Duquet 2013).

Importantly, Zoubir (2009a:403-405) notes that the EU, at the time, faced a considerable dilemma in terms of its commercial relations with Libya, because; first, Libya was Europe’s major energy supplier and an important commercial importer although it posed various threats to European security. And second, while being a close ally for Europe, the EU’s interests conflicted with those of the American ones due to its attempts to impose an oil embargo on Libyan oil, which would have damaging consequences for Europe. But, despite strong pressure from the US, Europe rejected any boycott on Libyan oil, because of its heavy dependence on it, resulting only American oil companies withdrew from Libya, while Euro-Libyan economic relations continued to grow. At the same time, heavy sanctions over suspected terror links put pressure on Libya since the 1980s up until the time when 2003 diplomatic settlement by the U.N. Security Council Resolution –after which Qaddafi regime accepted responsibility for its past terrorist actions, ended its support for terrorism and the pursuit of WMD– restored relations and formally lifted economic sanctions on Libya in exchange for those concessions (Morton and Hernandez-Ramos 2015:22).



Source: U.S. Library of Congress

“From 2003 until 2011, Libya’s economy improved dramatically as international trade was allowed and foreign investment developed the country’s energy markets”

(Morton and Hernandez-Ramos 2015:22). In conjunction, the economy of Libya became so heavily dependent on the oil sector, representing approximately 95 percent of all its export revenues (Fanack 2018). As far as Libya-EU economic relations are concerned, they developed relatively good relations regardless of political tensions (Zoubir 2009a:404). The EU, before 2010, was “an important trading partner for Libya accounting for 70% of the country's total trade” even though it decreased to 53,8% after the civil war (European Commission 2017c). To be more specific, for example, Libya became one of the major suppliers of energy to the EU due to quality of its crude oil and proximity to Europe, in that according to EIA (2011), “85% of Libyan oil goes to Europe” with Italy, France, and Spain being the leader recipients (seemingly, yet paradoxically, marked by the colonial legacy), in addition to Germany. On the other hand, Libya obtained only an observer status in the Euromed partnership (EMP), and did not conclude a Free Trade Agreement with the EU where trade relations have taken place on a bilateral basis. Although the country largely borders the Mediterranean Sea, it was excluded from EMP principally because of the imposition of unilateral sanctions against it that time (Khader 2013:23). Predictably, ever since the events of the Arab Spring, Libya was not able to become a member either.

Given the above, one may argue that including economic reasons, aggravated with the global economic and financial crisis, both internal and external conditions brought Libya to corruption. Zoubir (2009a:402) points out that “internal conditions (the rise of radical Islamism, effects of sanctions, popular discontent, and so on) and external events (terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001, the ‘global war on terrorism’, increasing Western demands for oil and gas, illegal emigration, regional isolation, etc.) were the main factors that led Libya to pursue policies which have enabled it to regain its place in the international community, without the regime having to abandon its cruel domestic authoritarianism or to initiate democratic reforms”. Therefore, some brief background information of the totalitarian Qaddafi regime which was founded on the idea of radical Arab nationalism –under the influence of neighboring Nasser’s Egypt mentioned previously– is necessary to shed light upon the underlying dynamics and pathways behind the brutal 2011 Libyan civil war, which is largely considered as the direct consequence of the regime.

Under Qaddafi's regime, governing principles were derived from his 1975 *Green Book* ideology, in which the country was institutionalized by a unique government system, known as the 'Third Universal Theory' that combined elements of socialism, democracy, pan-Arabism, in consort with Islam, all outlined in the book (Bell and Witter 2011; Fanack 2017b). In 1977, the official name of the country became "the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab *Jamahiriya*". Under the *Jamahiriya* system, power was resided in Libyan people through various congresses and committees, despite the fact that in practice Qaddafi and his entourage had all the political power (Joffé 2014:16-17). In that, a revolutionary authority, separate from the people's authority, was established like a state within a state, as well as a parallel military force to protect the leader and his inner circle (his family and clan) in order to counter the strength of regular army (Ezrow 2015:3). The military of the country was, as a result, greatly weakened so that it would not threaten the leader through a military intervention.

Predominantly, Libya's political structure was based on a deeply rooted tribal model with clan-based extended families. Due to fragmentation within this tribal system, various tribes with different ethnic communities caused macro-divisions between the aforementioned three provinces playing a crucial role in Libyan politics and society (Bassiouni 2013: xlv- xlvi). As such, unequal development and distribution of resources across these provinces, despite Libya's oil wealth, also resulted in "regional differences along socio-economic lines" (Bassiouni 2013: xlvi). This was also worsened by the fact that within the circumstances of an extensively personalist regime by which Qaddafi imposed an oppressive ruling over his people, these subnational regional divisions that were united under the ideology of pan-Arab identity, instead of the creation of a Libyan identity and national unity, corresponded with his "divide-and-rule" purposes (Lesch and Haas 2016). Moreover, Anderson (2011:6) notes that Libya did not have a "system of political alliances, network of economic associations, or national organizations of any kind". Essentially, under Qaddafi's extensive patronage system, the institutions of the Libyan state, too, serviced the regime. Yet, every national institution, including the military, was divided by the cleavages of kinship and region (Anderson 2011:6). In this context, when the Libyan state collapsed, the central bank and the national oil company survived as the only two genuine state institutions, including the military split between supporting it and joining the rebels (Joffe 2017).

All the above may be considered as the beginning of an “institutionalized chaos, economic decline and general arbitrariness” (BBC News 2017b). Ultimately when the uprisings reached to Libya, a couple of days after Mubarak’s fall in February 2011, to be hit by dozens of anti-government protesters, particularly in Cyrenaica, the country was handed over to escalating chaos and extremism. A second, albeit hopeless, stage of the transition emerged when radical terrorist and various militant groups from the troubled areas of the Middle East fostered rapidly in Libya, also threatening the regional security. Following the outbreak of bloody civil unrest, the US, France and the UK made efforts to intervene Libya as an international reaction. UN Security Council authorized a no-fly zone over Libya and air strikes to protect civilians, over which NATO assumed command (BBC News 2017b). Yet, the anti-Qaddafi NATO coalition, that was mainly led by France and the UK, was quick to end *Jamahiriya* following the overthrow and execution of Qaddafi through direct military intervention by NATO forces, yet presumably to protect the civil population in response to human rights violations associated with the civil war –and most possibly to be able to secure the most important Western interests in the region. However, along with NATO intervention, which in contradiction greatly damaged Libya’s infrastructure and ended up with civilian casualties, the collapse of the government and the defeat of the Libyan military became the start of a sustained period of chaos, instability and lack of institutional control (Morton and Hernandez-Ramos 2015:24). With the power vacuum left by Qaddafi’s fall, violent political conflict over Libyan territory and resources emerged while at the same time neither single nor strong Libyan national government was able to be established. Most importantly, as a result of the fact that NATO concluded its participation in Libya after the intervention and abandoned the ground (Morton and Hernandez-Ramos 2015:22), the US and European states were blamed for the chaos considering that they failed to remain involved in the country (Toaldo 2016:65).

Under the civil war, Libya –with all the prerequisites such as worsened political, economic and social factors resulting from the absence of a centralized authority and nation-building– turned into a *failed state* with an uncertain future while remained vulnerable to extremist forces (Dodge 2012:67). To top it all off, “the emergence of Daesh (the so-called “Islamic State”) in strategically vital areas of Libya has further

complicated the conflict in Africa's most oil-rich country and raised security concerns in nearby states" (Cafiero and Wagner 2015). Indeed, oil production was highly disrupted and decreased by 70% in 2011 having a major impact on the Libyan economy (ACAPS 2017). Accordingly, Libya has been increasingly seen, by Europe, from the perspective of security threats ranging from terrorism and migration to energy security. As Toaldo (2016:64) explains, "sprawling militias with a grip on the weak central government; the prospect of uncontrolled migration through and from the country; a rising jihadi presence— these have framed the EU's perception of Libya".

On the political front, while the struggle between 'Islamists' and 'anti-Islamists' (or 'secularists') continued for the control of Libya, the Justice and Construction Party, the political branch of the Libyan Muslim Brotherhood which has long opposed to extremist militancy, gained seats and made further efforts to lead the government in 2012 so that it would follow a successful similar electoral path like in Egypt and Tunisia⁸⁵. However, after the military coup in Egypt that ousted the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, Libyan Brotherhood also lost power against the anti-Islamist group in the country which led by former Libyan army general Khalifa Haftar. Haftar, who is mostly viewed as the Libyan version of Egyptian military leader Abdul Fattah al-Sisi, launched his military campaign 'Operation Dignity' to target Libyan Islamists, professedly in order to secure neighbors Algeria and Egypt, while at the same time called on Egypt to engage militarily in Libya to protect its own borders (Wehrey 2014).

So, to conclude, as the political deadlock has continued for years especially since the summer of 2014, Libya has been deeply fractured into two rival parliaments and three governments in which case no one group could significantly establish strong presence and stability in the country (Boserup and Wichmann 2015:39-40). In that sense, it could be said that the outcome of the Arab Spring events in Libya were atypical compared to those took place in Tunisia and Egypt that were mentioned before.

⁸⁵ The Muslim Brotherhood in Libya was primarily founded in 1940s during King Idris period. When Qaddafi came to power, he worked vigorously to eliminate the Brotherhood. Ultimately, the Islamist group could not find any opportunity to set up any organizational structures or institutions within Libya and build enough support of the overall population.

2.3.1.4. In the case of Algeria –officially People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, which became a province of the Ottoman Empire for 300 years, then ruled by France more than a century, the impact of the colonial legacy has constituted a key component of cooperation between Algeria and France even after the country gained independence from France following the Algerian War of Independence (1954-1962). As a consequence, France deeply transformed Algerian political, economic and social structures and understandings. Layachi (2016:492) argues that “the integrationist policy pursued by France deeply instilled Algeria with French values and culture and is partially responsible for the nature of contemporary Algerian politics, which is split between Western-oriented elites and the masses who identify more strongly with their Arab, Berber and Islamic culture”. Yet, despite the painful past of the two countries, France, inside the EU, maintains its position as a major trade and energy partner of Algeria and at the same time French language has remained influential in the country while Arabic became official language.

On the political front, it must be stressed that much of the origins of the Algerian political system can be traced back to the late 1980s’ transition period started with anti-regime protests and continued with intense government repression in 1988’s ‘Black October’ (Middle East Monitor 2016). This period is widely referred to as the ‘first Arab Spring’ by Algerians (Parks 2013:3). Fundamental reforms and revisions in the political system were then made over the next years in order to end the crisis.

In the authoritarian single-party political system of the country, the secularist as well as military-backed National Liberation Front (FLN) became the sole legal ruling political party (and still is the most powerful and influential political party in the coalition), established in 1954 during the struggle for independence. Other parties were legalized later in 1989 even though they have not been able to provide a political vision for Algeria so far as a result of the very nature of the authoritarian rule (Ghezali 2011). In reality, the military strongly dominates power with FLN. This caused a three tiered structure in the system of government in which the army, party, and the state apparatus share power even though there was a constant competition among them (Metz 1994, Layachi 2016). Within this structure, unlike Egypt and Tunisia, the political, military and business elites of the country, commonly known as *le pouvoir* [the power], have

predominantly been linked to the ruling authority of the country (Burke 2013:12; Parks 2013:3-4). Consequently, this extensive oligarchical system has caused widespread public disenchantment and disaffection with state institutions (Parks 2013:7-9). Metz (1994) points out that:

A strong authoritative tendency and the supremacy of the military, both remnants of the war for liberation, have resulted in a sharply divided society in which the political elite remains highly remote from, and generally unaccountable to, the masses of its impoverished, unemployed, and dissatisfied citizens. State-supported socialism, largely fed by petroleum exports, and "depoliticization" of the masses during the 1970s replaced any real source of legitimacy for the regime and left the masses almost no form of political expression short of violent confrontation.

Meanwhile, in spite of reform efforts of the governing FLN Party toward a market-driven economy, failure to end high unemployment and economic hardship – especially due to oil shock of 1973-74 and the second oil shock of 1979-80 causing a sharp drop in natural gas and petroleum export earnings– threatened political stability in Algeria paving the way for fueling Islamist activism. As state socialism failed to resolve the country's social and economic problems, the abovementioned antigovernment riots in the late 1980s led to the collapse of Algeria's single-party system dominated by FLN since 1962.



Source: U.S. Library of Congress

Whereas Islamic groups flourished in the country, Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), a radical Islamist party that was established in 1989, gained massive public support from large part of Algeria's society in national elections. Even if this resulted in competitive political pluralism by the adoption of a multi-party system in 1989, the country ended up with polarization between the secularists and the Islamists. FIS gained victory in the first democratic elections, but second round of the vote never happened as the army intervened and installed a military government in 1992. FIS was officially banned the same year. The electoral process was cancelled and a state of emergency was declared, which would last nearly 19 years since 1992. After the Arab Spring events started in 2011 the state of emergency was lifted only then. Tragically, the coup led to a brutal civil war during the 1990s, ending with an estimated over 100,000 lost lives (BBC News 2017a; Parks 2013). Unlike in Egypt and Tunisia, political Islamists were firmly restricted in Algeria until after 1995, when they were left with only symbolic power sharing (Burke 2013:12; Parks 2013:12).

Importantly, over the course of the Algerian Civil War, in 1999, Abdelaziz Bouteflika won presidential elections with the backing of the military and he is still-standing in office despite ill health. His secular military-backed government made reforms in order to end the 'black decade' of the 1990s through a program of 'peace and

reconciliation' and strengthen Algeria's economy and reputation after the Civil War (Fanack 2017a). He also tried to improve relations with the West, and Morocco, based on the unsolved Western Sahara dispute.

Political reforms aside, it must be stressed that under the regime of Bouteflika, Algeria as an oil producer since 1958 and an OPEC member since 1969, has become "a key supplier of gas to Europe" while at the same time "an ally in the Western campaign against Islamist militancy", especially after 9/11 (Markey and Chikhi 2014). As Caruso and Geneve (2015) argue, for Europe "the Algerian government, in particular, is a desirable bulwark against terrorism and irregular migration from the heart of Africa". Therefore, locating only a few hundred miles from France, Spain and Italy as the largest country in Africa by land area, Algeria has strategically been very important for Europe with both its geographical proximity and its vast petroleum and gas reserves.

As far as economics is concerned, the EU is Algeria's largest trading partner just like other North African states, accounting for 54.1% of its international trade in 2016, whereas Algeria is the EU's 22nd largest trading partner for imports and 20th largest partner for exports (European Commission 2017d). As a strategic player in the geopolitics of energy in the post-oil era, today Algeria has turned out to be one of the top three gas suppliers of the EU together with Russia and Norway (Grigorjeva 2016:3; Kilpeläinen 2013:351). According to European Commission (2015:6), for example, "[] the EU will use all its foreign policy instruments to establish strategic energy partnerships with increasingly important producing and transit countries or regions such as Algeria and Turkey; Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan; the Middle East; Africa and other potential suppliers". All this seems to reflect EU's soft-balancing efforts on Russia for its vital energy interests in North Africa through advancing energy partnership with Algeria while reducing its existing dependency on Russian energy. On the other hand, militant groups operating in the region raise concerns over security risks to oil and natural gas installations in the region (EIA 2016). Considering all factors, from a theoretical perspective, it could be argued that terrorism, illegal migration as well as guaranteeing the free and secure flow of oil and gas constitute the important interests of the EU in Algeria hence are related to its defensive motives in the region consistent with the aim of maintaining its status quo.

In regard to the 2011 revolts in Algeria, it is largely seen unsurprising when the events of the Arab Spring did not alter the political system in Algeria. With the rapid response of the Bouteflika government by initiating reforms such as lifting the state of emergency and promising further reforms, the country could manage to avoid the turmoil. As the country remained immune to the effects of the rapidly-spreading unrest, it has been commonly called the “missing Spring” (Layachi 2016). Parks (2013:7) describes the reasons on a set of dominant grounds such as authoritarianism, oil and gas (re)distribution, October 1988, Islamism, *le pouvoir* and civil war. In more concrete terms, these mean that:

- 1) The Algerian regime has been able to buy peace and stability by redistributing oil rent;
- 2) Algeria’s Arab Spring happened in October 1988;
- 3) Algerians fear the effects of another lurch toward political Islam;
- 4) Algerians fear the ferocity of their military, which is willing to do whatever it takes to remain in power;
- and 5) Algerians do not want to return to *fitna*, or civil war (Parks 2013:7).

Furthermore, although Algerians showed demand and anger with socio-economic grievances in 2011 protests, with the fear of instability they did not enforce any change-in-government unlike Tunisia, Libya and Egypt (Joffe, in Hussey 2014:15-16). They showed low participation to the parliamentary elections, too. All this was also due to perceived complexity of the Algerian regime, the heterogeneous structure and ineffectiveness of the opposition and civil society, besides aforesaid fearful memories of mass violence during the civil war of 1990s (Arieff 2013:6; Janning and Frontini 2013:6). So to conclude, as Boserup and Wichmann (2015:8) categorizes, Algeria became one of the key cases, along with Morocco, that did not experienced anti-regime mass revolt, but saw some kind of regime-initiated reforms during the Arab Spring events.

2.3.1.5. In the case of Morocco –officially the Kingdom of Morocco, which is a constitutional monarchy, the king, Mohammed VI is the latest head of state since 1999. He is the center of *Makhzen* known as the political, economic and military system (White 2016). Within the system of Makhzen, policy decisions are made by the king

and his close advisors. Therefore, Morocco is mainly considered an “authoritarian monarchy” (Leech and Gaskarth 2015:141). In addition, the country has been ruled by the Alaoui dynasty for the last four centuries.

Unlike the other four states of North Africa, Morocco never, in history, became a province or part of the Ottoman Empire even though it had once been a powerful Muslim Empire. But likewise its neighbor Algeria, it could not escape from being subject to European pressure and coming under the colonial rule after the turn of the century. With the Act of Algeciras in 1906, France and Spain were given control of the political and financial affairs of the country. As a result, French and Spanish protectorates –regardless of the fact that the French held most of the country– were established after the Treaty of Fez signed in 1912, thereafter ended Moroccan independence. With the mid-1930s, though, Moroccan national independence movement started to gain momentum (White 2016) resulting at the end of the French-Spanish colonial dominance and proclamation of the Kingdom of Morocco in 1956 as a governmental structure.

According to BTI (2012), after independence the Moroccan monarchy needed to gain support from specific parts of the population so as to rapidly initiate new policies. It has therefore “based its rule on the rural elites, the urban bourgeoisie and the military” (BTI 2012). But even so “the largely uncontested traditional, charismatic and religious legitimacy” of the monarchy has not alone been adequate to ensure sustainable development and structural reforms (Colombo 2011:165). This is mainly considered to rely upon the fact that after the 1950s independence, the Moroccan monarchy has pursued an external orientation “unlike its neighbors who more thoroughly embraced Arab socialism” mentioned previously (Posusney 2003:274).

More specifically, similar to the experiences of Algeria and Tunisia towards political democratization and economic liberalization, Morocco’s policies have been shaped mainly by the EU and the US after decolonization. It has enjoyed warm relations with western powers receiving great amount of aid. Colombo (2011:179) argues that Moroccan regime has been able to foster relations with the EU “in the framework of the EU-Moroccan Association Agreement, signed in 1996 (and entered into force in 2000)

in the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, beefed up by the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) since 2004”. In the context of wider development of relations, the Kingdom has become “the largest recipient of EU funds in the framework of the European Neighborhood Policy” (European Commission 2017e). Since 2008, Morocco has enjoyed to be the first southern Mediterranean country that has gained an “advanced status” with an increased symbolic leverage both domestically and regionally (Monjib 2016:36; Colombo 2011:180) within the frameworks of both European Neighborhood Policy and the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA) launched in March 2013⁸⁶. In retrospect, as Colombo (2011:180) highlights, “the extent to which Morocco has concretely benefited politically and economically from the Advanced Status is questionable due to the fact that the Joint Document did not introduce substantial concessions in the fields of strategic interest for Morocco”.



Source: U.S. Library of Congress

⁸⁶ According to European Commission, “negotiations for a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) between the EU and Morocco were launched on 1 March 2013. Four negotiating rounds have taken place so far, the most recent in April 2014. The DCFTA will build on the existing EU-Morocco Association Agreement which entered into force in 2000 and created a Free Trade Area between the EU and Morocco. The overall goal of the negotiations is to create new trade and investment opportunities and ensure a better integration of Morocco's economy into the EU single market. The DCFTA also aims at supporting ongoing economic reforms in Morocco and at bringing the Moroccan legislation closer to that of the EU in trade-related areas.”(2017).

Unsurprisingly, from independence onward, both France and Spain have ensued their interests in Morocco impinging critically on European security and economic interests. Morocco's close geographic proximity to Europe through the Strait of Gibraltar locating between the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea⁸⁷ as well as aforementioned historic colonial ties with France and Spain links the country to the EU with considerable dependence. Of great strategic and economic interests of the EU in Morocco, especially related to its defensive motives, are controlling illegal migration (through crossing the Strait of Gibraltar), fighting terrorism and ensuring access to energy supplies in North Africa. Monjib (2016:36) posits that Morocco, as one of the most populous countries of the Mediterranean with over 30 million (in contradiction of its relatively smaller size), stands as the most reliable and stable ally of the EU in the region against security threats. Yet, he (2016:36) depicts the paradox that human rights and democracy in Morocco have not been the most important aspects for the EU since economic ties and security cooperation always take priority for Europe. Similarly, Colombo (2011:180) emphasizes that most strategies by the EU are framed in terms of security and economic gains while "praising the piecemeal and window-dressing political measures of the Palace, instead of pushing for a coherent democratization strategy".

It should be yet noted that Morocco has used its ties with the US and EU in order to boost its economic growth in the macroeconomic sphere. Like most other North African states, the Kingdom took foreign loan in the 1980s from the international lending agencies, in particular from IMF and WB, albeit these left the country with massive debt. In the 1990s, the EU started to support neo-liberal economic reforms in Morocco through EMP and ENP that deepened bilateral relations including areas related to politics, economics, regional stability and security. In this respect, "the country launched a major structural adjustment program based on liberalization and privatization fostering foreign direct investment" (Colombo 2011:162-163). The EU finally became Morocco's largest trading partner, accounting for 55.7% of its trade in 2015 whereas the country is the EU's 22nd trading partner representing only 1% of the EU's total trade with the world (European Commission 2017e). After all, despite the

⁸⁷ Note that Gibraltar is overseas British territory, which became also part of the EU when the UK joined the Union in 1973.

image of a liberalizing country with a range of reforms, these have been considered insufficient to stimulate long-term growth and sustainability in Morocco (Cavatorta 2016:88).

As far as energy is concerned, Morocco, unlike its neighbor Algeria, is an energy deficient country importing as much as 95% of its energy needs (REEEP 2014). This indeed makes Moroccan economy quite fragile. Kilpeläinen (2013:351) argues that “the lack of substantial reserves prevents Morocco from emerging as a possible supplier of conventional energy to the EU. It can therefore only act as a key transit country for Europe in bringing Algerian gas to the continent (European Commission 2013a).

On a regional scale, Morocco has not been able to isolate itself from various developments. Its problematic relation with Algeria over the long-running unsolved conflict over the sovereignty of Western Sahara, for instance, remains a considerable issue, blocking cooperation throughout the whole region. In addition, instability within Morocco’s surroundings, as is the case with the Arab Spring, has brought significant economic and political costs to Morocco likewise in all other regional actors in North Africa. This has, as a result, hindered a common regional approach and complicated North Africa’s relations with the EU as a whole (Lesser *et al.* 2012:8).

Upon the outbreak of the Arab Spring in Morocco, the monarchy quickly initiated the launch of new constitutional reform measures against political and socio-economic problems in order to preempt any challenges. Cavatorta (2016:86) argues that “contrary to the demands of demonstrators in Tunisia and Egypt, however, the protesting crowds never demanded the end of monarchical rule”. As a result, the scale of demonstrations remained lower than seen in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya, which is also why it is widely called “partial awakening” (Pace and Cavatorta 2012:126). According to Daragahi from Financial Times (2014), Morocco, by disentangling political chaos and economic effects of the revolutions, has projected a steadier path in contrast to elsewhere in the region. On the other hand, like Tunisia and Egypt, Islamist party –the Justice and Development Party (JDP or PJD)– has won the elections in the immediate aftermath of the uprisings and forced the monarchy to abandon the official political sphere (Pace and Cavatorta 2012:128). However, Moroccan monarchy could manage to

stay in power at the expense of the Islamist-dominated government. Although Islamist movement benefited from the situation politically, Morocco saw only limited changes after the Arab Spring (2012:73). So contrary to expectations “by the summer of 2011 the Moroccan Spring was effectively over, to the relief of the ruling elites and the international community” based on the factors which are generally considered to be “the religious and historical legitimacy of the monarchy; the tried and tested strategies of ‘divide and rule’; and depolitisation”. (Cavatorta 2016:87).

2.3.2. Policies and Actions Taken by the EU during the Arab Spring

Having given a complex set of domestic characters of each North African state affected by an overarching relationship with Europe that focused on profound political changes and rapid transitions in the aftermath of the Arab Spring, and remarkably seen that “each uprising was different, focused on domestic, national issues and comprehensible in its own light” (Dalacoura 2012:63), it is now important to dig deeper into European reactions that hint at the EU’s balancing strategies towards the region, as is the case. Since deepened regional developments as initial causal factors have necessitated a new security agenda for the EU in the post-Spring period, it has made adjustments in its defensive position to ensure its power and survival. Then, the question should be structured around the following question: how did the EU respond to this complex, dramatic and manifold developments of the Arab Spring associated with a defensive neorealist mindset?

Defensive neorealism suggests that actors’ decisions are driven by perceived threat of insecurity. Also, for the theory, balance of power should be maintained to bring in more security. Given major interests and threats of European security –colonial history, geographic proximity, oil dependence, counterterrorism and illegal migration– the Union for nearly six decades, has built muscles to protect and maintain its expanding sphere of influence and reduce the threats it has perceived in North Africa reflecting a defensive stance. At the same time, as Dworkin (2016:12) highlights, “the security threats are more pressing now than they were before 2011”. Bearing in mind that the picture in the region has now altered, all the cases in the post-Spring era have yet raised the level of perceived threats to European interests and security, pushing the

EU and its members into new behavior. A relevant illustrative example can be the refugee flows, put differently humanitarian crises, becoming much greater after the events. Here, it could be argued that the EU, consistent with the theory, has perceived the flow of illegal migrants and refugees as a greater threat for its territorial integrity and border security, in particular, and its economy and prosperity, in general, hence took a defensive stance by tightening migration controls.

Given the fluid situation after the Arab Spring events, defense-oriented policies have regained much prominence in the EU's policy-making agenda towards the region. As a result, the major argument that this section points out is that the EU's performance in the sub-case of the Arab Spring 2010-2013 developments in North Africa presents empirical evidence of the EU's persisting security considerations, hence a useful test for major arguments of defensive neorealism reflecting the Union's security driven and interest-based, which is a status-quo oriented, policy implementation in the region.

For many decades, Europe has been a favored and natural partner for the Northern Arab states of the Mediterranean as they have been heavily dependent on the EU for economic growth, political stability and regional integration. While the EU's pivotal role is mostly relied on a range of tools and measures, as laid out previously, these can be considered to have been formed as balancing cooperation initiatives in an attempt to maintain its own interests and security as well as contain other emergent great powers from gaining more influence within a competitive and conflictual regional context. Nevertheless, by the events in North Africa, the balance of power in the region has greatly transformed causing new systemic pressures for Europe conforming to defensive neorealism. This accordingly generated new political and economic results for the Union. Broadly speaking, in addition to the new chaotic geopolitical context in North Africa, the existence of new external players, which were attracted by the region's strategic and economic potential, has resulted in greater regional polarization. As defined in detail previously, polarity, in theory, is determined by distribution of capabilities which shapes the particular balancing strategies of actors. In such a context, the strategic importance of Europe for North Africa, with heightened tension in the region added to competitive regional polarity where external actors already bolstered—to name the most powerful, Russia and China along with the US—has relatively

lessened. In such a context, the EU, in theory, has evaluated the political intentions of the main challengers in the region, and accordingly devised new measures to counterbalance extra-regional great powers. In practice, it has revised and strengthened its internal capabilities and competences as well as reinforced its regional/external alliances with partners through multilateral means in an attempt to protect its interests and increase its sphere of influence in the region, as shall be demonstrated in the next chapter.

As a matter of fact, the so-called Arab Spring took the EU by very much surprise and completely unprepared (Koch 2011; Khader 2013:34). It was widely thought that the EU officials did not give a timely, coherent and coordinated response. At first glance, it was hoped that the events would follow similar democratic results as took place in the 1990s across Central and Eastern Europe (Maggi 2015). While the events unfolded, the EU's reaction remained hesitant and uncertain, "cautiously trying to figure out where the public revolts are going with Europe's best autocratic friends" (Isaac 2012:7). Dworkin (2016:13), referring to the aftermath and result of the events, argues that "instead of a phalanx of long-serving autocrats, the EU faces authoritarian retrenchment in Egypt, fragmentation in Libya, a precarious transition in Tunisia, ambiguous stirrings of change in Algeria, and a Moroccan regime that is interested in presenting at least the image of serious political reform". Also in his words (2016:13), "the directions taken by these countries owe little to EU engagement (leaving aside the 2011 military intervention in Libya)".

To this end, the EU's reactions can be seen as a combination of its long term inclination for regional stability and its more short term institutional shortcomings and divisions (Behr 2012:78). Aliboni (2012:14) stresses that European response has come partly from the EU and partly from national governments. This implies that not a shared and unified but a divided response by the EU members, in accordance to their own foreign policy agendas, were reached in some cases of the events. Tunisian case provides an example of such a situation. While France supported the regime in Tunisia, others did not react initially and remained silent. Similarly, a fraction within the EU to develop a consensus throughout the events can also be illustrated in the military intervention of France and the UK in the Libyan crisis in an effort to respond to humanitarian crises after the threat of violence against civilians by Qaddafi regime, and

to justify and legitimize the intervention. While France and UK were enthusiastic for military intervention, Germany and Italy opposed to get involved and other EU members remained cautious (Isaac 2012:8-9). Here, a critical strategic mindset of France and the UK, within defensive neorealist realm, might be maintaining access to Libyan oil and minimizing the terrorist threat from Libya as additional causal factors under the intervention decision (Davidson 2013:319).

From the above discussion, theoretically it could be derived that in defensive neorealist account member states in the EU sub-system are status-quo powers; simply put 'defensive positionalists' who aim at security maximization through preserving the existing balance of power. The decisions taken within the EU sub-system toward the external environment are shaped by a degree of power asymmetry as the necessary feature of the anarchical system and self-help mechanism consistent with the expectations of neorealism. In Waltz' words (1993:49), "structural change begins in a system's unit, and then unit level and structural causes interact". Though this theoretical lens, it could be argued that the EU's systemically cautious responding to the Arab Spring has been initially determined by unit-level domestic reasons and then interacted with structural factors in the emergence of its new European-level security policies towards North Africa.

While above-mentioned disagreements and divided strategies on the European sub-systemic level could be underscored as the dominant landmark of the EU's response to the Arab Spring, it should also be reiterated that Europe had, since 2008, lurched into its own financial crisis as well as political tensions within the euro zone, in which a lack of enthusiasm among much of the EU member states prevailed in supporting North African countries in transition. As a result, the reasons for their reluctance and bystander policies should be considered manifold. Within the new regional/global world order, European policies in North Africa were pursued by member states' "fear of radicalism, migration, and terrorism, which is reflected throughout the regional and bilateral initiatives taken" (Wouters and Duquet 2013:239). Yet to be anticipated, "wide disagreements among European capitals on how to react to Arab uprisings, the sudden influx of illegal migrants and refugees, increased energy concerns, and the rise of political Islam, especially in radical forms, appears to be the

key reasons behind this weak response” (Isaac 2012:3). All these considerations have given weight to security interests of the member states at the very end, conforming to defensive neorealism.

In the meantime, “Europe’s utter failure in Tunisia drew considerable criticism from the press and civil society organisations and encouraged a gradual rethinking at the level of both the EU and its member states” (Behr 2012:79). After some hesitation and lack of consensus, the EU, as Barrinha (2013) pinpoints, pressed the reset button in Euro-Mediterranean Relations with security being the key concern. While the Arab Spring events gradually intensified, the nature of European policies and commitment towards its neighbors in southern Mediterranean has greatly changed. In concrete terms, this included the EU’s critical and rapid reassessment of its foreign and regional policies towards the Southern Mediterranean first, and then, a revision in conceptualizing these with a set of key frameworks. In the first official statement to the situation in Tunisia on 10 January 2011, the then High Representative Catherine Ashton and Enlargement Commissioner Stefan Füle (European Union 2011a) called for restraint and condemned the violent repression of demonstrators. Only after Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali stepped down in January, they expressed their support for the democratic aspirations of the Tunisian people (European Union 2011b):

[] We want to express our support and recognition to the Tunisian people and their democratic aspirations, which should be achieved in a peaceful way. [] Dialogue is key. We reiterate our engagement with Tunisia and its people and our willingness to help find lasting democratic solutions to the ongoing crisis.

On 31 January 2011 the EU called for an on an orderly transition in Egypt through democratic reforms paving the way for free and fair elections (European Council 2011). As Behr (2012: 79) pinpoints, “although EU policy remained highly reactive, it no longer sought to stem the overall tide of events and jumped on the revolutionary bandwagon”. Subsequently, as from March 2011, the EU responded to the Arab Spring through various actions, mechanisms and programs by its new-born diplomatic service –namely European External Action Service (EEAS) – that was

launched in January 2011⁸⁸. One might argue that the silence of the EU at first depended on the inappropriate timing until diplomatic institutions under EEAS were ready to face post-Spring events. From a theoretical standpoint, the creation of EEAS by the Lisbon Treaty has strengthened the actor structure of the sub-system EU, as it aimed at acting as a single voice and platform for external policies of the Union where also the Arab Spring became the first “major foreign policy test” as a challenge (Wouters and Duquet 2013:231).

The EU’s reactions to the Arab Spring events can be outlined in two policy documents: first, in March 2011 with the joint communication of the High Representative/Vice President (HR/VP) Catherine Ashton and European Commission (2011a) proposing “A Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean”; and second, in May 2011 entitled “A New Response to a Changing Neighborhood” (European Commission 2011b) within the framework of a fundamentally ‘renewed European Neighborhood Policy’, stating that “the EU needs to rise to the historical challenges in our neighborhood”. In the first Communication document, it was emphasized that the EU should be pro-active and assertive in its approach to the region:

The events unfolding in our southern neighborhood are of historic proportions. They reflect a profound transformation process and will have lasting consequences not only for the people and countries of the region but also for the rest of the world and the EU in particular. The changes now underway carry the hope of a better life for the people of the region and for greater respect of human rights, pluralism, rule of law and social justice – universal values that we all share [] For these reasons *the EU must not be a passive spectator* [] European countries have their own experience of democratic transition. The European Union has a proud tradition of supporting countries in transition from autocratic regimes to democracy, first in the South and more recently in Central and Eastern Europe. (emphasis added)

⁸⁸ Note that the very first joint statement was made on the situation in Egypt on 29 January 2011 by Merkel, Sarkozy and Cameron on behalf of their countries, not the EU. See, Joint statement by Nicolas Sarkozy, Angela Merkel, and David Cameron, available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/joint-uk-france-germany-statement-on-egypt>

The key novelty in these policies was Catherine Ashton's 'Three Ms' –money, market access and mobility– emerged out of ENP revision, following the principle of 'more for more' based on positive conditionality⁸⁹. It meant that both resources and incentives would be provided for the Northern Arab states to encourage them through a sustainable change (Behr 2012a:10-11). The principle of 'less for less', on the other hand, indicated that "the EU intended to downgrade its relations with regimes, which violated human rights, including making use of targeted sanctions" (Seeberg and Shteivi 2014). In terms of 'monetary' support within the more-for-more principle, SPRING Programme (Support for Partnership, Reform and Inclusive Growth) was launched in September 2011, "as a strategic and cross-cutting financial instrument to support democratic transformation, institution-building, and economic growth" (Wouters and Duquet 2013:239). An €350 million of assistance during 2011-2013 was provided to North African states to realize these goals in 2011 and 2012 (Wouters and Duquet 2013:239). The EU also made more than €1 billion of extra funding available through its European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) for the period 2011-2013 (Behr 2012a:10). Yet some argue that the revised ENP was insufficiently funded by the EU considering the fact that the economies of North African states, which have further deteriorated after the uprisings, suffer large amounts of debts, hence the funds were not significant enough to recover and truly help the process of democratization and development in the region (Isaac 2012:12-13). With regard to 'market access', the EU adopted 'Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas' (DCFTAs) for a progressive economic integration into the EU's internal market. And for 'mobility', the main innovation of the ENP review was to offer some Mobility Partnerships to its southern Mediterranean partners (Behr 2012a:10-13).

According to Burke (2013:6), all these measures outline how ENP and other mechanisms the EU established would be used to advance democracy in these countries while also promise to increase the resources for the region. On the one hand, it is pointed out that "moving beyond mere rhetoric, the EU put forward both a revised ENP and a set of policies particularly directed at the Mediterranean, such as the Partnership

⁸⁹ "Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy", European Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Brussels, 18 November 2015, p. 3, available at https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/european-neighbourhood-policy-enp/330/european-neighbourhood-policy-enp_en

for Democracy and Shared Prosperity with the South Mediterranean, the Dialogue for Migration, Mobility and Security with the Southern Mediterranean Countries, the Support for Partnership Reform and Inclusive Growth (SPRING) programme, and the Civil Society Facility (to both the Mediterranean and Eastern Europe)” (Barrinha 2013:209). On the other hand, some observers discuss that there is a contrast “between the strong normative rhetoric and the poor outcomes of EU democracy promotion in the MENA countries” (Bauer 2015:30). And this strengthened the idea that “the European Union was an interest-driven actor, concerned primarily with securing energy supplies and migration control, taming political Islam and fighting against international terrorism by cooperation with authoritarian Arab partner countries” (Bauer 2015:30).

Brauch (2011:84) argues that “instead of reacting to perceived security threats, a proactive security policy should focus on the prevention of the causes and effects of risks”. In the case of the EU’s security behavior in North Africa, theoretically it could be derived that it is anarchy encouraged Europe to maximize its security with restrained and moderate behavior after the events began. Therefore the EU did not actually facilitate a proactive approach to policymaking in the region first, but, once in need of change by new threat perceptions, it has positioned itself in a new defensive posture depending on the persistent security needs through new multilateral mechanisms and strategy-led new instruments, mentioned above.

While the Union as a status-quo power in the Arab region has established close relations with authoritarian regimes, it has ignored promotion of democracy in exchange for protecting its security interests. Therefore, in the Arab Spring case, the EU was hesitant at first, questioning its long-lasting engagement with the authoritarian regimes, in contradiction with its record of democracy promotion in the region, and then suddenly underwent a new realist turn from being a passive actor, for example from the case of Tunisia, to a new active attitude, in the case of Libya, to secure its interests in the new regional context. As a result, the Arab Spring empirical case corroborates the defensive neorealist behavior of the EU from a theoretical framework, showing its motives for self-interest and security maximization.

CHAPTER 3

ANALYSIS:

EUROPEAN BALANCING STRATEGIES IN NORTH AFRICA

3.1. The Impact of Shifting Security Patterns in North Africa on the EU from Defensive Neorealist Thinking

In line with defensive neorealist reading, the EU has always aspired to maintain its status-quo and maximize regional security in its southern periphery by strengthening its position among other major powers operating in the region as well as furthering its ties with the Northern Arab states of the Mediterranean. This is the reason for why, over the past decades, the EU has developed various regional mechanisms through the formation of alliances and relationships involving its Southern Mediterranean neighbors. As the regional landscape has evolved into a much more security-driven endeavor for Europe, the stability and the future of North Africa have become a matter of increasing priority for the EU's collective foreign policy actions that are very much related to its defensive objectives built on strong colonial legacy and geographical proximity linked tightly to its strategic and economic concerns. Yet, growing regional security threats aggravated by the destabilizing effect of the Arab Spring have also been a catalyst for the EU to launch and adopt arguably more coherent policies in the security patterns related to its defensive motives. Under the circumstances, it could be argued that the EU has gradually strengthened its defensive posture, by which fundamental changes on the threat perceptions and security needs have determined the means and tools it has used in managing these threats, regardless of the fact that most of the initiatives have seemingly generated dilemmas on the other shore of the Mediterranean resulting in relative failure while empowering the role of other external actors.

As this thesis has both a geographical and thematic focus; it could be pointed out that the broad geographical scope spreads across two continents, where the Mediterranean brings together the two sides –Europe and North Africa– linked by geography and history, while the thematic focus consists of political-security and

economic spheres with regard to changing regional security patterns of migration, terrorism, failed states, energy security and economic fields. To be more specific, the thesis inquiries into the case of alliance between the EU and North African states in all thematic areas chosen –migration, terrorism, energy security, failed states and economic relations where necessary; the case of transatlantic alliance toward North Africa on security cooperation under NATO with a special emphasis on terrorism, state failure and energy security; the case of increased Russian reengagement in North Africa with a particular focus on energy security and economic fields; the case of growing Chinese interest and influence in North Africa with an evaluation on expanding trade relationships; and, the case of increased American unilateralism in North Africa with a focus on trade and economic issues.

3.2. Evaluation of Different Dimensions in Thematic Areas

Defensive neorealism suggests helpful predictions to understand various dimensions in each thematic area. By looking through two lenses of balancing behavior, namely balance of power neorealism and balance of threat neorealism, the following table (see Table 2) provides insight to explore the EU's balancing strategies toward North Africa, testament to a defensive neorealist interpretation whether through increasing its capabilities or forming alliances, as was expressed by the previously raised hypotheses being tested by empirical evidence. To restate, the set of hypotheses emanating from the defensive neorealist understanding of security interests of the EU related to migration, terrorism, state failure, energy security, trade and economic issues, read as follows:

1. The EU constitutes a dual strategy towards the US in North Africa; both a *soft-balancing* act to offset US unilateralism in the region and a *bandwagoning* approach to keep the 'US pacifier' in a security alliance against threats that are endangering European security and regional stability.
2. The EU intends to build up its power and enhance its influence against emerging great powers in North Africa in order to preserve its status quo by *soft-balancing* Russia and China.
3. The EU seeks to maximize its security in North Africa against threats that are endangering European security and regional stability by adopting an *offshore*

balancing strategy and so shifting foreign policy burdens to its North African partners through regional tools.

Table 2, composed by the author, paints a broad and combined picture of European balancing strategies toward North Africa, which are explored in the following sections under each thematic heading based on empirical material, mainly in the form of EU documents or statements. The table, being separated by balance of power and balance of threat theories, is divided into five columns. As going down in each column, the details of the balancing behavior are expanded vis-à-vis the relevant subheading by combining each balancing behavior of the EU with related actors, security patterns, the means and tools as well as the relevant examples from various angles, where possible. The subheadings in Table 2 consist of the following:

Type of Balancing: Describes the conception of balancing (e.g. soft or hard) to define balancing behavior within balance of power or balance of threat neorealism

Balancing Behavior: Describes certain approach of the theory with a deeper explanatory distinction on the balancing behavior (e.g. internal or external)

Balancing Strategy: Describes the underlying aspirations and critical maneuvers set out for policymaking in formulation of the balancing behavior (e.g. through increasing capabilities or forming alliances)

Motives and Interests: Describe the underlying reasons causing the balancing behavior.

Applied Sphere: Describes core security dimensions in examining balancing behavior (e.g. political or economic)

Security Patterns: Describe security issues (e.g. migration, terrorism) to be taken into consideration as empirical evidence while exploring the causal logic of balancing

Tools under CFSP: Describe the EU's major balancing instruments to promote regional stability and maintain the status-quo for security maximization (e.g. ENP, EEAS)

Means: Describe strategy-led mechanisms and practices in policymaking (e.g. multilateralism)

Some Cases: Describe several illustrative examples of existing empirical evidence as accompaniment to the theoretical discussion

Table 2: European Balancing Strategies in North Africa

EU Balancing Strategies in North Africa	Balance of Power			Balance of Threat	
	on Russia	on China	on the US	on the US	on North Africa
Type of Balancing	Soft-Balancing	Soft-Balancing	Soft-Balancing	Bandwagoning	Burden-sharing / Offshore Balancing
Balancing Behaviour	Internal Balancing	Internal Balancing	Internal Balancing	External Balancing	External Balancing
Balancing Strategy	Diversification of Energy Supplies, Expanding Capabilities	Expanding Capabilities, Maintaining Status-quo in the Region	Resource Allocation, Expanding Capabilities, Competences and Resources	Entering into Alliances	Entering into Alliances
Motives and Interests	Increased Russian Energy and Trade Influence in the Region	Increased Chinese Economic Presence in the Region (e.g. BRI and MSR)	Increased American Unilateralism in the Region	Against Threats of Abandonment and Entrapment by the US	Against Security Threats
	Russian Arms Sales to MENA	China's Quest for Raw Materials and Energy in the region	Aim of Gaining Global and Regional Influence	Shared Security Threats with the US	
Applied Sphere	Mainly economic	Mainly economic	Mainly economic	Mainly political-security	Mainly political-security
Security Patterns	Trade and Economic Issues, Energy Security	Trade and Economic Issues, Energy Security	Trade and Economic Issues	Energy Security, Terrorism, Failed States	Migration, Terrorism, Failed States, Energy Security, Trade and Economic Issues
Tools under CFSP	EMP, ENP, UfM, Lisbon Treaty	EMP, ENP, UfM	EMP, ENP, UfM, Lisbon Treaty	Security Cooperation through CSDP within NATO	EMP, ENP, UfM, EUGS, The Creation of EEAS,
	The Oil Stocks Directive	Comprehensive Cooperation Agreements	European Security Strategy (2003, 2008, 2016)		Energy Security Strategy, Energy Union
	Energy Union	The creation of EEAS by the Lisbon Treaty	The creation of EEAS by the Lisbon Treaty		Bilateral Agreements, 'More for More' Partnerships
	Revised ENP	Revised ENP	Revised ENP, DCFTAs		FTAs and DCFTAs
	European Energy Security Strategy	Institutional Frameworks	ENPI and SPRING Programs		
Means	European Commission Directives, Green Papers, Regulations,	European Commission Directives, Green Papers, Regulations,	Civilian/Normative Power Europe, Multilateralism	Multilateralism The EU-US Energy Council	Multilateralism
	New Policies, Agreements (diplomatic means)	New Policies, Agreements (diplomatic means)	Coalition-building with North African Countries	Humanitarian Intervention	Med-TSO, MedReg
Some Cases	Renewable Energy Projects for Diversification of Energy Supply	Attempts to co-finance BRI/MSR through European Investment Bank or European Bank	ENP versus BMENA ENPI versus MEPI ESS versus NSS	NATO Intervention - Libya	Frontex, EUBAM, GAMM, MEDA, JHA Programs, Renewable Energy Projects such as TuNur and MSP.

3.2.1. Migration

In 1995, the year when European Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) was signed with North African states; an aide of the then French President Jacques Chirac said that “if we don’t help North Africa, North Africa will come to us” (European Voice 1995). Today, nearly one third of the world’s international migrants (78 million) live in Europe while it was far less at 27 million in 1990 (IOM 2018)⁹⁰. Clearly, following the Arab Spring events, migration in its various forms has been at the top of the EU’s agenda by the massive influx of people, labeled as the so-called *migration crisis* or *refugee crisis*. Yet, one might expect that migration is neither a new phenomenon in the Mediterranean basin nor merely a side effect of the Arab Spring. The history of migration patterns in Europe from North Africa started mainly during decolonization period and continued after the oil crisis of 1973. Parfitt (1997:867) explains that “in the wake of the economic reversals of the 1970s and 1980s, the Union became anxious to reverse this flow of migrants into Europe, adopting strict controls to limit immigration”. The EU started to formulate strategies on migration issues towards its southern vicinity in the 1970s with the aim of managing or limiting refugee flows into Europe (Boswell 2003: 619). However, these measures have proven inadequate and eventually a severe illegal immigration problem has emerged (Parfitt 1997:867). It is the end of the Cold War that actually transformed the perceived threats of Europe with the particular concern of migration as an emergent *security* issue-area.

In the past, immigrants were seen a threat mainly to economic security (e.g. to the labor market, etc.), or culture and demography of the receiving country as a “soft security” consideration (Brauch 2011:67). Later, the largest-ever Southern enlargement of the EU in 2004 brought the Union closer to an unstable region like North Africa. Since the 1990s, particularly in the post-9/11 era which is characterized with significant acts of terror coupled with the 2004 Madrid bombings –noting that Spain is a transit EU member state for terrorist groups from North Africa– migration was started to be linked with prominent global security threats. The phenomenon was associated increasingly

⁹⁰ In the same vein, as mentioned in the report by the UK House of Lords EU Committee (2012), “since the 1990s, the EU has emerged as a major destination region” and “it is now home to approximately 23 per cent of the world’s international migrants, making it second only to North America as a destination region”.

with terrorism that stems from radical groups and ideologies, in other words ‘non-state actors’. Eventually, security concern over cross-border criminal activity and illegal immigration became the new impetus of European countries. So, migration started to be treated within “hard security” issue of concern to European security. In that sense, the EU, with shared threat perceptions of its members to domestic stability, has endorsed a defensive neorealist orientation in migration issues. And eventually the projections, type of strategies or policies in response to migration have differentiated widely from the previous ones.

With hindsight, the defensive neorealist approach would point to balance of threat behavior of the EU triggered by the fear of immigration as an incentive that might be considered as one of the key motivations of the bloc in supporting North African regimes with various frameworks. Since the new regional threat landscape of the post-9/11 era prompted Europe to take steps in threat balancing, one might assess migration patterns of European security practices through the prism of neorealist self-help mechanism and via alliances, namely external balancing. Guided by the basic neorealist principle of self-help, the EU has framed North Africa as a threat in terms of migration. Hence it has first and foremost focused on ensuring its own security and protecting the status-quo. Notwithstanding its concurrent policy failures of ENP (2004 onwards) and UfM (2008 onwards) towards the Mediterranean, “a heightened sense of insecurity in the EU in relation to irregular immigration and a response to the global ambitions of the EU” were clearly emphasized in the 2003 and 2008 updated version of European Security Strategy (Bilgin and Bilgiç 2011:2).

From a theoretical reading, the EU under systemic regional pressure has sought both to reinforce security at borders by self-help mechanism, and utilize its expertise in multilateralism with the regimes of the region by placing several frameworks and instruments. There is ample evidence of subsequent efforts of the EU for tackling migration issues beyond its borders through self-help mechanism after the Cold War. By the 1985 Schengen Agreement (came into force in 1995), a security-oriented notion of migration was prioritized. The 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam represented the first attempt by the EU to formulate policies on asylum-seeking and immigration issues. In 1999, an external dimension to migration as a common policy at the EU level was

added in the Tampere Presidency Conclusions: Justice and Home Affairs - JHA (European Council 1999c). The EU has also further externalized its immigration and border control policies through the creation of Frontex, the main border security agency that was created for a more integrated and stronger border security. Bilgin and Bilgiç (2011:18) argue that “Frontex was established in a political context in which coordinated security practices (including military ones) were deemed necessary to security in and of Europe”. When these measures taken together, southern Mediterranean, or North Africa has been transformed into a “buffer zone around the European Union” or “EU borderlands” (Del Sarto 2010). Put differently, an increasingly ‘us versus them’ division prevailed again strongly between northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean, built up by the attitude of ‘the self and the other’ notion since *Orientalism* (1978).

The constant preoccupation of the EU –mainly through economic coercion– to get North African states comply with its strict anti-refugee and anti-migration policies as well as treaties and agreements take the form in soft power. Miller (2012:354) highlights that “defensive realism advances a multilateral management of the regional balance of capabilities”. On the EU level, regional frameworks and initiatives within the EuroMed (EMP) and bilateral neighborhood policy (ENP via Action Plans) hold defensive European objectives. In contrast, instead of mutual interests, specific bilateral agreements made on border controls between some of the member states who most affected by refugee crisis and some North African countries (e.g. Tunisia and France, Morocco and Spain or Libya and Italy) are testament to the logic of relative gains where some member states’ national interests take precedence.

In the form of burdensharing strategy against migration; the EU has aligned with North African states over Europe’s migration policy, which is based on sharing and shifting the security burden of the EU to regional partners or North African allies through various mechanisms. Consistent with the offshore balancing context described by Christopher Layne (2002: 245), what the EU actually did –before the removal of the authoritarian regimes– was to *transfer* the task of managing the evolving security risks and threats of the region, including illegal immigration, to the local actors, such as Qaddafi regime in Libya. More to the point, while Europe to a great extent needed to

control the flow of illegal immigration from North Africa, the regimes of the pre-Spring era ensured the tackling of these issues beyond EU borders and so helped restrict European anxiety. As Roth (2012) argues, “the West relied on pliant governments to help curb it –to prevent migrants from departing their shores and to accept their summary return” and “in turn rewarded these governments with various trade and aid agreements”. So, in fact, within the context of ENP, the EU’s official discourse of establishing a ‘ring of well-governed states’, whilst pursuing an actual policy of continual supporting status-quo presence of authoritarian regimes turned into a policy of favoring a “ring of states governed under the firm grip of these regimes” (Pace 2010:432). It can be argued that the fragile authoritarian regimes in North Africa have always been the factor of stability and the staging ground of the EU for addressing and guaranteeing mass immigration issues, which illustrates the systematization of the Union’s protection of the status-quo. This seems to have been the major reason for one of the biggest criticisms and challenges the EU is facing by its migration policy which is claimed to be suffering a large gap or contrast between rhetoric and practice, as was clearly depicted many times in previous sections.

The case of the Arab Spring, at the same time, provides a useful test on the issue of migration for theoretical expectations of defensive neorealism. Within the new regional pressures and structural constraints of the Mediterranean security environment, the uncertainty and the level of threat posed by the function of geographical proximity greatly increased for Europe. This prompted the Union to consider reassessing its migration, refugee and asylum policies. Indeed, migration pressures and refugee flows (mostly through Libya) have become much greater with the fall-out of the events. Masses of migrants, refugees and displaced people from North Africa poured into Europe, more specifically Mediterranean-bordering countries of Southern Europe such as Italy, Greece, Spain and France. Park (2015) points out that “the number of illegal border-crossing detections in the EU started to surge in 2011, as thousands of Tunisians started to arrive at the Italian island of Lampedusa following the onset of the Arab Spring”, and this continued with Libyans fleeing political unrest after the fall of Qaddafi. For instance, between January and April 2011, nearly 25.000 North African immigrants (mostly from Tunisia and Libya) arrived at the EU’s southern borders

(Zaiotti 2011), which rose from 104.000 in 2009 and 2010 to nearly 141.000 in 2011, indicating an increase of 35% in comparison with the previous years (Frontex 2012).

Indeed, Tunisia and Libya have been the “key exit nations for many attempting to cross the Mediterranean Sea” (Blair 2016:54). However, the events in the latter led to massive refugee crisis due to escalation of violence and humanitarian crisis. From a defensive neorealist approach, this has been the reason why Libyan migration issue, combined with economics and energy interests in addition to security and terrorism logics is regarded “as an initial causal factor” for the direct NATO intervention of Libya by Britain and France, along with US cooperation (Davidson 2013:323). As underlined before, in March 2011, France and the UK decided to forcibly intervene in Libya. The specific attitudes of the two EU members –as also partly explained in the previous parts– contradicts with the Union’s problem-solving methods like diplomatic, political and economic measures, while military means have normally been the last resort for the Union. However, in Libyan intervention case, these powerful European states led upfront and did most of the military job, while the US (NATO) pursuing from behind (Miller 2012:376). Ironically, it was Libya under Qaddafi regime before, which in part limited African migration through Libya to Europe as a gatekeeper. In the post-Qaddafi period, however, large numbers of migrants have flown to Europe from Africa as well as the Middle East through Libya. In defensive neorealist interpretation, France and Britain, who have Europe’s biggest militaries, sought to protect their interests based on national and regional calculations by eliminating a failed state –Libya– through regime change with the use of force. Put differently, the intervention could be read as part of the policy against a failed state which has threatened the security and upset the status quo of Europe. In 2011, UK Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg vindicated why Britain and Europe needed to engage in the intervention against violence in Libya:

This is a region vital to UK and EU interests [] If people in the UK ask why, I would point at the efforts in recent weeks to rescue British nationals caught up in the turbulent events, at the level of human migration from North Africa to Europe, at the level of trade and investment between Europe and North Africa, and its importance to us in terms of energy, the environment and counter-terrorism [] North Africa is just 14 miles from Europe at its closest point, what happens to our near neighbours affects us deeply.

In the past, Europe has sought to build a partnership with North Africa, but failings on both sides have held us back (Clegg 2011).

It could be argued that the consequence of the EU-wide failures in the initial post-Spring era has been a clear illustration of the fact that the member states' threat perceptions and interests have diverged since the start of the events. It was largely considered that there was not an initial holistic mechanism of the EU to deal with the security issues of the region, including migration. Arguably, there was no common political will on the issue due to national priorities of the member states along with the weakness of the Commission. Since the rise of the Arab Spring, "although new emphasis and great effort was dedicated to democracy-building, the EU did not invent any new responses to short-term migratory movements or long-term migration", but rather "reaffirmed old positions regarding Mediterranean migration" (Fargues 2012:5). As anticipated, this was because the clashes of self-interest and ideals have played a big role in member states' policies, in particular and European foreign policy, in general. In Dworkin's (2016:9) words:

Far from becoming a beachhead of democratic progress in the Arab world, North Africa is fighting to stave off disorder. Waves of migrants are passing through the region to Europe, and terrorist groups are an increasingly severe threat in several North African countries. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that the European Union's stance towards North Africa is now overwhelmingly defensive (Dworkin 2016:9).

All of this raises the question whether the European states really succeeded in developing a *common* policy against migration after the events. Fargues and Fandrich (2012:6) stresses that the fears of illegal immigration and the prospects of spillover of terror-related crimes to Europe rapidly led to efforts on strengthening border control and on pressuring readmission agreements on the EU level, as correlates with defensive neorealism. Classically, as a response, the Union has used legitimate means to achieve realist ends to justify its strategic aims, because a stable regional environment matters substantially for Europe. Catherine Ashton's 'three Ms' (money, market access and mobility) that emerged out of ENP revision following the principle of more-for-more appears to represent a common position. Out of the three Ms, the "mobility

partnerships” aimed at supporting the EU in border control and migration management through concrete negotiations such as Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt (Behr 2012b:83). On the other hand, the principle of more-for-more is also described as “old wine in new bottles” (Behr 2012a:27), because it is a part of the EU’s positive conditionality mechanism that provides aid and assistance in the form of sanctions and suspensions for a long time, which still continued to be the major development policy instead of real domestic political developments beyond aid and funding.

As a critical component of the EU’s external migration policy –the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM) – which was actually designed in 2005, transformed to deal with the migration crisis in 2011 with an aim to extend the scope of the migration policy to cover and enhance the mobility of non-EU nationals across the EU’s external borders. This followed bilateral dialogue and cooperation frameworks with partner countries under GAMM, namely the Mobility Partnerships (MP) and the Common Agendas for Migration and Mobility (CAMM), covering all GAMM objectives. For example, these dialogues allowed the EU to conclude a mobility partnership with Morocco in 2013 and a mobility partnership with Tunisia in 2014. Accordingly, on the EU level, 2011 post-Spring initiatives of the Union included topics related to migration flows and border security through the democracy partnership in March 2011 (European Commission 2011d)⁹¹. All in all, the EU’s efforts to mitigate and balance migration threats through alliances in the Mediterranean basin during the post-Spring era, taken as a test case, offer an empirical confirmation and represent the continuation of its defensive posture where it mainly seeks to achieve survival under the anarchical regional context.

⁹¹ According to European Commission Communication on *the Dialogue for migration, mobility and security with the southern Mediterranean countries* (2011d), “the Dialogue for migration, mobility and security will be launched progressively with the Southern Mediterranean Countries, including through the development of Mobility Partnerships, and taking into account (1) the overall relationship that the EU maintains with each partner country, (2) the current level of capacity in the partner country to manage migration flows, and (3) the willingness of the latter to engage in a constructive and effective dialogue aimed at establishing the Partnership. On this basis, the Commission proposes to start dialogues with Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt”.

3.2.2. Terrorism

Terrorism is one of the dominant topics on the relationship between Europe and North Africa. As the threat of terrorism has continued in the post-Spring era in various forms, the issue remains top concern of the EU. The phenomenon initially attracted the attention of Europe after the 1970s oil crisis, most specifically with the beginning of the political tension of the Arab-Israeli conflict (Bicchi 2003:13). Under the headings of ‘Terrorism, Radicalism, Extremism and International Violence’ the TREVI Group was the first platform created in 1976 at the EU level to fight against and eliminate terrorism by the then 12 EU members. The Group first adopted economic measures in 1987 against countries, such as Libya, who protect and finance terrorism (Crelinsten and Schmid 2012:121-122).

The Islamist movements that emerged in MENA region over the 1980s and 1990s, such as the Palestinian Hamas, the Algerian armed groups, the Lebanese Hezbollah and the Egyptian Jihad, which were associated with transnational activities, became “the subject of unlawful political violence, often termed ‘terrorism’” (Halliday 2005:243-244)⁹². Particularly until the end of 1980s, Europe, along with the US, did not see North Africa as a security problem (Holm 2008:18). For the most part, their policies strengthened the authoritarian regimes behind the scenes in order to maintain a regional presence and exert more leverage on their strategic interests.

One might expect that extremist terrorism arose as a major threat to European continent after the 1990s and replaced the old external threat of communism (COT 2007:51). Within this context, North Africa region is regarded as more of a supplier

⁹² According to Wardlaw (1982:16), “political terrorism is the use, or threat of use, of violence by an individual or a group, whether acting for or in opposition to established authority, when such action is designed to create extreme anxiety and/or fear-inducing effects in a target group larger than the immediate victims with the purpose of coercing that group into acceding to the political demands of the perpetrators”. From an historical angle, Halliday (2005:244) informs that “the term ‘terrorism’, in its original sense taken from the French and Russian revolutions, and refers to abuses of the rules of war *not by rebels*, but by *states*: in the annals of the modern Middle East, and in relations between the region and the west, violations of humanitarian norms, or terrorist acts, by states far dwarf those of opposition groups, in terms of attacks on civilians, killing of prisoners, use of illegal weaponry and the use of terror for political ends”, showing as evidence of Ba’thism in Syria and Iraq, which has committed large-scale massacres of its own people (*italics in original*).

than a consumer of jihadists in the wider MENA region (Aliboni 2012:35)⁹³. Especially after the events of 11 September 2001, global terrorism gained a new momentum and terrorism-related security issues, such as migration, have become top concerns of the EU. Aliboni *et al.* (2008:8) put forward how the EU's Mediterranean policy was adjusted according to new developments: "Since the turn of the century, the EMP has been affected by three strategic changes, namely: (a) the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States, and the ensuing global war on terrorism launched by the US administration; (b) the enlargement of the EU into Eastern Europe in 2004; (c) the increase in immigration towards the EU from the Mediterranean shores and of migrants travelling across the Mediterranean from more distant areas". Notably, terrorism, through the activities and regional ambitions of Al-Qaeda, together with its Maghreb branch based in the Sahara and Sahel area called the "Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb" (AQIM), has become higher on the security agenda of Europe as the phenomenon has become more transnational in nature. According to den Boer and Monar (2002):

11 September has clearly provided a major new impetus to EU Justice and Home Affairs, specially as regards judicial co-operation in the fight against serious international crime. It has also given a boost to crosspillarization of EU action in the security field, with the long list of measures adopted on 20 September being the most comprehensive cross-pillar security action plan ever adopted by the Council [] The predominance of the security rationale has clearly been reinforced by the terrorist attacks. The anti-terrorism package began to occupy almost the entire agenda of the JHA Council meetings after 11 September, with the effect that other areas – such as judicial co-operation in civil matters and asylum policy measures – were put on the back burner.

Theoretically speaking, before 9/11, the logic of relative gains prevailed largely on how the member states would seek to achieve their own security. However, "9/11 accelerated decision-making about terrorism at an EU level" (COT 2007). Before 9/11,

⁹³ Arabic word *Jihad* literally means 'struggle'. Jihadism has various scholarly definitions and usages such as 'jihadist ideology', 'jihadist radicalization' and 'jihadist terrorism'. This is because, from 2002, jihad movements have been mainly labeled or linked to terrorist activities which seek major political goals and changes. In general, the term 'jihadism' can be described as a "radical idea of religion that requires a perpetual war" against external non-Muslim enemies (GTI 2016; Keddie 1994). For a detailed analysis on the term Jihadism, see: Mark Sedgwick "Jihadism, Narrow and Wide: The Dangers of Loose Use of an Important Term", *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 9(2), 2015.

European states could not develop a joint-cooperation strategy against terrorism due to their fragmented agendas based on different experiences with terrorist attacks on their territories (Boer and Monar 2002:24). However, after 9/11, threat perceptions were equalized amongst them and a strong spillover from national anti-terrorism measures gradually transferred to the European level resulting at the harmonization of counterterrorism measures (COT 2007:53). Looking through the theoretical lens of balance of threat, coherence has been championed on the EU level to formulate a common security policy against the terror threat faced. In 2003 European Security Strategy-ESS, it was stated that “Europe is both a target and a base for such terrorism: European countries are targets and have been attacked” therefore should take action for “violent religious extremism”. Haine (2008:27) contends that “the post-9/11 world is thus characterized by an unprecedented combination of non-state actors with easily available capabilities to inflict mass destruction or disruption”. Under the circumstances, 2004 Madrid and 2005 London terrorist attacks linked terrorism more to Europe’s southern neighborhood where it gained a new momentum in connection with the threat posed by jihadist radicalization (Global Terrorism Index - GTI 2016). Along with it came the growing significance of securitization of European Common Foreign and Security Policy, by which the first counterterrorism strategy of the EU was adopted after the London bombings in 2005 –later updated in 2008 and revised in 2014 (Sgueo 2015:3).

According to defensive neorealism, structural modifiers (in other words, causal variables) –one of which is geographic proximity– may increase or reduce aggression (Taliaferro 2000:137). Due to proximity, the EU has faced enhanced security challenges. Because of its geographical landscape of mountains and deserts with a close distance to Europe, North Africa has constituted a good hinterland for terrorists (Smith 2007). In 2013, for instance, overall 152 terrorist attacks occurred in EU member states (Sgueo 2015:2). This demonstrates that close geographic proximity of Europe to MENA from which terrorists originated have allowed the jihadist groups to plan and coordinate their operations into European states by penetrating the continent. Yet, according to a situation report by the Council of the European Union (2002), the EU has not been “only a target for terrorist attacks but also an important area for preparatory and logistic purposes in the widest sense”. The same report also underlines that several suicide

hijackers prepared their terrorist activities in the EU. Considering that terrorists emanating from Europe's south could easily enter the territory of member states amongst the high number of immigrants from the Mediterranean shores or travelling across the Mediterranean from other areas, fueled insecurity within the EU. This was even worsened by the fact that in 2011, one of the jihadist terrorist groups, originally a branch of Al-Qaeda, known as ISIL/Daesh and IS, reemerged in MENA and propagandized its aims with the "visions of a global caliphate and the decline and fall of the West to the armies of Islam" (Tyner 2015)⁹⁴. It carried out and inspired various terror acts in European states as well as around the world. As such, it has been one of the greatest threats to the most powerful nations of the world, which caused hundreds of deaths as well as large costs of damages to the global economy. To the surprise of many, the group seized large portions of Iraqi and Syrian territory while declared itself 'the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria' (ISIS) since 2013. Strikingly, Tunisia, in the post-2010 era, has been one of the largest contributors, with almost half of foreign fighters, to Daesh across North Africa region, following Algeria, Morocco and Libya with less contributions (Ramdeen 2017). Yet, the power vacuum emerged after the fall of Qaddafi allowed Daesh further its aims in Libyan territory, since the country failed to establish a unity government.

In the neorealist perspective on terrorism, the theory emphasizes the phenomenon as a perceived aggressive threat to actors' interests. In a systemically anarchic environment, where European states have faced such a pressing threat associated with non-state actors, stabilization in the periphery has become much more essential for collective security. Therefore, European powers have bond around the shared threat they faced and acted strongly against it. Put it shortly, the Union positioned itself in a broader common defensive posture against the prevailing threat perception. Many steps on the EU level had already been taken in the fight against terrorism since the 1980s, including "the Schengen Agreement (1985), which abolished all internal borders between participating Member States and enhanced judicial and border cooperation; the Maastricht Treaty (1992), which reorganised justice and home

⁹⁴ According to GTI (2016), "ISIL, also known as ISIS, Daesh or the Islamic State, was the deadliest terrorist group in 2015. ISIL killed 6,141 people with an average of 6.4 deaths per attack. ISIL was responsible for 62 per cent of all deaths from terrorism in Iraq, but this is likely a conservative estimate as 37 per cent of deaths in Iraq were by unknown actors".

affairs cooperation, including anti-terrorism efforts within a 'third pillar' and created the law enforcement agency Europol; the first EU Action Plan to fight terrorism (2001), which established a European Arrest Warrant and provided for a common definition of terrorist offences; the appointment of the EU's first Counter-Terrorism Coordinator (2004); and, finally, the adoption of the first overall counter-terrorism strategy (2005) and its updates (in 2008 and 2014)" (Sgueo 2015:3). Yet, political attention to counterterrorism, from the angle of EU cohesion, has increased very fast after 9/11. This could be best illustrated in the migration issue as it has become an increasingly politicized area for the EU and questioned together with rising jihadist radicalism that turned out to be a driving factor in terms of defense cooperation. New EU policies concerning border and immigration controls have been adjusted in relation to radical terrorism with the aim of political stability despite the fact that these new measures limited and sacrificed political liberalization and democratic reforms in the southern countries. Various other steps taken included measures against the financing of terrorist organizations and activities, a common EU arrest warrant and a common definition of terrorist acts" (Tanner 2004:146).

Importantly, spending on counterterrorism has been substantially increased within the last two decades as an evidence of security maximization at the EU level. As emphasized in a report by European Parliament (Sgueo 2015), EU spending for counterterrorism is estimated to have increased from €5.7 million in 2002 to €93.5 million in 2009, indicating a 16-fold increase, thus met by a defensive neorealist understanding. Overall, acknowledging terrorism as a common threat to all European states, a defensive mindset to solving terrorism issue at the EU sub-systemic level where member states would act multilaterally thus appeared. In this context, member states also developed multilateral regional counterterrorism policies and measures based on CFSP and ESS. This envisaged that the Union should pursue its objectives through multilateral cooperation and security partnerships with key actors in the region to work closely.

Within the anarchical regional environment, combined with more pressing factors, such as the Arab Spring, the EU has suffered more from the deterioration of the situation and increase in the risk of terrorist activities in its southern neighboring

countries. As Kausch and Youngs (2012:52) argue, “the ‘Arab Spring’ has created a deeply insecure regional situation due to the insufficiency or even lack of controls at the borders of countries undergoing transition”. This is also worsened by the fact that “ungoverned spaces throughout the Maghreb and Sahel regions have significantly contributed to both the transnational connections between extremist groups and the movement of fighters” (Sharif and Richards 2016). This resulted at many fighters travelling to Libya for support in violent radical extremism (Ramdeen 2017). While counterterrorism has become increasingly important for Europe, EU members sought to better understand terror threat emanating from North African countries so as to react and eliminate the threat through cooperative mechanisms.

Walt (1985:24) scrutinizes that “states are more likely to follow their ideological preferences when they are already fairly secure”, but, when there are pragmatic interests to worry about, “security considerations take pre-cedence over ideological preferences”. Indeed, after 9/11, Europe was concerned about the rise of Islamic parties in its south, because “the combination of the European fear of radicalisation of Muslim communities in Europe and the increasing Islamisation of Maghreb societies” (Holm 2008:30) made the EU think that these parties generate instability and jeopardize European interests in the fight against terrorism. Plus, as mentioned before, the EU needed to control the flow of immigrants through the help of North African governments. The Union therefore supported the ruling autocrats as a factor of stability in control of the repression of these parties, driven largely to fight regional instability for its own security. After all, in the post-Spring era, these Islamist political parties particularly in Tunisia, Egypt and Morocco were rewarded by electoral victory (Dalmaso and Cavatorta 2013:225)⁹⁵. Then paradoxically, the initial rise of these Islamist parties and movements in North African countries –until the 2013 coup against Mohammed Morsi eventually altered the regional order and accelerated the diminution of Islamist movements like Muslim Brotherhood– has been welcomed by Europe “as a positive example” of their integration into the political processes in those states (Colombo and Tocci 2011; Holm

⁹⁵ Respectively, the Justice and Development Party (PJD) in Morocco, Al-Nahda in Tunisia and the Muslim Brotherhood’s Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) in Egypt won significant electoral victories after the Arab Spring started. Several years later, while the PJD has again won a plurality in Morocco’s parliament, Al-Nahda could only become a junior partner in Tunisia’s governing coalition and the Muslim Brotherhood removed from power by the army after the President Mohamed Morsi’s ouster from power (Ghafar and Hess 2018).

2008:17). In that sense, it could be contended that European support of the Islamist authoritarian status quo in North Africa proves as evidence of the EU's survival motive concerned with its security and defense interests.

Defensive neorealist theory clearly addresses that threats must consist of aggressive intentions and offensive capabilities (Walt 1987). What is more, proximate threats may limit "the ability to project power", thus causes balancing or bandwagoning behavior (Walt 1987:23). Translated to EU behavior, the supreme aim of the Union in its terrorism policy towards North Africa has been to create defensive alliances as a response to aggressive intentions of non-state actors, thereby foster security through various balancing mechanisms. In that regard, joint EU strategy against terrorism has been integrated into multilateral mechanisms that stood on two grounds based on external balancing: burdensharing and bandwagoning.

In the form of burdensharing strategy against terror threat; Europe's risks of engaging in the region, both militarily or politically, are expected to decrease. The EU, despite the launch of above-mentioned initiatives on the sub-systemic level, significantly needed to maximize its security to contain the threatening non-state adversaries. According to defensive neorealism, under many circumstances, actors of the international system can overcome difficulties posed by anarchy through cooperation and avoid harm (Grieco 1988:45). Thus, as a defensive positionalist (Grieco 1988), the EU has calculated costs and gains of action, then adopted an external offshore balancing strategy in order to shift foreign policy burdens to its North African allies through regional tools, and intervene only when necessary. In that, as an offshore balancer it remained on the sidelines to be able to concentrate on developing various security initiatives, while multilateral alliances or individual local powers were expected to deter terrorism in the wider geopolitical neighborhoods and ensure collective interests. In more concrete terms, Arab states would provide the security of their own region thereby shoulder a great share of the burden with Europe and prevent terror threat that exerts pressure on all sides. In turn, the EU would promote closer economic integration with the authoritarian regimes –even at the expense of political stability and democracy– by fostering opportunities for financial support and capacity building for counterterrorism through a wide variety of bilateral and multilateral regional

frameworks within EMP and ENP agenda, such as the Action Plans negotiated with each North African country, or the MEDA and JHA programs which contain provisions on collaboration in terrorism.

Overall, before and after the Arab Spring, these mechanisms included; externalizing JHA to partner countries, military operations by the armed forces of these countries, border, airport and maritime security, counterterrorism campaigns against terrorist activities within their borders, counterterrorism laws and constitutional reforms, exchanging information on means and methods, CFSP Joint Actions in the field of terrorism, sharing intelligence, and the development of new multilateral strategies and frameworks linked to international mechanisms such as the African Union's (AU) Counter Terrorism Framework, the United Nations' (UN) Global Counter-terrorism Strategy and the Global Coalition against Daesh (Ramdeen 2017; Wolff 2009:144-153). Yet, on this front, the degree of relationship has depended on the profile of each partner country, where also the weight of former colonial powers still play a pivotal role on the region. To exemplify, Algeria and Morocco –both are being the ex-colonial countries and actors of the vulnerable Sahara/Sahel region in which terror groups are based– have been central to cooperation in the fight against terrorism. This is because, even though the Algerian-Moroccan dispute over the Western Sahara is the security problem for North Africa region, “the American and European fight against terrorism and illegal immigration point to ‘securitisation’ of the Western Sahara which is still perceived as a dangerous area through which smugglers, terrorist and illegal immigrants pass” (Holm 2008:26).

As a point of departure, it is noteworthy to reiterate that prior to late 2010, when autocratic leaders shared with the Union an interest in controlling the risk of terrorism locally (Wouters and Duquet 2013:243-44), cooperation in the area of counterterrorism was based on strategic interests and foreign policy calculations of North African regimes, providing they were not put in jeopardy by Europe (Dworkin 2016:14). This is to say that the regimes used security issues, both terrorism and migration, against Europe as a ‘political tool’ (Kausch and Youngs 2012:51). Whereas the impact of 9/11 forged them to join the fight against terrorism and combat illegal immigration in the Mediterranean security through cooperation and dialogue mechanisms, such as 2002

Valencia Conference, these frameworks also provided opportunities for Arab leaders to legitimize internal domestic problems especially with their Islamic opponents (Wolff 2009:146-147). Indicative of the defensive neorealist logic put into practice, the EU's inconsistent alliance preferences with the authoritarian rulers underline its search for normalizing the relations rather than ensuring democratic change and political reforms, driven to maintain the stability of the status quo in the region, which is linked tightly to the fear that destabilization in the region might impact Europe's vital interests negatively. Eder (2011:432) argues that "instead of tackling the root causes of the terrorist threat from across the Mediterranean by means of a rollback approach, the Union has so far focused on a short term containing strategy" which "minimizes the threat to Europe to an acceptable level [] towards states like Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya".

Given the above, theoretically it could be argued that in order to fight terrorism and contain non-state actors, the EU accepted short-term losses for long-term priorities (Brooks 1997; Gilpin 1993). In other words, it preferred short-term stability in its periphery to achieve long-term stability for Europe's future interests, which is more in keeping with the tenets of defensive neorealism. In that sense, the logic of the EU's strategy of burdensharing mechanism through alliances consists of the efforts of local partners that contribute to collective security of the region in deterring terror threat whilst the Union using limited military capabilities. After all, despite frequently declared that it had a 'responsibility to protect', the EU's use of CSDP instruments to respond to the Arab Spring is considered to have been quite limited (Wouters and Duquet 2013:241; Howorth 2014:4).

In the form of bandwagoning strategy against terror threat; it is considered that the EU sides with the stronger in its south by militarily allying with American power and NATO to maximize its security. Waltz, from a neorealist perspective, validates NATO's survival into the post-Cold war period and symbolizes NATO as "the instrument for maintaining America's domination of the foreign and military policies of European states" (2000:21). In terms of the continuation of NATO after the Cold War, his conjecture (2000:18) that "the recent history of NATO illustrates the subordination of international institutions to national purposes" makes sense for defensive neorealism.

After all, international terrorism in all its forms has now become one of the major threats and concerns with which NATO has to deal today.

Miller (2004:242) argues that “hegemony leads status-quo states to bandwagon with the hegemon and to balance against revisionist threats”⁹⁶. Indeed, for Europe, the regional landscape has evolved into a more security-driven endeavor caused by terrorism, by which the stability as well as the future of North Africa have become a matter of increasing priority for its collective foreign policy actions. Walt (1997:933) argues that when faced an external threat, states may tend to ally with, rather than balance against. They tend to bandwagon with a powerful state if that state offers security through military and economic assistance (Walt 1985:27). At the regional level, defensive neorealist view of bandwagoning behavior relates to status quo reflex of the EU in line with the survival motive to counterterrorism. In practice; instead of confronting the threat alone as a major power, Europe’s tendency to asymmetrically ally with the US in order to balance against the aggression of potential adversaries is a clear instance of its bandwagoning strategy. As both NSS (2002) and ESS (2003) demonstrate, within the transatlantic context, intensive security cooperation with the US has been a fundamental component of counterterrorism policy of the Union. Transatlantic cooperation, such as border controls and transport security including passenger data-sharing, cargo security, biometrics, visa policy, immigration and asylum issues in addition to information sharing (especially on the foreign fighter phenomenon) between the United States and EU police and judicial bodies constitute some examples (Archick 2014:1-7). Moreover, NATO’s planning for military presence in the Libyan shores is another example. Under the circumstances, CSDP is mainly seen as complementary rather than contradictory to NATO, which strengthens bandwagoning view.

As laid out previously, the international security environment has transformed globally and around Europe after the Cold War. While the US has taken advantage of its

⁹⁶ According to Randall Schweller (1994:104), who has made significant contribution on the concept of bandwagoning, argues that “status-quo powers seek self-preservation and the protection of values they already possess; they are security-maximizers, not power-maximizers. For status-quo states, potential gains from nonsecurity expansion are outweighed by the costs of war. While they may seek to extend their values, status-quo states do not employ military means to achieve this end. For this reason, their interest in military power varies with the level of threat to their values”.

‘unipolar moment’, it has sought hegemony for its strategic interests based on the claims of spreading democracy across the world, including the MENA region. With rising concerns about the spread of terrorism and insecurity in the broader region, the EU has become increasingly sensitive to the need to fight instability in the region for its own security. Wivel (2008:302) argues that in such a world order, “Europeans are stuck in dependence”, which is why their aim has been to bandwagon with the US so that they can “free-ride on American security provision”. For example, it could be argued that France’s full reintegration in the military structures of NATO in 2009 could be to increase its influence in NATO as well as enhance European security and defence policy in order to better cooperate with the US. In the post-Spring period, the fact that under the NATO umbrella France along with the UK intervened Libya which is a base for radical terrorist groups, is hence consistent with the counterterrorism strategy of European powers and Europe in general, for free-riding on the US, reveals the behavior of bandwagoning in empirical reality.

On the one hand, Dyson (2013:388) puts forward that in an era of ‘offensive unipolarity’, European bandwagoning behaviour is dependent on both fears of abandonment and fears of entrapment by the US. Regardless of the arguments on the patterns of complementarity and competition between NATO and CSDP, the EU fears that the importance of Europe might be decreasing for the US hence the American hegemon might not be any more supportive for European security problems, seeing that it gradually shifts away from the European Union based on its own self-strategic calculations such as Obama Administration's aforementioned “Asia Pivot” strategy after 2011 (Dyson 2013:387-388). When Barack Obama came to power, in his words (2009), “both sides of the Atlantic”, seem to “fail to acknowledge the fundamental truth that America cannot confront the challenges of this century alone, but that Europe cannot confront them without America”. While the EU and the US share common threats like terrorism, their capabilities and instruments on dealing with these threats differ (military instruments versus civilian means). Consistent with the military gap between the two as well as the context that NATO as an important element of the US constitutes the primary actor in the MENA area, for many it seems that the EU has been destined to accept US hegemony in its own backyard. In retrospect, since 2003 European Security Strategy, the EU’s objective has been to pursue “an effective and balanced partnership

with the USA” (ESS, 2003). Yet with the faltering landscape of European defense cooperation and diversified political cohesion in its policies in North Africa, Europe’s facing uncertainty in its terrorism fight created a strong incentive to bandwagon on US military power. In that sense, the fact that the US has become an influential actor on European foreign policy in regional affairs proves as evidence of the EU’s survival motive concerned with security and defense matters along with a manner of avoiding relative losses.

Notwithstanding the EU’s efforts on the inception and further development of its own military capacity through CFSP/CSDP discussed before, under the immediate pressures of rising terrorism, the Union has willingly accepted a subordinate role to the US within the collective security system of NATO alliance. To the contrary previously mentioned alternative viewpoints on European soft-balancing behavior on the US in security and defense interests, these efforts might be enhancing coherence and synergy between the two sides of the Atlantic on that field resulting positively at an increase in the EU’s overall responsibilities and contributions. From that perspective, it is argued, “the tendency to bandwagon shows that European attempts to increase capabilities are strengthening rather than weakening transatlantic ties”, because “through bandwagoning NATO benefits from European security and defence policy, becoming more durable and stronger than traditional realism expects” (Cladi and Locatelli 2012:1).

To reiterate Walt’s theory (1998:31), he purports that “great powers could guarantee their security by forming balancing alliances”. In that, they seek to have the benefits of “being on the winning side”, which determines that “alliances are a positive-sum game” (Schweller 1994:107). Markedly, the phenomenon of bandwagoning behavior is associated with *change* bearing in mind that “bandwagons roll when the system is in flux; either when the status-quo order starts to unravel or when a new order is being imposed” (Schweller 1994:107). Waltz (1990:29) puts that the structural change and external pressures on the system influence the outcomes and stimulate new actions of the units, finally creating a conditional impact on the outcomes. It could be argued that under the circumstances of the heightened threat of terrorism that led change in European security environment in its neighborhood, the system has shaped the status quo and constrained the relationships among actors, in which these structural changes

have then delivered back into the system causing modifications in security calculations of the EU. Such calculations may also explain why the US still remains vital in assisting Europe from security threats in its immediate vicinity, even more so in the changing regional context after the Arab Spring. The ambiguity and insecurity dominated in the post-Spring era caused the EU to take defence and military calculus more seriously within the framework of Euro-Mediterranean politics, in particular as regards terrorism and immigration. While the EU falls behind the US in military capabilities and defense spending, plus still relies on the support of NATO for defense matters, the sustained role of the US in European security is considered critical, given the case with NATO's Operation Unified Protector concerning the 2011 Libyan Civil War (Dyson 2013:388). European bandwagoning behavior is hence best illustrated within the collective security alliance under NATO.

Questions of significance are then; how long North Africa region has posed a terror threat to the US and to what extent. Geographically-oriented terrorism, which has intensely concentrated in MENA area as a whole since 9/11 and increasingly in the post-Spring era is the most important indication. Great terrorism risks emanating from the region have had critical geopolitical consequences affecting not only the EU's but also the US's interests, considering that North Africa borders three regions: Europe, Africa and the Middle East (Malka 2015:8-9). Clearly, developments such as the growing number of terror groups in North Africa and the Sahel, made the US refocus on the region as a factor that might easily upset "political stability in Europe and NATO's credibility as an effective collective security institution" (Malka 2015:2).

In general, North Africa is considered to have been of great US interest for military and security reasons as well as economic and political motives after the Cold War. While military and security reasons are related to terrorism, radical Islamism and democratization, economic and political aims are mainly related to securing the free flow of oil to the West and opportunities for trade and investment (Zoubir 2008:266-269). In fact, having the new role of hegemonic power after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the US has sought to establish trade links with the countries of the region by the necessity of globalization and seek opportunities linking it with the rest of the Middle East and the Gulf (Zoubir 2008:268). Yet, within the post-9/11 context, the 'global war

on terrorism' has become the US's major foreign policy objective and heightened its attention in North Africa as one of the most terrorism-prone regions of the world. Besides, the US, in addressing and solving the major causes of the threatening structural factors in the broader region, believed that not only military power, but also democratic reforms were necessary to develop for the region. This sparked the drive for the Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative (BMENA) which the Bush Administration launched in 2003 as a multilateral civilian approach to support political and economic reforms in the wider MENA region. Relatedly, Holm (2008:30) postulates that before 9/11, the Maghreb had merely a marginal impact for the US. But afterwards it has had stronger relations in security cooperation with the countries of the region, especially with Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria. Terrorism has become the main security threat for North African countries as well, but they did not have the capacity to cooperate with each other closely while could not even shape the regional balance of power (Dris 2008:257).

One might conclude that although North Africa region has been a "secondary priority" for the US, it still "has the most resources to offer" (Chivvis 2017). All in all, in the post-Spring era, the concerns and pressure perceived by the EU posed by radical groups in North Africa overrode its balance of power calculations towards a heightened terror threat on the horizon. The terror threat and its relation to other issues such as the EU military weakness, the long-lasting impact of the financial troubles, the dependence on oil and gas, the lack of the political willingness of the member states in a troubled and uncertain regional environment due to their own agendas have increased the importance of the US as a strategic ally for the EU. As a result, the EU has opted for bandwagoning through an asymmetric alliance with the US.

3.2.3. Failed States

Libya's pre and post-conflict outlook has drawn exceptional implications for the EU as an immediate neighbor of strategic and economic importance in its close vicinity. There are different concerns about the Libyan security threat for European vital interests ranging from counterterrorism and migration to energy security which are interlinked with each other. Especially after 9/11, the EU has faced immediate security threats

emanating from Libya which could critically cause several risks for European interests including major disruption in the flow of oil. These structural pressures have triggered a notable shift in Europe's security understanding, and influenced its defensive neorealist attitude towards Libya where it has used external balancing mechanisms more often to ensure its security beyond its borders.

Amongst all North African countries, Libya which is commonly labeled as a 'failed/failing', 'rouge', 'fragile' or 'weak' state⁹⁷ is a particular point of contention in this section as an important source of insecurity to the regional agenda of the EU. According to Barry Buzan, a weak/failed state is characterized by "the high level of concern with domestically generated threats to the security of the government, in other words, weak states either do not have, or have failed to create, a domestic political and social consensus of sufficient strength to eliminate the large-scale use of force as a major and continuing element in the domestic political life of the nation" (Buzan, 1983:67). Even though the concept has been used since the 1990s when the unipolar order emerged, it has shifted from domestic to international level particularly after September 2001 with the state failures of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Although discovery of oil transformed Libya economically and brought it closer to the Western powers from the early 1960s (Zoubir 2009a:402), Qaddafi's revisionist policies became source of tension in the relations. That said, Libya, since from the Qaddafi regime, has been identified as a *failed state*, because of the long-standing instability, political fragmentation and deepening fragility as well as state-supported domestic and international terrorism since the 1980s, including previously-mentioned 'Lockerbie case' and the pursuit of Weapons of Mass Destruction by the state. After the Arab Spring, the conflict-affected country, which fell into civil war and widespread violence with constant political crises and failure of state institutions caused by the lack of a stable centralized government and nation-building, has remained a failed state with an unclear future. According to Fragile State Index (FSI, formerly Failed State Index) – an analytical tool for the annual ranking of 178 countries worldwide based on their level

⁹⁷ In this thesis, the concept of 'failed state' is chosen for the case of Libya to provide a commonly used rhetoric for state weakness. The term began widely to be used by in the field of international security from 9/11. In the broader MENA region it is associated with the situation in Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, Syria and Libya.

of stability and fragility on various criteria— renewed conflicts in Libya has gradually moved up its rating into critical worsening (high alert) position in years, scoring 25th in 2018, compared to 54th in 2013 and 111th in 2011 when the Libyan Spring just began (Fund for Peace 2011, 2013, 2018).

Given Libya's proximity to Europe; rapid deterioration of the political situation in Libya in the years leading up to the outbreak of the Arab Spring, and then the termination of the political transition process with the power vacuum seized by the extremist regional militias in the post-2010, Libya has increasingly invoked into chaos, making it an important factor for Europe's defensive foreign policy orientation towards the country. The EU's first step became arms embargo and asset freeze (the Council of the European Union, 2011)⁹⁸. The purpose of these was to isolate Qaddafi for a smooth transition (Kostanyan 2017:22).

The report of Council of the European Union (2014) indicates that; "EU interests and values are directly threatened by the current crisis in Libya: irregular migration is expected to increase due to lack of border control; foreign fighters on their way to Syria and Iraq are being trained in Libya; uncontrolled weapon proliferation and terrorist groups operating in Libya are destabilizing the country and the region, and pose a major threat to the EU; and economic interests (oil and gas sector) are also at stake". At the time of writing, the situation in Libya, along with the uncertainty of the outcome of the conflict, has caused "a more serious breakdown and real damage to U.S. and European regional and global interests—above all counterterrorism and the stability of world energy markets" (Chivvis and Martini 2014:ix).

Gilpin (1981:82) argues that "the desire of groups and states to increase their shares of the economic surplus and the tendency for this surplus to decline as a result of

⁹⁸ During the first three years of the Libyan Spring, the EU's response for post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation, mainly from the European Commission, includes: "the new SPRING/Support to Partnership, Reform and Inclusive Growth programme, with an extra 350 million euros for 2011-2013; plus a new Civil Society Facility (22 million for 2011-2013); and a new set of new bilateral agreements (Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area with Agreements on Conformity Assessment and Acceptance). This results from the bi-annual European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument Strategy Paper and National Indicative Programme for Libya" (Stavridis 2014). Plus, in November 2013, the European Commission announced another 15 million euros support package (European Commission 2013b).

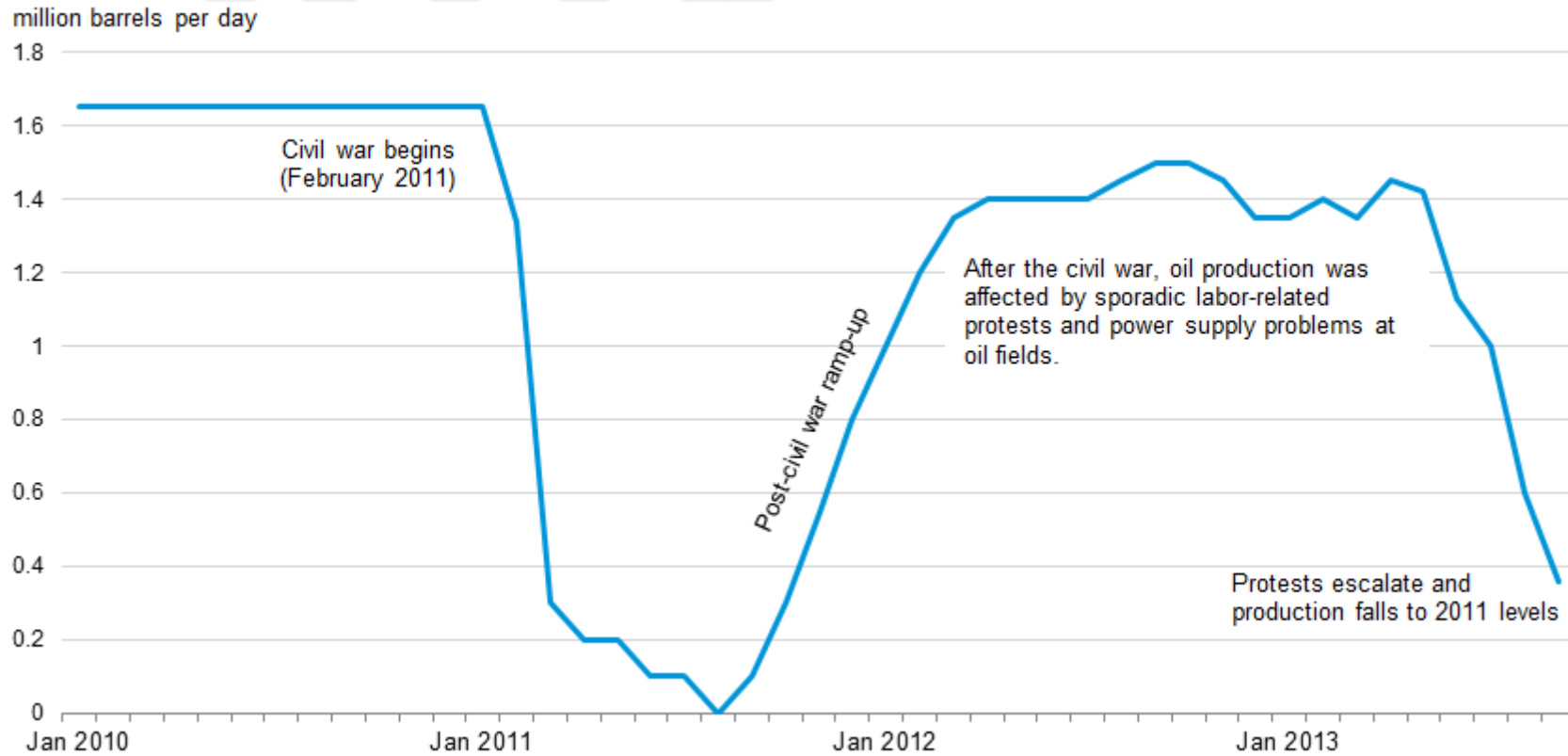
the law of diminishing returns constitute powerful incentives behind expansion and international political change”. In this vein, Chivvis and Martini (2014:56-57) highlight that in Libya control of oil wealth has always been an incentive for the rise of authoritarianism prior to the Arab Spring as well as a major source of motivation for the rise of regional actors and individual groups in the tension and chaos they caused during the post-Spring era. Although Libya’s oil wealth has created problems and economic turbulence, Joffe (2017) posits that financial and energy institutions were the fields that survived after the civil war in 2011. This was particularly important for Europe as Libya has always played an important role for the EU’s economic and security interests as a major supplier of energy and a commercial importer. According to EIA (2015:7), more than 80% of Libya's oil is sold to European countries, with Italy, Germany, and France being the leading recipients. Due to EU member states’ dependence of Libyan oil and gas, disruption of energy flow could seriously affect the majority of European states. Thus, the rapid return of Libyan oil production to the pre-Spring levels was crucial for the EU. But Daesh threatened petroleum infrastructure of the country and advanced towards oil production sites. With the capture of key oil facilities by the militias in 2013, Europe’s oil import from Libya has been curtailed again as a result of disruptions to oil production that escalated in mid-2013 and continued into 2014 (Figure 1). As Chivvis and Martini (2014:53) point out:

Oil production recovered quickly to near-prewar levels after the war, but mounting insecurity proved a major impediment to progress on other economic tasks. Violence distracted the government while scaring off foreign workers and investors, both of which were needed for successful economic stabilization. For a time, Libya was able to subsist reasonably well on oil revenues. Sadly, however, 18 months after Qaddafi’s death, political turbulence-coupled with the weakness of the Libyan state-permitted gangs and militias to take control of multiple oil production facilities, driving oil production back down to dangerously low levels, thereby demonstrating how vulnerable the economy really was.

What is more in Libya between 2011 and 2013 –within the timeframe of this thesis for analyzing the Arab Spring events– due to weak central authority, rival governments as well as rebel and militia groups fighting for power led to chaos by

which state-rebuilding and democratization trajectories collapsed. Eventually, the country has become a 'safe haven' for terrorist groups and could not even remove or prevent foreign terrorist fighters, coming in and out of Libyan territory (Council of the European Union 2014). It is important to note that with the rise of political turmoil, security situation in the country has deteriorated further since 2014. The country has become "home to a range of jihadist groups, from the Islamic State group (ISIS) to al Qaeda-linked groups, to other Salafi-jihadi factions" (Toaldo and Fitzgerald 2016). Global Terrorism Index (2016:17-18) fulfills such claims providing that Libya was ranked 90th in 2010, but by 2015 it rose to 10th. For the meantime, the UN withdrew its staff out of Libya, embassies were closed, foreigners evacuated the country and Tripoli international airport was destroyed by fighters (BBC 2018). All in all, Libya has not shown reliable progress in stability in the years following the aftermath of the Arab Spring; instead, for years it has remained a deeply unstable country while the prevailing fragmentations, hence risks of falling apart in the post-Qaddafi period demonstrate an increasingly worsened political scene. These concerns have greatly threatened the hopes of Europe for political reforms in the country while reinforcing its fears about terrorism, illegal immigration and energy supply from Libya.

Figure 1: Recovery and Decline of Oil Production in Libya after the Civil War, 2010 – 2013



Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), *Short-term Energy Outlook, 2010-2013*

From the defensive neorealist perspective on the failed Libyan state, the EU's behavior can be analyzed as an external balancing behavior within the balance of threat analysis. Waltz (2000:38) puts forward that actors in the international system may choose any strategy for survival; either balancing or bandwagoning. Through alliance formation, bandwagoning or burdensharing strategies are viewed as a response to threats. Burdensharing indicates to shifting foreign policy burdens to regional partners through regional tools. On the other hand, bandwagoning implies alignment with the dominant side against external threats. According to Waltz (2000:38), bandwagoning requires "less effort and extracting lower costs while promising concrete rewards". Applied to the case on the EU, it could be argued that with the discovery of oil in Libya, strategic objectives of Europe towards the North African country have changed. The EU has rationally examined its key interests and security priorities in Libya upon cost-benefit calculations where it focused on short-term goals for realization of longer-term objectives concerning its future strategic direction. In practice, the expected benefits of the EU have exceeded the expected costs, which is why it has chosen to ally with the authoritarian regime to better protect its interests and survive without disturbing the status-quo. Overall, it could be put forward that the EU has implemented a balance of threat strategy towards a failed state through both burdensharing with the regime and a bandwagoning strategy by relying on the US/NATO security umbrella on the threatening issues of the region related to migration flows, secure energy supply and counterterrorism.

In the form of burdensharing strategy against the regional threats emanating from the failed Libyan state; the EU has tended to adopt multilateral diplomacy mechanisms leaving the higher burden of responsibility to the Libyan side. On this front, both the Qaddafi era and post-Qaddafi era should be discussed separately. Prior to the fall of Qaddafi, the EU's conditionality-based regional policies such as the ENP and the EMP⁹⁹ to push for democratic reforms in Libya, as for all North African states, at the same time cooperate in counterterrorism and illegal migration issues, could be considered as a reciprocal mechanism of burdensharing. Torun (2012: 85-86) contends that ENP, intended to be complementary to EMP suffered from a theory-practice gap as

⁹⁹ Note that Libya only has an observer status in the Euromed partnership (EMP).

a result of the fact that it did not succeed in the actual goals aimed at. According to Dandashly (2014:4), “agreements with the EU have essentially focused on security and stability, at the expense of democracy” that mentioned before.

In the Libyan case, it could be argued that the EU’s normative power in the North African country has clashed with European security interests. The EU has basically maintained its status-quo and security interests by cooperating and rewarding –rather than transforming– the regime through the incentive of access to the EU market and gaining financial assistance, in return transferring the task of controlling security risks to the regime. As such, Sottiolotta (2013:8) suggests, the EU has prioritized regime stability and survival over democratization based on “the belief that an authoritarian regime could be as durable as a democratic one, at least in the short-medium term, and the idea that a gradual (rather than an abrupt) democratic transition to democracy was possible and desirable in the Arab world”. From the defensive neorealist perspective, it could be said that Europe preferred short-term stability by allying with an authoritarian regime and containing it so as to tackle the root causes of regional security threats affecting it, as a clear instance of burdensharing.

One might compare the EU’s arguably varying approach towards Libya before and after 9/11. In the 1990s, Libya had a role in forming jihadi and salafi groups which fought in Al Qaeda in Afghanistan and Iraq (Malka 2015:4). Therefore, the country faced sanctions imposed by the EU and UN applied over Lockerbie bombing, the relations remained only bilateral (Wouters and Duquet 2013:234). For example, in 1999, Libya could only obtain an observer status in the EMP. However, “the need for reliable and cooperative counterparts in the Middle East became more urgent than ever in the wake of 9/11”. In this context, the relations between the EU and Libya have evolved at a rapid pace and the country turned into a valued ally of Europe in the fight against terrorism and illegal migration. In time, Libya’s cooperation with the EU on the issues of terrorist groups and its decision to renounce the nuclear program and WMD accelerated normalization with Europe (Wouters and Duquet 2013:407).

From 2003 to 2011, the economy of Libya has boosted as international trade and foreign investment improved the energy markets of Libya (Morton and Hernandez-

Ramos 2015:22). To this end, Europe's burdensharing policy was based on shifting the security burden to Libya for its short-term security interests such as fighting against terrorism and illegal migration. In return, the EU has refrained from taking a harsh stance against the authoritarian rule on repressive domestic policies and human rights violations which is why the Libyan regime managed to avoid political reforms and extend its control over society (Torun 2012:86). Even when European vital security interests were at stake with regard to transatlantic relations, the EU avoided US's unilateral decisions. Zoubir (2009a:404) emphasizes that "close trade relations continued even after the imposition of US unilateral sanctions against Libya". For example, when the US extended *the Iran and Libya Sanctions Act* (ILSA) for five years, the EU opposed these unilateral sanctions (Patten 2001). The relationship with the EU officially began in 2003 when the UN sanctions were lifted (Cardwell 2011:226). The EU started negotiations with Libya for a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) in 2008, yet it was suspended after the outbreak of the Arab Spring in 2011 (Torun 2012:86).

Ever since the events of the Arab Spring, European cooperation patterns with Libya have changed more. The EU eventually "recognised the need to adopt a new approach to relations with its Southern neighbours" (European Commission 2011f). In retrospect, one could argue that "EU policies helped to trigger the so-called Arab Spring, not by intention but by default" (Hollis 2012). According to Torun (2012:81), "for the European Union (EU), this wave of change or the "the Arab Spring" has once again demonstrated that the normative or civilian power of the EU, which declared transforming its neighbourhood in line with its values such as democracy, human rights and rule of law and through peaceful means as its goal, has been far from successful in the region". It is also considered that while pre-Spring regimes were mainly interested in getting funds and assistance to use for instrumental purposes, the EU programs and frameworks had shortcomings hence did not fit into the overall regional setting (Aliboni 2012:23). Ironically, the EU was taken by surprise with the Arab Spring even though it was not prepared for either diplomatic or military action. Eventually, bilateral relations, in particular, on resolving security issues, came to the fore between the EU and each North African state.

While the character of the regional threats was transformed in the post-Qaddafi era, Europe's burdensharing actions have differed from the period when isolationist measures were taken against Libya. According to a report by the Council of the European Union (2014:11), "the lack of regional border security and attendant risks from illegal migration, arms, drugs, health and other forms of illicit smuggling and human trafficking in Libya are all serious threats to the internal security of EU countries and could become a source of destabilisation in the southern neighbourhood, in particular the Sahel/Maghreb region". As Lehne (2017) emphasizes, with the growing turmoil in the region, the EU's departure from the previously ambitious stance of transforming the region moved towards a "defensive mode" to enhance stability and resilience. Therefore, "the EU underlines the importance of inclusiveness of the political process and Libyan ownership, notably through the participation of all legitimate Libyan stakeholders" (EEAS 2018).

Guided by defensive neorealism, the EU's actions in Libya have since been based on crisis management and conflict prevention through diplomacy and multilateralism grounded on soft power burdensharing tools. Case in point, a post-conflict stabilizing mechanism which is called 'EU Border Assistance Mission in Libya' (EUBAM) could be considered as a clear example of burdensharing tool towards Libya. EUBAM Libya was launched in 2013 to support "the Libyans in addressing security challenges through its Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions and operations". In concrete terms, it is a border security crisis management mission for the deteriorating security situation in the country. It empowers and cooperates closely with Libyan authorities and other relevant security actors such as Libyan police and border management agencies/authorities (EEAS 2018). Its purpose is to train and assist them in a number of priority areas on border management, law enforcement and criminal justice. As such, it could be argued, EUBAM Libya has been developed as the soft power projection mission of the EU towards Libya to ally with and share the burden of securing its external border with Libya, representing a threat balancing defensive instrument way forward.

In the form of bandwagoning strategy against the regional threats emanating from the failed Libyan state; Europe's cooperation with the US and NATO as well as UN to contain or resolve Libyan security issues, mentioned earlier, helps illustrate the point. In the case of European behavior on the US, "bandwagoning is chosen for *defensive* reasons, as a means of maintaining independence in the face of a potential threat" (Walt 1985:8, emphasis in original). For instance, "states may balance by allying with other strong states, if a weaker power is more dangerous for other reasons" (Walt 1985:9). The EU has enjoyed the free-riding and bandwagoning on the US against the revisionist policies of Libyan regime in its backyard for many years. During the Qaddafi era, Europe has allowed US aggressive regional involvement to assert its power and leadership in the country. The EU's bandwagoning actions with the US against the failed Libya state during the Qaddafi period were mainly based on the sanctions for the international isolation of Libya, although in some cases, the EU's behavior demonstrated self-interest in realist terms. In the case of Libya, both actors shared common interest and seemed to be in favour of political stability for the sake of regime survival. On the other hand, the US has mainly expected unquestioned leadership while criticizing the military capacity of the EU.

After the Libyan crisis, "the hard power role left to NATO, whereas the EU embraced its 'traditional' soft power role defined by post-conflict institution-building task" (Chappell *et al.*). Walt (1985:8) argues that "a state may align with the dominant side in war in order to share the spoils of victory". The EU has had little room for maneuver against a threatening revisionist and failing neighbor, and so jumped on the wagon of the US within UN/NATO involvement. In that, one might argue that in order to end the violence and provide humanitarian assistance in 2011, the EU member states could have taken the initiative for an EU joint military mission via its Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) through military support. In other words, CSDP could have been operational in Libya. However, as a result of disunity and collective action problem within the EU member states, the military intervention was conducted under NATO lead, aided by the coalition forces of France and the UK as well as a few other countries. In a nutshell, the EU's decision to ally with NATO against the authoritarian Qaddafi regime in the 2011 conflict illustrates bandwagoning behavior on the US.

3.2.4. Energy Security and Dependency

The term ‘energy security’ is shortly described as “the uninterrupted availability of energy sources at an affordable price” (International Energy Agency 2019). The stability in global energy markets and supplies are thus critical. From a foreign policy perspective, energy related tensions and crises threaten security as the phenomenon can be the cause of cooperation or conflict within global and regional dynamics (Grevi 2006:1-2). In line with a neorealist standpoint, the structure of the international system is shaped by the distribution of capabilities among actors. Whenever the distribution of capabilities changes across the system, the structure along with the expectations and behavior of the actors in balance of power also changes. That said, since the turn of the 20th century, in particular the post-war period; energy (i.e. oil and gas) has been a key capability and a powerful political tool for international actors to change the system. This was clearly seen when the energy crises in the Middle East broke out in the 1970s and has since been the cause of ongoing tensions, interventions and instability in the wider region.

After all, even the first step towards today’s European Union was the formation of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1951, designed to cooperate and integrate energy industries in Western Europe. Since then, due to the continent’s lack of energy sources, external energy dependency, the security of supply and the volatility of energy prices have remained the EU’s key foreign policy issues under continued uncertainty. So, from a theoretical perspective, it can be argued that the EU as a defensive positionalist, worrying constantly about its relative gains about energy, strives to increase its capabilities for secure access to energy supplies and minimize the threat of serious energy disruptions.

On a global scale, driven by security and self-help, energy producers, consumers and transit countries, all have different interests and objectives in their energy policies. Amongst these, largest energy market actors such as the US and Saudi Arabia are the ones who globally define energy relations along with Russia¹⁰⁰. In Orban’s words

¹⁰⁰ Today, at the global level; in terms of crude oil production, Russia, the USA and Saudi Arabia account for around 40 per cent of global production, and in terms of natural gas, Russia and the USA

(2008:14), “the high energy prices after 1999 changed the relative capabilities of Russia in the international system as well as its opportunities significantly”. On a regional scale, considering the high dependency of European countries on external sources, Russia and Europe have become mutually interdependent in terms of energy due to the advantage of geographical proximity (EIA 2017). “Driven by this notion of mutual dependence, energy security has become a major goal of the EU foreign policy” (Bahgat 2009:156).

To put into a wider context, the EU, as a political and economic union of 28 member states, is world’s major importer of oil and natural gas. Whereas it has very low energy sources of its own, it consumes one-fifth of global production (European Commission 2012a). The main energy producers in European continent are the UK, Netherlands and Denmark, with extra-EU trading partner Norway. For European states, energy is vital for economic and strategic interests because safe and sustainable supply is a matter of national security. Besides, security for supply is critical for the functioning of European economy and the Union. Having had a relative economic decline during the last decade, energy security has become one of the major threats that the EU has faced due to high-level energy import dependence on non-European resources and the necessity for secure supply. Addressing on the EU’s dependence on energy import, the then president of the European Commission, Jose Manuel Barroso (2009:3) indicated that “in fact, all of us [Europeans], consuming, producing and transiting countries alike, are becoming more and more dependent on each other: security of supply is important for us, but other countries seek security of demand” hence “this is the age of energy inter-dependence”. On this front, “the lack of reliable and sustainable European access to energy represents a clear threat to the continent’s security” (Baran 2007:132). Therefore, one might argue that energy security should be integrated into foreign and security policy of the EU, namely CFSP/CSDP. As Grevi (2006:2) points out, the measurement of energy security is rather vague thus it should be set in a wide-ranging policy mix. In his words (2006:1-2);

account for around 40 per cent of global production. For a complete analysis on recent global energy markets with a specific attention to MENA region, see: Emanuela Menichetti, Abdelghani El Gharras, Barthélémy Duhamel and Sohbet Karbuz, *The MENA Region in the Global Energy Markets* (MENARA Working Papers, No. 21, October 2018).

Energy security is a very broad concept. Perceptions vary from country to country and risks are different if assessed in the short or long-term. It is also essential to differentiate between oil and gas markets. There is therefore no one-size-fits-all solution: different responses are needed to address different problems (2006:1-2).

Generally speaking, structural conditions including the fast growing global and European demand of energy along with the security of supply risks due to geopolitical instabilities in supplier countries have been serious causes for concern over EU energy security¹⁰¹. Initial concerns on energy security have begun in the EU by the 1970s' and early 1980s' energy crises followed by the oil price shocks mentioned earlier. While the EU energy production has decreased in years, European countries have gradually become more import-dependent in achieving stable and secure energy supply. According to the Economist (2019), "such worries have flared again even as, in 2018, imports of Russian gas by EU countries reached a record high". Figure 2 shows the increasing energy dependence rate of Europe between 2006 and 2016. The Union imports around 90 per cent of crude oil and around 70 per cent of natural gas consumed in European countries (European Commission 2014a). In total, 53 per cent of the EU's energy consumption is linked to imports (European Commission 2014a). Significantly, this ratio is forecasted to increase to 70 per cent by 2030 if sufficient measures are not taken for the problem (Maltby 2013:438).

On the other hand, the EU produces and imports alternative hydro-carbon resource, namely hard coal while at the same time renewable energy has a rapidly increasing role for the resource-poor continent (European Commission 2012b). Moreover, "the EU is believed to hold a significant amount of shale gas that could contribute to its supply security, prospects for development look bleak in many member states due to strong environmental opposition and uncertainty about the true extent of deposits" (Dreyer and Stang 2013:1).

Particularly, 2004 and 2007 enlargements of the EU (with a total of 12 new countries joined) and the disruptions of gas in 2006 and 2009 after the crises between

¹⁰¹ Energy demand worldwide is predicted to grow by 27% in 2030, with important changes to energy supply and trade flows (European Commission 2014b).

Russia and Ukraine have brought new dynamics to the EU's energy security agenda. To make matters worse, the rapidly rising energy demand and ambitions of Asian emerging economies, especially China and India, towards securing future energy needs increase the competition with Asian markets for global share of energy (Khoday 2017). All these factors have pressurized the EU to formulate a new energy policy at the EU level. As Youngs (2009) argues, "the European Union (EU) has recognized the importance of incorporating energy security more systematically into foreign policy" hence "committed itself to pursuing an energy security policy based on market interdependence, European unity and long-term governance improvements in producer states".

Attempts for a more integrated internal energy market at the EU level must then be read in terms of security-seeking behavior by which way energy competition may increase, energy prices might reduce and disruptions of external supplies could be sidestepped (Maltby 2013:439). Yet still, one might add that there is significant uncertainty within the multipolar energy world due to lack of reliable data on the availability of proven long-term energy sources as well as level of energy demand and supply, potentially affecting the prices for oil and gas, all of which eventually have a depressing impact on the EU (Kirchner and Berk 2010:875; Summerton 2016:10). Taking all this into account, how the EU balances its energy interests from North Africa region should be discussed from a theoretical point of view.

Figure 2: Energy Dependency Rate, EU-28, 2006-2016

(% of net imports in gross inland consumption and bunkers, based on tonnes of oil equivalent)



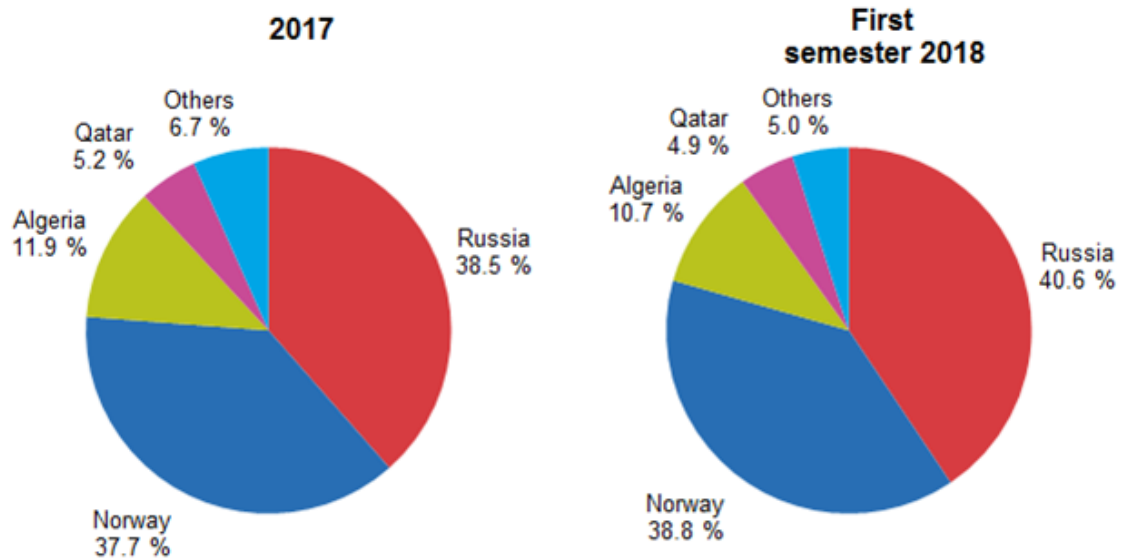
Source: Eurostat Energy Balances - European Commission, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php>

From a neorealist perspective, energy resources, which are part of aggregate power of states, are important factors for power maximization (Česnakas 2010:35). Actors in international relations are concerned about relative gains in economic realm as well as security realm (Powell 1991:1304). While energy resources enhance economic power leading to state power, maximizing welfare is crucial to obtain political and military power. In other words, states should have sufficient economic power to achieve power and survival. While there is constant uncertainty about future energy supply and demand, decline in energy supplies along with high energy prices and growing populations determine states' behavior. Overall, these risks and challenges have an impact on the energy relationships of European countries and energy exporting countries that use their energy resources for economic and political leverage.

European states receive supply of energy from a variety of countries and regions around the world. According to European Commission (2018a), Russia is the world's largest producer of crude oil and the second largest producer of natural gas, and as such,

it is the primary gas supplier of Europe accounting for nearly 40 per cent of EU imports of natural gas in 2018, followed by Norway (39 per cent), Algeria (11 per cent) and Qatar (5 per cent). It exports gas to Europe through largely state-owned energy company Gazprom.

Figure 3: Extra-EU Imports of Natural Gas from Main Trading Partners

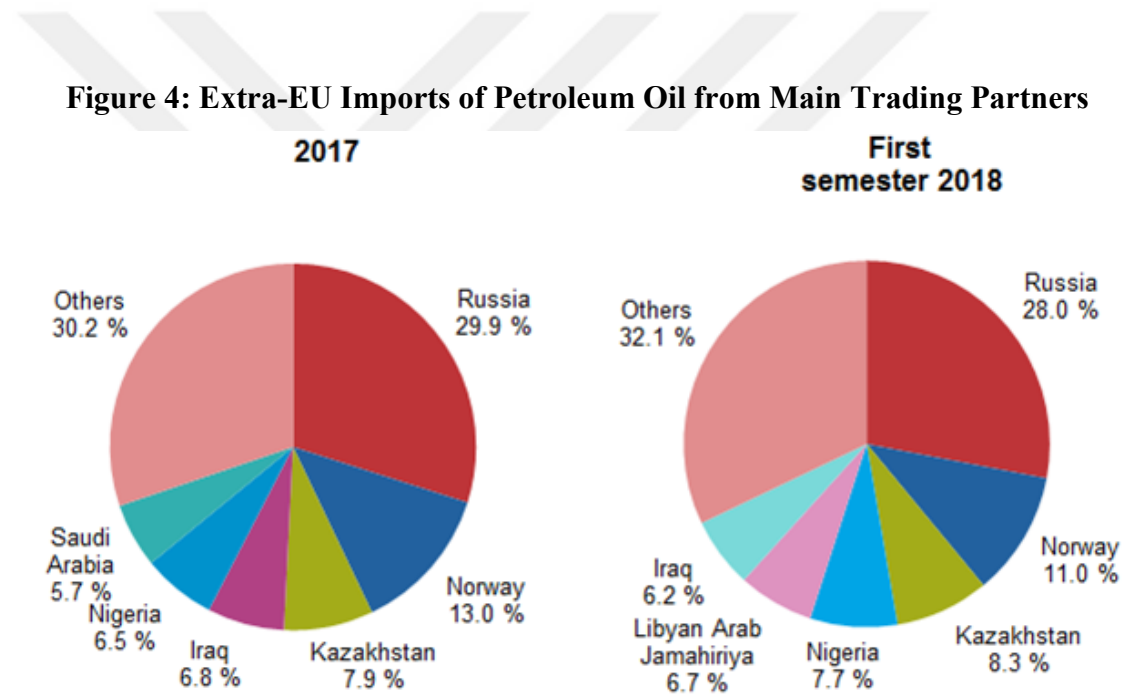


Source: Eurostat - European Commission,
<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php>

Goral (2011:190) highlights that “North African energy corridor in the south of Europe is an important source of energy since it helps the diversification problem and provides convenient and affordable natural gas”. In that, North African oil and gas have particular geostrategic advantages (i.e. substantial reserves, high quality, easy transportation, and attractive investment environment) as critical material factors that provide the motivation and basis for cooperation between major European companies and North African producers (Bahgat 2011:201). From the region; Libya, Algeria and Egypt are the major oil and gas producers for the EU’s energy need. Morocco –the backdoor route to Europe– and Tunisia are both poor in oil and gas, albeit they have become key transit countries, plus increasingly important sources of renewable energy.

Libya, due to the quality of crude oil and proximity to Europe, in particular, is one of the major suppliers of oil to the EU. Figure 4 shows that the EU imports around 7 per cent of Libyan oil. To put it differently, 85 per cent of Libyan oil goes to Europe

with Italy, France, Spain and Germany being the leader recipients (EIA 2010). With around 11 per cent (Figure 3), Algeria, following Russia and Norway, is the EU’s third largest gas supplier with the Mediterranean member states of the EU –Portugal, Spain, Italy and France– being highly dependent on. Egypt is one of the top gas producers in the African continent and expanding its natural-gas production with increased exports to the EU. The Suez Canal in Egypt is an important transit route for oil and gas transport to Europe. It is also important to note that in January 2018, the discovery of massive gas field in offshore Egypt, Zohr field in the Mediterranean Sea, is expected to change the EU’s prospects for energy security, hence will become one of the balancing tools for Russian gas.



*Source: Eurostat - European Commission,
<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php>*

For Waltz, states seek security rather than power in order to maintain their position in the system (1979:126). Neorealists believe that actors in the system see each other as potential threats and fear that others will achieve relatively greater gains (Grieco 1988:499). When the theory is applied on energy security with these assumptions, it could be argued that member states in the sub-system EU seek to secure energy supply with the fear that others will gain priority. To put it otherwise, they act

for their own interests in the energy field even at the expense of other member states within the same sub-system. Indeed, given different economic structures also consisting of energy needs and resources, most European states inevitably resort to self-help in order to survive. Yet, due to lack of energy policy coherence within the EU, there is little unity to act collectively in sharing the risks and enhancing cooperation in this field. Acknowledging that, neorealism on energy security focuses on power asymmetries within the anarchical system. These asymmetries can be regarded as a structural feature in bargaining where relative gains and national interests are the main motivations of certain member states in their energy policies.

Goral (2011:225) emphasizes that while European Commission has made efforts to further integrate national energy policies under the common energy policy; member states have continued to implement individual policies in defense of their own energy security. In this context, trade deals in the energy field have been mainly based on bilateral agreements rather than multilateral. One might exemplify that big member states with larger energy market potential in the EU, such as France, Germany and Italy, have retained their sovereignty in the common energy policy directly through long-term contracts for supply of gas with Russia's Gazprom, such as France's Gaz de France Suez (until 2030), Germany's EON Ruhrgas (until 2035) and Italy's ENI (until 2035) (Kirchner and Berk 2010:868; Maltby 2013:439)¹⁰². Here, it could be argued that each member state seeks to secure and strengthen its sovereign domestic position in terms of energy in order to maximize their relative gains. As such, the sphere of energy, which characterized by EU member states' national interests and preferences, has remained intergovernmental. To this end, above-mentioned inclinations of the member states, as to why limited EU-wide multilateral tools have been adopted in energy security, can be read through a neorealist reading based on structural constraints and self-help mechanism as the primary drivers of the actors. This is in fact consistent with the neorealist assumption of worst-case/possibilistic focus favoring immediate preparedness to increase energy security.

¹⁰² It should be noted that it is alleged that Russia, in its energy strategy on Europe, pursues a divide-and-rule policy within the member states (Maltby 2013:439). In broader terms, Russian pipelines are regarded to be preventing multilateral cooperation on the EU level while solidifying Russia's position on the EU gas market.

Despite the above, when a unified EU energy policy is in question, defensive branch of neorealism has a broader explanatory reach to the question on the development of a common energy policy in order to explain how and why cooperation exist and to what extent. Contrary to the above limitations of neorealism in the energy field, defensive neorealism allows exploring the effects of intervening unit level variables in foreign policy analysis, such as perceived domestic intentions and the polarity of the system to overcome these shortcomings. In that sense, the outcome of the interactions among the member states explains energy policy decisions of the Union. Defensive neorealism accepts that states may cooperate for security and survival when they are collectively faced by an external threat like long-term energy supply or the cost of energy supply. The theory accepts that the most cost-effective means to enhance security could be through increasing share of economic resources besides military preparedness (Orban 2008:18). So, the theory adds non-military power, in particular economic power, to the analysis.

Considering that there is intense level of economic interdependence and interconnectedness between the member states in energy affairs, they try to avoid conflicts and develop new initiatives, as a tendency of defensive doctrine. Economic pressure based on long-term secure supply of energy to Europe hence provides the reason for EU-wide behavior within the defensive neorealist paradigm. From this perspective, defensive neorealism could be considered to hold a neoliberal orientation (Jervis 1999:49), which is plausible for the analysis of cooperation in energy security by adding the role energy resources in an aggregate sense.

In the meanwhile, coupled with the ongoing re-transformation of the world, multipolarity causes intense competition among the actors of the international system over secure energy supply aspirations. The EU has been operating in an unstable multipolar situation in North African energy sector by the rapidly expanding role of new rising powers, in particular Russia and China. As mentioned before, the US and the EU have predominant positions in North Africa region for many years, but Russia and China are rapidly increasing their presence in the region, most particularly in the energy and trade domains. This creates greater uncertainty for European energy policy within an unstable and changing regional context. These emerging powers try to play important

roles and establish close political and economic relations with resource-rich North African states in quest of their own geo-economic and geo-strategic goals in the energy field. At the same time, there is intense competition between China and Russia for control over North African strategic resources as the former heavily dependent on oil and gas, and the latter seeks to have a stronger influence in the region with the purpose of keeping the oil and gas prices high for their own interests.

Summerton (2016) points out that large amount of energy that the EU imports come from geopolitically unstable regions that are affected by internal and border conflicts in addition to terrorism, which have resulted at the EU facing an increased risk of supply interruptions and shortages. Two examples help illustrate this point. First is related to aforesaid 2006 and 2009 temporary disruptions of gas supplies to Europe from Russia due to the crises between Russia and Ukraine –as a transit country for Russian gas. This gas shortage reinforced European fear of supply disruptions and prompted to formulate a European energy security strategy for over-dependence on one single neighbor (European Commission 2014b). Second example is the political turmoil in North Africa region and the immediate impact of the aftermath of the 2011 Arab Spring, which destabilized the EU's oil and gas supply hence affected energy flows to Europe, necessitating a reassessment of the EU's engagements with regional suppliers.

All the concerns above with a rapidly changed nature of regional and international environment have become more pressing and threatening for Europe's economic sustainability and prosperity. In general from the mid-2000s onward, constrained by Russian pressure and gas disruptions, successive EU enlargements, higher energy dependence and increasing prices, the EU member states have realized that they have to enhance cooperation on energy security by taking further actions in the light of previous experiences. As a response to these concerns, new frameworks and policies for a unitary position at the EU level have been developed, such as the European Energy Security Strategy and the Energy Union initiatives, plus the Oil Stocks Directive to hold stocks of oil to reduce the effects of supply shortages (Summerton 2016:10-11). Exemplary for strengthened energy competences at the EU level can also be the provisions brought about by the Lisbon Treaty in 2009, which

reinforce the EU's commitment to the promotion of renewable energy and energy efficiency¹⁰³.

Theoretically, the EU, as a defensive positionalist actor in the international system, strives to maintain its position with energy suppliers hence worries about its energy security and power relative to its partners and competitors in the region. Given the fragmentation of the regional energy landscape in EU-North Africa relations, the Union, driven by interest for survival within energy geopolitics, engaged in various balancing mechanisms that are offshore balancing (burdensharing), bandwagoning and soft-balancing. According to Waltz (1979:118), international actors behave in ways that create the balances of power either by internal balancing (e.g. by increasing economic growth) or external balancing (e.g. by alliances), or by the combination of the two. In line with a defensive neorealist reading, the EU's balancing behavior in energy security toward North Africa involves both internal and external strategies that could be considered threefold. First, through burdensharing (offshore balancing) with Libya, Algeria and Egypt in particular¹⁰⁴, European countries have sought to eliminate the risks arising from energy security by providing to the regional actors economic benefits, mostly development and humanitarian assistance. Second, the EU, greatly vulnerable to the volatility of oil prices due to geopolitical risks, bandwagons with an external power, namely the US, in order to balance against the energy security threat to preserve its interests in North Africa through the transatlantic alliance. Third and last, by making internal soft-balancing against Russia and China, the EU seeks to have greater influence on energy supply from North Africa, by improving the diversification of routes/sources, energy efficiency and internal energy market.

¹⁰³ Article 176A of the Lisbon Treaty states that "Union policy on energy shall aim, in a spirit of solidarity between Member States, to: (a) ensure the functioning of the energy market; (b) ensure security of energy supply in the Union; and (c) promote energy efficiency and energy saving and the development of new and renewable forms of energy; and (d) promote the interconnection of energy networks".

¹⁰⁴ According to 2015 Clingendael Report; **in Libya**, there are three European oil and gas companies operating; Eni from Italy, Total from France and Wintershall from Germany. **In Algeria**, there are six European oil and gas companies operating; Statoil from Norway, BP from Britain, Royal Dutch Shell from the Netherlands, Respol from Spain, Petroceltic from Ireland and Enel from Italy. **In Egypt**, there are four European oil and gas companies operating; Eni, BP, Shell, Total. All have exploration deals to expand their operations in Egypt. While Libya and Algeria are both members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), Egypt is not an OPEC member. See: Gartenstein-Ross *et al.* *The Crisis in North Africa: Implications for Europe and Options for EU Policymakers* (Clingendael Report, Netherlands Institute of International Relations, 2015).

In the form of burdensharing strategy against the threat of energy security: it is expected that strategic multilateral alliances with North African energy sector should become means to sustainable and secure supply of energy for the EU in order to counterbalance its dependence and vulnerability to Russian influence and mitigate the risks of insufficient diversification of energy sources and routes threatening Europe. With this aim, the EU has strengthened its relations with principal energy partners in North Africa. Prior to the Arab Spring, various mechanisms were established based on the relationships with Qaddafi's Libya, Bouteflika's Algeria, King Mohammed VI's Morocco and Mubarak's Egypt whereby EU energy interests were guaranteed by individual allies to sustain the flow of energy and prevent any threat of disruption of supply to Europe. For instance, owing to good diplomatic relations between Italy and Qaddafi's regime, Italian national oil company ENI "enjoyed valuable long-term oil concessions, both in the Sahara desert and - for the future" (Willey 2012). This cooperative alliance has changed after the Arab Spring, when instability has altered the relations and political energy landscape in the region. As Colombo and Sartori (2014) argue:

Energy is a key factor shaping relations between Europe and North Africa. Due to the Maghreb's strategic role for European energy security, in the last two decades the EU has attempted to promote deeper energy cooperation both with and within the region. The success of the EU's bilateral and multilateral initiatives, however, has been hindered by diverging interests between European countries and their North African counterparts. The upheaval in the region unleashed by the Arab awakening, along with critical socio-economic challenges like population growth and urbanization, are altering this picture.

In a broader perspective; after the first half of the 2000s, energy disruptions by the Ukraine crisis coupled with the European financial crisis, continuous upsurge in oil and gas price along with the fragmentation of energy markets during the post-Spring political landscape have all increased energy security concerns of Europe in a turbulent neighborhood. The situation has even worsened by stagnation in energy production in contradiction to the rapid growth in domestic consumption of North African countries

due to increasing population and urbanization (Colombo and Sartori 2014:14). All these shocks and disruptions to European energy supplies indicated to the need for a common European energy policy. In line with a defensive motive, in 2014, the EU implemented the first “European Energy Security Strategy” for its long-term plans for competitive, secure and sustainable energy (European Commission 2014b).

Concerning burdensharing and alliance formation that qualify as external balancing between the EU and its resource-rich North African neighbors, bilateral energy cooperation have been the central mechanism, employed through Association Agreements, within the framework of ENP Action Plans that define the objectives and provisions of various reforms (European Commission 2016a). On the other hand, according to Colombo and Sartori (2014:8-9), despite strong emphasis on energy cooperation in ENP, the top-down approach did not actually deliver concrete results in practice. So as to overcome these constraints and destabilizing effects, various measures in energy legislation along with regulatory and technical issues have been facilitated in harmonizing these countries’ procedures with the EU’s internal energy market rules. In this context, “the creation of the Association of Mediterranean Energy Regulators (MedReg) in 2006, followed by the establishment of Med-TSO, a platform to coordinate the activities of Mediterranean transmission system operators, represent the most successful examples of the new EU approach towards energy cooperation in the region” (Colombo and Sartori 2014:8-9). Several other mechanisms, one of which a new system of energy partnership has been centered on the contributions of North African allies for the external dimension of the EU’s common energy security policy (European Commission 2011e) could also be considered within the burdensharing approach of the EU, based on its cost-benefit considerations in line with a defensive neorealist reasoning.

Subsequently, within an intensified competitive environment for North African resources, the EU’s increasing over-dependence on energy supply has underlined that multilateral engagement on developing and implementing new energy policies for Europe on the EU level would be more feasible than bilateral supply deals to achieve energy security, supportive of defensive neorealism. With the advantage of a structural modifier, namely geographical proximity, the Union has desperately sought additional

multilateral mechanisms to facilitate its diversification of energy resources, suppliers and pipeline routes generated from North Africa to the EU. The latest discoveries of conventional sources as well as new affordable routes from the south could thus be considered clear examples of these burdensharing mechanisms to reduce energy dependency on Russia. Major projects include; Egypt's West Nile Delta gas fields, its latest immense Zohr gas field laid out above, Morocco's new offshore and onshore gas pipeline with Nigeria to distribute gas to Europe, Algeria's offshore Galsi Pipeline to northern Italy and Europe, and Trans-Saharan Gas Pipeline Project (TSGP) to be completed by 2020 connecting Algeria to Spain (Ezugwu, 2017; Tsourakis 2018). With Egypt, for instance, the EU has signed an agreement of strategic partnership on energy, covering the period 2018-2022¹⁰⁵, what is called a "new era in EU-Egypt energy cooperation" (European Commission 2018b). These examples of burdensharing balancing mechanisms of the EU for diversification of energy can be considered to be part of the external dimension of its 'Energy Union' adopted in 2015 (with an objective for the period 2021 to 2030). It stresses on the Mediterranean region as a whole as below:

The EU wants to create a Mediterranean gas hub in the South of Europe to help diversify its energy suppliers and routes. To this end, the EU is engaged in an active energy dialogue at political level with North African and Eastern Mediterranean partners. Taking into account the huge potential of Algeria, both for conventional and unconventional gas resources, as well as the new gas resources in the East Mediterranean and the associated infrastructure development plans, the Mediterranean area can act as a key source and route for supplying gas to the EU. Israel, Egypt and Cyprus, because of their significant offshore gas reserve, make the Eastern Mediterranean region a strategic partner for the EU in its effort to diversify its gas supply routes (European Commission 2018c).

More noticeably, the development and delivery of renewables in Europe's energy mix (e.g. solar, hydro, wind or biofuels) from its southern periphery, since 2008 in particular, have become crucial for constant access to affordable and sustainable

¹⁰⁵ For "Memorandum of Understanding on a Strategic Partnership on Energy between the European Union and the Arab Republic of Egypt 2018 – 2022, see: https://ec.europa.eu/energy/sites/ener/files/documents/eu-egypt_mou.pdf.

energy as well as increased diversification and high-efficiency. According to World Bank (Smilie 2016), North Africa has “some of the world’s best solar energy resources”. Indeed, the fact that oil and gas prices skyrocketed, particularly after the Arab Spring in contrast to the decline in the cost of renewable energy, has encouraged Europe for renewable energy support policies and investment (Lins *et al.* 2014). European Commission Energy Security Strategy (2014a) indicates that;

In 2012, energy from renewable sources was estimated to have contributed 14.1% of EU final energy consumption and should reach the objective of 20% in 2020. Looking beyond 2020, the Commission has proposed to increase the share of renewable energy to at least 27% by 2030 (European Commission 2014b).

In the longer term, the EU even has a further vision of 100% of electricity generation coming from renewable sources by 2050, in relation with North African states, through fully aligning its energy policy and markets with of theirs (Schellekens *et al.* 2010). This perspective has functionally helped the EU’s rapid formation of renewable energy projects with key regional energy actors in North Africa, which are in exchange funded partly by the EU grants for energy to be exported to Europe. Illustrative examples of burdensharing outcomes include *the Mediterranean Solar Plan* (MSP) launched in 2008, *the Noor Ouarzazate Solar Power Complex* in Morocco launched in 2016, *TuNur Solar Park* in Tunisia launched in 2016 (as a revival of *the Desertec Initiative* launched in 2009 but abandoned due to concerns on political instability in the region) (European Commission 2019b, Kilpeläinen 2013, the Guardian 2016).

Taken together, with all the implications for burdensharing and alliance commitment, Europe’s out-of-area mutual mechanisms with key North African renewable energy markets frame the distribution of cooperative efforts on the EU level based on financial incentives and major investments in renewable power technology. These multilateral attempts, demonstrating the EU’s balancing politics in energy, will in the long term shift a great deal of its energy mix diversification essential to enhance the security of supply in overcoming Russia’s dominance and the increased competition over conventional resources in North Africa.

In the form of bandwagoning with the US against the threat of energy security; Europe seeks to maximize its capabilities in the security of energy supplies from North Africa by externally strengthening transatlantic ties. Byman and Moller (2016:7) argue that ensuring the free flow of oil, not only for itself but also for Europe, through an open and secure market is the most important US interest in the Middle East (with the Persian Gulf at its center). Basically, there are two reasons for this. First, the US is very concerned about Europe's substantial volumes of energy imports from Russia, and fears that Russia might politically influence the EU and use energy relationships in times of conflicts. This concern is also highlighted in Obama's NSS of 2015; "energy security concerns have been exacerbated by European dependence on Russian natural gas and the willingness of Russia to use energy for political ends", in which it further indicates the priority for US promotion for "diversification of energy fuels, sources, and routes" for its Western allies¹⁰⁶. Second, given the US discoveries of shale gas over the last decade, it explicitly strives to be the dominant energy supplier to the world, particularly to Europe, and sees Russia as a competitor in this respect.

As stated before, North Africa region –through Libya's and Algeria's roles in OPEC along with non-OPEC Egypt's emerging energy potential– represents some of the world's richest resources of oil and gas, hence occupies an important position in the geopolitics of energy. Yet, the growing world oil demand in the 20th century has shifted US political leadership in the balance of oil power within an environment of geopolitical tensions and instability. The US, as a hard power, is thus significant in mitigating Europe's fears about energy security by defending sea lanes for oil flows around the world and protecting the security environment for critical energy infrastructure (Jaffe 2018; Byman and Moller 2016). In this light, the US energy security strategies in MENA, through which the EU enjoys avoiding its own energy security concerns in its south, justifies the bandwagoning hypothesis.

Given the critical role the US plays in global energy sector, one might wonder the reasons for American involvement in energy politics of MENA in particular, with an

¹⁰⁶ See: National Security Strategy, 2015 from <http://nssarchive.us/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/2015.pdf>

attempt to examine its influence on European energy security. The US has essentially been driven by self-interest in an energy-rich region like MENA, which has over the half of the world's proven reserves as the largest energy producing region, in order to maintain its military and economic hegemony in global power dynamics and energy competitiveness. US foreign policy in the Middle East has long been, since the 1970s in particular, committed to protect the stability of its European allies by ensuring the free flow of oil as the most important driver for energy-driven economies (Hudson 1996: 332-333). During those years, the US, as then heavily dependent on the Middle Eastern oil, feared that the Soviet control of the Middle Eastern energy sources could disrupt Western economy by affecting global energy trends, markets and the pricing policy of energy supplies. Thus, at its core, since the 1980 'Carter Doctrine', and possibly still today, the US policy has firmly adhered to maintain and secure Western energy interests in this strategically important region, a policy proclaimed to protect the free flow of oil from the region. So, in turn, this will directly affect US economy and national interests. From a theoretical point of view, this also explains why, for the interest-driven West, having warm relationships with Arab autocrats for decades were "the best way to sustain the flow of oil" (Roth 2012).

Fast-forward to 2018, the US, resulting from a dramatic increase in its domestic oil production (slightly beginning in 2008), has become the largest producer of crude oil in the world, surpassing Saudi Arabia and Russia for the first time since 1999 (EIA 2018). Despite the fact that it still receives a good share of the Middle Eastern oil, this trend, according to energy outlook reports, is likely to continue in which case the US is anticipated to be self-sufficient by 2030 (BP 2013). At that point, many analysts believe that the EU will be exposed to lessened American interest in the energy sector of MENA, that is, in theoretical terms, the threat of abandonment and entrapment by the US (Dyson 2013:388-389). These concerns indicate a potential US disengagement – albeit not a total withdrawal from the region– with reduced security commitments to Europe, all of which bear extensively on the EU interests including energy security. This might relatively hold true, given that; first, American foreign policy rhetoric of the "Asia Pivot" consists of US economic and energy-related dimensions meaning a shift from the West to the East and second, the expected US self-sufficiency in energy by 2030 would free the country from the Middle East oil to a large extent, implying a

potentially less American interest to the region. Then, it could be discussed that a possible diminishing role of the US hegemon in the region would considerably complicate the EU's energy security environment, where Russia has been strengthening its foothold in MENA in general, and North African energy markets in particular (Meyer *et al.* 2018).

Considering that the EU, taken as a whole, is the largest US trading partner –and vice versa– one should admit that the US exerts its influence by investing in regional security of Europe, pressurizing it politically through the control of energy-related issues in the continent's backyard. Yet, at the same time, it increasingly expects the EU to deal with other security threats on its own. It is argued that “the US is the only state with sufficient military capability to credibly defend or intervene in important energy producing areas” (Monaghan 2006:4). In this context, security-seeking Europe feels entrapped by the US in energy issues of an unstable regional setting while also being uncertain about American intentions and preferences of future trajectories toward both its import independence in energy and foreign policy to Asia. In line with defensive neorealism, these concerns create a powerful incentive for the EU on bandwagoning and holding on with the US power to ensure own survival and bolster its status-quo within the complications of energy security by allying with the strong.

In contrast, some other scholars contend that “America's growing oil self-sufficiency does not make it “independent” of the Middle East or the effects of an oil market disruption” (Collins and Krane 2017:3). Even if it will be enjoying energy independence with no need the access to the oil of MENA in future; it is expected to stay engaged in the region for geostrategic considerations, especially for global energy markets and pricing strategies (Thompson 2012). It “plays a critical role defending the global sea lanes and ensuring the free flow of oil around the world” (Jaffe 2018). 2015 NSS also addresses “major energy market disruptions” as one of “the top strategic risks” for the US and stresses its key role for the free flow of energy from MENA to the world. After all, as long as oil remains dominant for all kinds of transport, political stability in MENA will always be critical for energy prices. As a result, “the United States cannot insulate itself from global energy markets, despite being projected to

become increasingly self-sufficient in energy terms, as its economy is nevertheless trade dependent” (Colombo and Sartori 2014:13).

Against this background, two US broad energy strategies in MENA, which the EU bandwagons with an aim of preventing own energy security threats, can be outlined as; controlling energy demand and resources by protecting oil shipment routes and affecting regional and global energy pricing strategies (especially in light of rising US energy surge). If not, any disruption of oil supplies from North Africa to Europe, along with the concerns where Russia is regarded as a “politically unreliable partner” (Monaghan 2006:4) would be a major threat with negative consequences to global economy, ultimately damaging US economy (Jaffe 2018). Also NSS of the US, supportive of this claim, stresses on American dominance of European energy affairs:

We are reassuring our allies by backing our security commitments and increasing responsiveness [] to deter further Russian aggression. This will include working with Europe to improve its energy security in both the short and long term (NSS 2015:25).

It could be contended that even if US foreign policy priorities shift from MENA to a degree, its energy objectives are unlikely to change in the region for a long term. This is because; promoting European energy security is viewed as an ongoing US national interest to ensure dominance in controlling geopolitical power balances of energy markets in a multipolar world. “Whether through its global military deployment, or by examining the case for alternative energy sources or by reconsidering its approach to conservation, it plays a role that has a major impact on its NATO partners” (Monaghan 2006:5).

Above analyses underline why the EU as a status quo power seeks to bandwagon on the US in the issue of energy security with various mechanisms, from which some set out particularly after 2008. For example, NATO as a bandwagoning tool in security has been reinforced for European energy security, as well, in order to minimize any losses from instability or disruptions of existing North African energy flow through the Alliance’s deeper involvement in this field. For this purpose, in 2008 Bucharest Summit, NATO’s role in energy security has been strengthened in the changing new global and regional security environment, with an emphasis to “consult on the most

immediate risks in the field of energy security” (NATO 2018). From an empirical standpoint, applied to the Libya case during the Arab Spring, one may point out that NATO intervention in 2011 was driven, besides the humanitarian motives of the conflict itself, with the aim of protecting the vulnerable energy infrastructure mainly emanating from terrorism, ultimately to stabilize energy markets.

On a similar account, the EU-US Energy Council was established in 2009 to expand “the transatlantic dialogue on strategic energy issues” and “to promote transparent, open and secure global energy markets; foster policy and regulatory cooperation on efficient and sustainable energy use; and pursue joint research and development on clean energy and energy efficiency technologies” (European Commission 2009). Last but not least, at the time of writing, the proposed anti-OPEC legislative attempt under Trump presidency –more commonly referred to as *No Oil Producing and Exporting Cartels* (NOPEC) Act of 2018– which aims to prosecute OPEC member countries for fixing oil prices might impose a downward pressure on OPEC’s pricing muscle whereas it increases concerns with the potential to damage the world oil market (Brown 2018, Raval and Crooks 2019).

Overall, it is logical to theoretically posit that systemic factors, in other words, the changing dynamics and transformation in global energy system with a relatively decreasing US power in MENA might be expected to have a particular impact on the decisions and relations of the energy market actors with uncertain consequences under the anarchic system, which will directly affect Europe’s future balancing and bandwagoning acts on energy security in its periphery.

In the form of soft-balancing strategy towards Russia on energy security; the EU engages in internal soft-balancing acts against Russia’s growing strategic influence in North Africa in the field of energy, that is, through constraining tools such as institutional and diplomatic means which do not directly constitute aggressive behavior. On the other hand, Russia, as a rising military power –and with a desire to create a more attractive soft power in North Africa– has a growing naval presence and battle groups in the eastern Mediterranean that gives it the ability to have a critical impact on energy cooperation between the EU and energy-rich countries of North Africa. Then, one might

suggest that with the rising role of Russia in the region, “Europe’s options to attract interest in these countries to export their gas volumes to European markets will be reduced as a result of Russia’s policies” (Widdershoven 2016). Within this context, it is argued that as long as the transatlantic relationship falters between EU soft power and US hard power, Russia is gaining a geostrategic advantage for oil and gas operations in the region (Widdershoven 2016). Additionally, Russia is supporting all North African countries to construct nuclear power plants and reactors in the post-Spring era through its state-based company of nuclear technology, Rosatom (Laaroussi 2019; Eichner 2018). From a theoretical point of view, the international environment has helped Russia shape regional outcomes to enhance its energy interests.

As underlined before, “the EU mainly depends on Russia for imports of crude oil, natural gas and solid fuels, followed by Norway for crude oil and natural gas” (European Commission 2018d). Nonetheless, it is believed that state-owned Gazprom pursues a unilateralist energy policy towards its European energy partners by allegedly abusing its dominant market position mainly through price divergence mechanisms (i.e. charging higher prices on exports than on domestic sales), hence damaging the competition in the energy field (Whitney and Behrens 2010:431). Even so, it should be noted that the EU member states –particularly Germany and Italy, representing almost the half of the total gas imported from Russia– have gradually become more dependent on its energy imports (Girardi 2018).

Admittedly, global energy sector is neither immune nor isolated from the influence of political constraints and debates, consistent with neorealism. Within this context, aside from interdependence, the EU’s concern is security of supply to keep control of sources steady whereas Russia’s concern is security of demand to ensure payback and guaranteed future demand (Kirchner and Berk 2010:864-865). Theoretically, diverged interests and approaches, where both sides are trying to strengthen their own positions against each other, escalate the security dilemma. A good illustration of this is the ongoing geopolitical confrontation between Europe and Russia over the past many years, such as gas disruptions of the 2000s by the Ukraine crisis as well as Russia’s annexation of Crimea in 2014 resulting at Western sanctions that played out largely on the energy stage, when the EU felt pressured to focus more on

alternative energy supplies (e.g. LNG and renewables) and transit routes from North Africa. According to Fortmann *et al.* (2004:370), soft-balancing strategies are issue-specific and ad hoc maneuvers that are mainly cooperative exercises at the regional/institutional level. In this respect; the most prominent example of the EU's soft-balancing behavior for energy security is 2006 'Green Paper', published only a few months after the 2006 gas supply disruptions, in order to take all the necessary steps as the most effective response to energy security challenges as is the case with Russia. By advocating a comprehensive EU-wide energy policy, it defines that the EU should pursue external energy policy at the EU level with a 'single voice' (European Commission 2006b). Following this, European Commission's strategic energy reviews (European Commission 2007a; 2008d), which generated the European Energy Security Strategy (2015) towards building an Energy Union, illustrate further codification of internal balancing efforts within a defensive neorealist approach.

Aware of Europe's diversification efforts, Russia has, in response, stepped up its engagement to undermine or delay the Union's attempts in North Africa, which has turned into a playing field for external energy players other than European states. Additionally, within the transitional dynamics of the international system moving from unipolarity to multipolarity, the Arab Spring has contributed to stimulating the process of Russian reengagement in North Africa. Therefore, across Europe's regional environment where the hegemonic energy leader, Russia, seeks to reposition itself as a global actor by the upsurge of a multipolar regional order, its pursuit for influence in the North African energy sector has to be taken into account in detail, in order to analyze Europe's aspiration to soft-balance the pressures of Russian energy power in its close vicinity.

One might argue that Russia, suffering the sanctions by the US, the EU and other Western allies causing economic pressure, has progressively (and perhaps quietly) rebuilt its energy influence across North Africa and the Middle East since the mid-2000s, and explicitly after the Arab Spring (Feuer and Borshchevskaya 2017; Mammadov 2018, Ladaam 2018). On the one hand, "the high oil prices and stability have been important for Russian energy security" (Xing and Yuan 2010:99). On the other, increased political instability and the chaos in new geopolitical structure of the

region facilitates the development of Russian regional hegemony, especially since from the power vacuum left by the US and the EU leaderships, not to mention the rise of terrorism and collapse of the dictatorships, all paving the way for alternative partnerships like Russia (Popescu and Secieru 2018:5). O'Sullivan (2017:196) posits that “continued instability in the region boosts the price of oil, which is firmly in Moscow’s favor”. Although major energy producer countries in North Africa, particularly Algeria, are the main competitors of Russia in supplying energy to Europe; through cooperation with them, Russia seeks to maintain the prices stable and increase its leverage by further penetrating into the region (Xing and Yuan 2010:96). Yet, OPEC has substantial influence on international energy prices, which is why Russia seeks to break its monopoly through cooperation with them.

In a broader context, Russia’s main energy diplomacy objectives in North Africa consist of; “partnering in oil and gas exploration and development projects, taking part in energy transportation infrastructure projects, such as oil shipping terminals, signing bilateral energy and foreign-policy agreements [with them], working with OPEC and the GECF on energy price-bolstering mechanisms, using a combination of Russia’s and the region’s energy export potential as a bargaining chip in relations with the West” (Mammadov 2018)¹⁰⁷. Briefly stated, “the intensification of Russian engagement in the energy sectors of Algeria, Libya and Egypt is an integral part of its multidimensional global energy diplomacy strategy” (Mammadov 2018). Nevertheless, one might expect that its rapprochement with three main North African suppliers through price cooperation and bilateral energy deals, as explained below, fuel fears of the EU over potential rise in energy prices which is why the Union has defensively resorts to soft-balancing measures.

To begin with *Libya*; Russia enjoyed good relations with Qaddafi regime before 2011. In the post-Spring period, especially since 2016, according to Warsaw Institute (2018), Russia has sought a “great comeback to the Libyan market that they lost completely in 2011; the revolution of that time stopped more than a dozen major

¹⁰⁷ Note that Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF), founded in 2001 by gathering the world’s leading gas producers, including Russia. It is regarded as evolving into a ‘gas OPEC’, which includes Algeria, Libya and Egypt from North Africa region, whereas OPEC, to reiterate, includes only Algeria and Libya from that region.

projects in such domains as oil, construction, nuclear energy”. In concrete terms, after Syria, “Moscow is trying to turn Libya into new Russian stronghold in the South Mediterranean” (Salacanian 2019). Importantly, due to unstable political and security environment of the civil unrest, most of Libyan hydrocarbon resources remain unexplored (EIA 2015). One might suggest that European energy companies have expected larger share of the Libyan energy market to actually reduce its dependence on Russian imports, consistent with defensive neorealism. And yet, Italy’s Eni and France’s Total have separate joint ventures in Libya, despite tensions between the two EU member states, of which Italy “accused France of hindering peace in Libya, Italy’s former colony, to secure French access to oil” (Riegele 2019). Meanwhile, Russia, in an attempt to counter European influence on energy, has speeded up its investments in the war-torn country for exploration and production via oil deals between its state-run producer Rosneft and Libyan National Oil Corporation (Meyer *et al.* 2018; Wintour 2017).

In this context, the West and Russia took opposite sides in supporting political and military factions of the Libyan civil war, whilst both sides have battled for control over the country’s energy resources. Russia, not militarily involved in the conflict itself, condemned 2011 NATO-led Franco-British intervention in Libya. Whereas the EU and the US supported UN-backed government, namely the Government of National Accord (GNA) in Tripoli, Russia supported Khalifa Haftar, the Libyan military officer and his so-called Libyan National Army (LNA) who controls most of the oil-producing east of Libya. Russia was even suspected of having military presence in Libya (Shariff, 2018). Yet, its engagement in the North African failed state at the doorstep of Europe has been a signal of strategic maneuver to the EU within the energy (economic) and political realms. With a long-term defensive mindset, the EU has then resorted to soft-balancing measures by using its diplomatic leverage in order to pacify and prevent the growing influence of Russia in Libya. These measures consist of CSDP activities of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL)¹⁰⁸ and additional efforts for establishing the Libyan International Assistance Mission (LIAM) as a stabilizing force with the goal “to

¹⁰⁸ With the outburst of the Libyan civil war in 2011, the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) was established at the request of the Libyan authorities to support the transition of the country in the post-conflict period. It mainly mediates between the conflicting parties to overcome the political divide. See: <https://unsmil.unmissions.org/>

protect Libya's oil and gas facilities, the country's main source of revenue, to demobilize militias and train a national army" (Council of the European Union 2016; Independent 2016). The EU, and the West in general, thought that Russia's involvement in the international discussions on Libya was to be "made conditional on Russian support for de-escalation in Libya: reduce support for Haftar, or be left out in the cold" (Toaldo 2017). In response, Russia, with an interest in taking advantage and controlling over Libya's resources on favorable terms and also striving to project more power into North Africa and the Mediterranean after a rewarding intervention in Syria, has changed its attitude in recent years, appearing to be conciliatory and supportive of UN-supported negotiations, which is largely regarded as Russia's "balancing act" (Shariff, 2018). In that sense, Russia's opting for mediation efforts for a consensus settlement between the two sides of the long-running conflict (Salacanian 2019; Meyer *et al.* 2018) reflects the outcome of the EU's balancing acts through diplomatic means.

With *Algeria*, Russia has had always good –albeit competitive– relations. Russian energy firms have, even before the Arab Spring, developed some energy projects in the North African country. To reiterate, Algeria, part of EMP/ENP, is the EU's second-largest natural gas provider outside Europe, after Russia. Even in the aftermath of the Arab Spring, Algeria has proved its commitment as a reliable energy partner of the EU. It has also been making efforts to increase its production capacity that might contribute to the EU Energy Union objective. Russia and Algeria, together account for nearly 50 per cent of Europe's natural gas supplies. While the EU holds important political and economic leverage on Algeria, Russian priority for the gas-rich country in recent years have shifted as part of a new "energy card" in an attempt to revive Russian economy and consolidate its position in MENA (Xing and Yuan 2010:89). As Algeria's unexplored energy potential is huge, Russia is aware that the North African country is very important for the EU. Yet, any potential for Algerian gas to be exported to Eastern Europe might weaken Russian energy power in those markets (Katz 2009). Therefore, with a stronger presence in Algeria, Russia seeks "to gain leverage over decisions pertaining to future supplies to the European market" (Mammadov 2018). Under afore-mentioned GECF, Russian ability to coordinate with Algeria in gas-related matters has increased. In that sense, GECF can theoretically be

regarded as a balancing tool of Russia to increase its bargaining power in its gas relations with the EU.

In more than 10 years, Russia's energy-based geopolitics in Algeria, besides being the leading arms supplier to the country, has lied largely in its aim at formal reengagement and deepened partnership to participate in energy projects, as in Libya and Egypt. This has been much evident when Russian Gazprom and Algerian national energy company Sonatrach signed an agreement in 2006, basically for Russia's interest in Algeria's strategic gas assets (particularly in LNG), technology and expertise, as well as participation in Algerian pipeline projects with the EU, such as Galsi pipeline (Darbouche 2007:1-2). This coordination, for Darbouche (2007:5), seems "a move aimed at coordinating not just their upstream activities but also the downstream, including controlling gas prices and volumes". According to Katz (2009), the agreement between Gazprom and Sonatrach is important for Russia, because it would not perhaps increase gas price but prevent its reduction as well as Russian gas sales to Europe.

On the EU side, considering that Europe's gas needs are expected to grow, any cooperation and coordination on energy between the two gas giant heightens the Union's concerns about gas price escalation. Bearing in mind the vulnerability to Russian gas monopoly at present, growing anxiety about a gas cartelization between Russia and Algeria has eventually led to Europe's internal balancing efforts with the purpose of limiting, delaying and even preventing energy cooperation between two countries through institutional approaches at the EU level. For example, Galsi pipeline along with Medgaz pipeline have been considered within the context of "projects of common interest" for all European states (European Commission 2007b). With Russian interest to these projects, the EU has felt necessity to take measures in order to offset Russian efforts to have any impact on them, consistent with soft-balancing. By adopting a restraining measure, for example, "the Commission assumed a more active role in reconfiguring long-term contracts and limiting Algeria's control over pipelines" (Weber 2014).

Overall, above energy security concerns have been key drivers towards the EU's energy policy development, including for Algeria. In line with the EU Energy Union

established in 2015, European Commission launched “EU Energy Diplomacy Action Plan” in the same year, which also emphasizes to exploit the potential of LNG and renewable energy (Council of the European Union 2015). For example, IEA expects that LNG imports to Europe will increase by almost 20% by 2040 compared to 2016 levels (European Commission 2018e). Indeed, renewables and LNG are important alternative sources to pipeline gas, which are considered to potentially expand Europe’s capacity in terms of diversification against over-reliance on Russian gas in the long term¹⁰⁹. That being said, the EU’s efforts to develop LNG and renewables can be seen as balancing tools to reduce dependency on Russian gas. In 2015, in order to take advantage of Algerian massive unexploited reserves, along with a broad LNG strategy “the EU-Algeria Political Dialogue on Energy” was, for the first time, launched in order to discuss facilitating infrastructure investment plans to support these projects (European Commission 2016b:11). On the other hand, Russia, aware of increasing European demand for LNG from non-Russian sources –with the aim of balancing dependency– has rapidly developed its LNG technology and infrastructure to be the world’s one of the largest LNG producers. And as is evident in Yamal LNG project, completed in the end of 2018, it has rapidly succeeded in its aim.

With *Egypt*, as well, energy relations of Russia (besides growing military cooperation) have been gradually transformed. Since Mubarak’s resignation in 2011, then the removal of Mohammed Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood administration in 2013, Russia’s relations with Egypt have flourished (Daly 2017). In 2018, two countries signed a 50-year ‘comprehensive cooperation and strategic partnership agreement’ (Shay 2018). According to EIA (2018), Egypt is the largest non-OPEC oil producer in Africa and the third-largest natural gas producer on the continent, after Algeria and Nigeria, while the Suez Canal stands as an important transit route for oil and LNG. Particularly, the major gas discoveries in Egypt’s offshore Mediterranean Sea over the last few years, the giant Zohr and the West Nile Delta fields, have increased the tendency for competition in energy markets. And yet, the potential of further offshore reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea basin have reinforced new prospects for the

¹⁰⁹ It should be noted that there are also various setbacks for the EU to rapidly import LNG. First, LNG requires new infrastructures hence its competition with lower Russian gas cost is weak for now. Second, Asia has become the primary market for LNG due to a higher demand.

competing interests and the power struggle of major powers in terms of demand and supply. That said, Egypt's energy sector is projected to grow significantly hence make the country's resources more competitive for Europe and other energy actors. In Bahgat's words, "Egypt is on its way to becoming a leading supplier of natural gas to the Mediterranean Basin" (2009:166). On this front, one can expect that Egypt, if achieves to become a fundamental regional energy hub, might compete even with Russia for European market in the foreseeable future. Then theoretically, Eastern Mediterranean gas can be regarded as an opportunity for Europe's alternative supply, hence a balancing and bargaining tool against dependency on Russian gas (De Micco 2014:18). There are nonetheless key structural factors that cause concerns for potential Egyptian gas export to Europe. Specifically, "Egyptian relations with Israel, Egyptian and EU relations with Turkey, and the unresolved Cyprus conflict remain complicating factors" (Mason 2018:3). Russia has strategically established close ties with these key players in order to challenge the EU's status quo and diversification efforts as well as limit its ability in the Eastern Mediterranean gas market. Despite political obstacles, the EU, with an attempt to offset Russia's political power and monopolistic visions, has ramped up its engagement with Egypt as is the case with strategic partnership agreement on energy, namely "new era in EU-Egypt energy cooperation" mentioned before (European Commission 2018a). It has at the same time made additional efforts with quite a few projects to turn Egypt into a primary hub for renewable energy, solar and wind in particular, channeled through European Investment Bank (Mason 2018:2-3).

Aware of that, Russia wants to keep its dominant position as Europe's energy supplier by controlling the Eastern Mediterranean gas market. In this endeavor, it has deepened ties with Egypt in energy cooperation to be able to play a key part in the agreements on regional/global energy supply and prices. At the same time, it seeks to export natural gas and LNG from the East Mediterranean gas fields to Asia, particularly to China, India and Japan (De Micco 2014:18). Therefore, in 2017, Russian company Rosneft's acquisition of 30 per cent stake in Egypt's Zohr gas field, discovered in 2015 by Eni, represents an evident instance of its balancing behavior on the EU. Yet, Russia participated into this megaproject with major European energy companies –Eni (60 percent stake) and BP (10 percent stake)– and became a partner in jointly developing

the largest gas field together (Reuters 2017). On this premise, it is considered that “the deal will give the Russian company an opportunity to exchange important expertise on the development of offshore fields, and will strengthen its position in the European and the Middle East markets” (Egypt Independent 2017). From a neorealist perspective, it can be said, after the Arab Spring in Egypt, regardless of the deterioration of the security environment, Russia, weighing its costs and benefits, has sought an expansion towards the North African country and acquired assets in a strategic country in order to improve its relative power over the EU.

As long as diversification of energy supply away from Russia remains atop of the Union agenda particularly from the mid-2000s, energy interests put the EU at odds with Russia in North Africa, stimulating balancing behavior. By engaging in soft-balancing internally, Europe seeks to maximize Union-wide capabilities in energy so as to exert its influence on southern neighbors and become better equipped to prevent Russia restore its monopoly in North African regional energy market. In general, EU level internal efforts constitute energy policy implementations and initiatives with an integrated and diversified internal energy market. Maltby (2013:439) points out that “the realisation of an interconnected and integrated internal energy market is considered by the Commission to increase energy security”. The fact that the EU seeks to establish itself as an international actor in the energy field and makes attempts on the externalization of the internal energy market regime represents a clear evidence of soft-balancing against the backdrop of increasing energy prices, rising energy demand and import dependency.

One might determine that the EU’s security maximization in energy are based on: energy efficiency; alternative sources and routes of gas, such as LNG, renewable energy, solar and wind power from North Africa, coal and gas with carbon capture and storage (CCS) and nuclear power (Tindale 2014). All these options, to be truly effective, necessitate huge financial support in the long term, compared to lower Russian energy prices. Therefore, in order to reinforce above strategies for expanded EU competency in the energy policy area, internal balancing tools have involved long-

term solutions such as the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty¹¹⁰, European Energy Security Strategy, the Energy Union and the Oil Stocks Directive that aim at creating a more balanced European energy mix and a unified regulatory framework. Additionally, various other instruments for the EU energy markets via self-strengthening reforms and regulatory aspects such as anti-monopoly statutes within the Energy Charter Treaty and Transit Protocol have been undertaken¹¹¹. In 2013, the EU launched “projects of common interest” (PCIs) for all European states related to key cross border infrastructure projects to help the EU achieve its energy policy, including North African energy projects (European Commission 2019c). It is also important to point out that in order to create an effective and integrated Mediterranean energy market, various platforms such as Euro-Arab Mashreq Gas Market Project (EAMGM) and Energy Market Integration Project (MED-EMIP) and Energy Efficiency in Construction (MED-ENEC) and Regulators for Electricity and Natural Gas (MEDREG) have been developed (Bahgat 2011:201-204).

While previously outlined burdensharing balancing mechanisms of the EU with North African energy allies constitute external balancing of the EU vis-à-vis the threat of energy security, the EU, through internal soft-balancing, seeks to enhance its relative energy muscle by translating its potential, in response to undermine Russia’s impact. To take renewable energy as an example, the EU seems to be diversifying sources away from Russia by combining both types of balancing; internal and external. “Whereas external balancing alters the distribution of power quickly [], internal balancing is a way to alter the distribution of power over the long term” (Brawley, 2004:82). Yet, facilitating a fruitful integration of renewables, for especially beyond 2030, for green power exports from North Africa requires long-term policies for both sides (Schellekens *et al.* 2010). On the one hand, the EU-level pursuit of energy security, in order to reduce dependence on Russia, through investments in renewable energy technologies and infrastructure by newly-developed policies, directives, market regulations illustrates

¹¹⁰ A new part on energy was added to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) in relation to the policy on energy (Article 194 of Title XXI in the TFEU, and Article 176A of Title XX in the Lisbon Treaty) incorporated for the first time energy into a legal basis in a European treaty.

¹¹¹ The Energy Charter Treaty, entered into force in 1998 was “designed to promote energy security through the operation of more open and competitive energy markets, while respecting the principles of sustainable development and sovereignty over energy resources”. See: <https://energycharter.org/process/energy-charter-treaty-1994/energy-charter-treaty/>

internal balancing efforts. On the other hand, in order to achieve that, “such investments in Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, and even Libya, upon stabilization, could make North Africa a global solar energy powerhouse” for Europe (Ghafar 2017). The EU has therefore engaged in external balancing initiatives to defy Russia’s dominant position through renewable energy projects to be exported to Europe by allying closely with North African countries, particularly with solar and wind resources, such as aforesaid projects as with Morocco and Tunisia, to mention the most evident. In doing so, it could be said that the EU pursues both burdensharing mechanisms and soft-balancing efforts to limit Russia’s role in the energy markets as well as its ability to set the prices in energy sector, thereby shift the balance of energy power against Russia.

In the form of soft-balancing strategy towards China on energy security; the EU intends to build up its power against the economic hegemon’s evolving energy engagement in North Africa. Given the fact that China has become the world’s largest importer and consumer of oil –taking over from the United States in 2017– as well as the second largest importer of gas and LNG (IEA 2017), its ever-increasing quest for global energy sources seems reasonable. Alden (2005:148) emphasizes that due to China’s reforms and opening-up that led to rapid economic growth over the years, the country switched from being a net exporter to a net importer of energy in 1993. This period became the critical juncture for the resource-poor country to increasingly link its energy strategy to MENA due to the region’s large energy reserves and close geographical proximity to Asia. From a theoretical perspective, it could be argued that the shift in the international system towards a multipolar order is one explanation for the competition over North African resources. Bearing this in mind, China regards North Africa “as a key supplier of energy” (Fox 2009:9). Historically, as well as presently, relations between China and North Africa have mainly been bilateral vis-à-vis multilateral relations between the EU and China (Hugon 2010). The relations date back to 1950s, with Egypt being the first country to establish diplomatic ties with China (Elshehawy et al. 2014). With Algeria, China’s relations also dates back to the 1950s, to the early days of the Algerian War of Independence, with China supported the revolution in 1962, and then Algeria supported China’s admission to the UN in 1971

(Olimat 2014). China also formally established diplomatic relations with Morocco and Tunisia around the same years, whereas with Libya much later in 1978¹¹².

After the 2000s in particular, driven by achieving energy security as a means for survival, China's top economic motivation for North Africa region has largely concentrated on sustainable energy alongside advancement in trade links, new markets and investment opportunities so as to be able to maintain its rapid economic development (Alden 2005:148). The China-led Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), launched in 2013, also stands out for these purposes. It consists of long term energy security plans through MENA (e.g. the sea route via the Suez Canal in Egypt, namely '21st Century Maritime Silk Road Initiative' – MSR, part of BRI) which gives North Africa the opportunity to serve as a hub into the Middle East and Africa (Lehr 2017). Given that, it is claimed that while the US is pivoting to Asia, China is pivoting to Europe through BRI across the "Eurasian" landmass, as a balancing act (Ciurtin 2017:2). According to Umbach (2018) "North African countries are looking with great interest and expectations at any larger Chinese investments in their region as part of the BRI". On the other hand, Chinese interest in North African resources along with BRI is expected to change the geopolitical balance in the Mediterranean, affecting European energy interests. As Burnay *et al.* (2015:50) suggests, "if successfully implemented, the projects will enhance China's role in Eurasia leading to the redistribution of power and creation of alternative international norms and institutions". For instance, the discovery in Zohr offshore gas field has increased Chinese interest to develop further partnerships in building offshore facilities within the MSRI platform and granting new chances for China in the energy sector (Franceschini 2018). In that sense, the Initiative can be considered both as a competitive tool and an incentive for better cooperation (Burnay, *et al.* 2015:50).

Grevi (2006:6) points out, today "China's goals are the diversification of oil supplies, the expansion of investment overseas and securing transport routes". While China reaches into Europe's resource-rich 'backyard' (Godoy 2006), its investment in

¹¹² For a broader historical overview of the relations between China and North Africa region, see: Muhamad S. Olimat, "China and North Africa since World War II: A Bilateral Approach" (Lexington Books, 2014).

North Africa has focused primarily on three countries, namely Algeria, Egypt and Libya, where potentially have strategic vast energy reserves for China (Elshehawy *et al.* 2014). Given the fact that around 10 percent of Libyan oil goes to the Asian country, China has become concerned about the turmoil in Libya realizing the threat to its energy security. Within a multipolar regional environment where the US is gradually losing its dominant role, China and Russia have coordinated their positions in international institutions, as was the case in UN. For example, in the post-Spring era, they both criticized the 2011 Libyan intervention and called for a ceasefire (though neither vetoed the Security Council resolution, largely influenced by the Arab League) (Rapoza, 2011). On the other hand, while both the EU and China share common energy interests, the EU is concerned about clash of interests that might threaten European energy goals in North Africa based on three aspects of Chinese growing presence in the region (Grevi 2006:6);

First, at a political/strategic level, Chinese dynamism heightened the sense of growing competition for resources and the perception of threat. On the whole, EU relations with energy-rich countries [] will be complicated by China's growing influence. Second, at the economic level, concerns about upward pressures on prices, given growing demand, were balanced by the consideration that Chinese investment abroad helped to expand production, although that entailed stronger competition in particular for medium-sized international oil companies. Third, the environmental implications of China's present policies were considered the biggest problem for the EU and the global environment at large (Grevi 2006:6).

As Fox (2009:9) points out "China's goal has been to forge partnerships with European energy giants that can deliver access to energy, technologies and two-way investment". It has employed a form of commercial diplomacy in its pursuit of energy security based on strategic partnerships (Albert 2017; Elshehawy *et al.* 2014:187). It makes efforts to secure its growing energy needs in the region, but at the same time concerned about the fluctuations in energy prices. With the aim to reduce the impact of the possibility of supply interruptions and price fluctuations, put differently, to supply energy below the international market price, China wants to gain the control over energy flows, thus has been purchasing equity shares in North African proven energy

fields, instead of relying on global energy markets (Alden 2005:149; Besada and Salam 2017:603; Olimat 2013:46). As an example; in 2002, Chinese state-owned Sinopec (second-largest oil producer) signed an agreement with Algerian national energy company Sonatrach to invest in Algeria's Zarzaitine field and have the larger stake (Ng 2002). Similarly, Sinopec's acquisition of 33 per cent oil stakes from the US oil firm Apache in Egyptian energy assets in 2013 represents China's "resource appetite" to secure additional supplies in North Africa (Fowler and Lee 2013; Hargreaves 2013).

Under the above circumstances, Chinese assertive drive for energy in North Africa strained European energy investments in the region. That said, the uncertainty of Chinese energy policy in North Africa have prompted the EU to take China more seriously while rivalry over influence on those resource-rich countries has highlighted the growing confrontation between the two regions. Europe has found itself in an aggressive competition with China for North African energy resources, implying that "such extensive involvement alarms [Europeans] who view it as contributing to price hikes, and potentially to the escalation of current and future crises in the region" (Olimat 2013:46-47). At the same time, suspicious of China's domination in North Africa and aiming at limiting its presence, "European oil and gas companies found themselves in an advanced position in natural gas explorations in eastern Mediterranean countries", by which they have accelerated their projects with North African partners with an effort to prevent China's strategic maneuvers in these projects.

Since the mid-2000s, to counteract the efforts of rising powers in North African energy markets –typically Russia and increasingly China– and maximize European-wide capabilities, the EU has devised internal balancing instruments, mentioned before, such as achieving a fully integrated integral European energy market, improving the diversification of routes/sources, energy efficiency and enhancing the European role in the international energy markets. More precisely, these internal balancing objectives as placed in 2014 European Energy Security Strategy (European Commission 2014b) consist of many mechanisms including strengthening emergency/solidarity mechanisms including coordination of risk assessments and contingency plans; and protecting strategic infrastructure, moderating energy demand, building a well-functioning and fully integrated internal market, increasing energy production in the European Union,

developing energy technologies, diversifying external supplies and related infrastructure and improving coordination of national energy policies and speaking with one voice in external energy policy.

3.2.5. Trade and Economic Issues

North Africa region has always been a priority interest for Europe for a number of prevalent issues discussed throughout this study. The region is a substantial market that offers many opportunities for the EU and other external actors, focused mainly on energy, arms sales and investment. Therefore, the EU has always been interested in engaging North Africa economically. And yet, the EU is the main economic partner of all North African countries, even though each country differs in terms of economic and political progress as was explained. Yet, defensive neorealist reasoning concentrated on the security issues, including trade and economic issues, “remain very present in post-Arab Spring initiatives” (Wouters and Duquet 2013:239). On the other hand, systemic pressures, aggravated through the post-9/11 era, such as the 2008 global financial crisis, the fast growing global and European demand of energy along with the security of supply risks and the emerging multipolar regional order in which other major powers are also determined to enhance their share of economic and political presence in North Africa, propel the EU to foster its economic and political leverage in the region ever more. Borck (2017) posits that:

Europe has substantial economic interests in engaging with North Africa. [] most importantly, closer economic cooperation across the Mediterranean offers great opportunities to both Europe and the North African states. Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco are all keen to expand their trade relationships with Europe; and for Europe, North Africa can be the gate to growing economies further south in Africa.

As mentioned earlier, in order to preserve the stability of the autocratic regimes, the governments of North Africa have, in the past, pursued market-oriented reforms and comprehensive economic structural programs by IMF and WB, based on the

*Washington Consensus*¹¹³ (Colombo and Tocci 2011). However, these –arguably US-led– measures, in addition to the successive failures of the EU frameworks for the region, have become insufficient to overcome deep socio-economic problems, driving discontent into the eruption of the Arab Spring protests in late 2010. Ultimately, political and economic instability, stemmed from continuous unrest, civil wars, international sanctions and the long-running unsolved Western Sahara dispute has caused at deterrent effects on the economies of the countries of the region. To put it bluntly, North Africa, a region with vast economic potential and a variety of substantial energy sources, has failed to restore political and economic stability for decades. Even so, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia managed to be members of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), while Libya and Algeria are still in the process of accession.

Brauch (2011:63-64) points out that the threat concept has widened to economic areas especially after 1990s, in addition to traditionally issues such as military and security. In that sense, economic obstacles for major powers can be considered non-military soft security threats. As Buzan puts it, economic threats are related to “export practices, import restrictions, price manipulations, default on debt, currency controls etc., and those to domestic stability” (1983; cited in Brauch et al. 2011:62). As defensive neorealism principally focuses on security issues, Powell (1991:1304) discusses that the actors in the international system also worry about relative gains in the economic realm in addition to security matters. On this premise, provided that regional cooperation is expected to be more in economic issue areas, the purpose of securing viable opportunities for economic expansion and ensuring greater access over North African energy resources has been crucial for political stability in Europe’s neighborhood. The EU fears that long-term instability in North Africa might result at negative consequences for its economy with regard to security concerns of illegal migration, terrorism and energy security, as was the case with the Arab Spring. After all, its ability to ally with North African states and politically penetrate into the region is largely grounded on financial aids and funding. As Walt (1985:27) pinpoints, “the more aid, the tighter the resulting alliance”. In that sense, economic reform objectives in a

¹¹³ The Washington Consensus, coined in 1989, refers to a list of free-market reforms supported by international financial institutions, such as IMF and the World Bank. It was intended to help developing countries facing financial crises by means of structural reforms.

civilian power context have always given the EU the leverage over North African partners.

To put the above in a nutshell, the close relationship between the EU and North Africa traditionally comprises security dimensions not only concerning migration, terrorism, state failures, energy security, but also a significant economic dimension. Since the very beginning of this multidimensional relationship from the 1970s to the years leading up to the Arab Spring, the EU's security-seeking and defensive positionalist behavior, based essentially on its own political and economic agenda, has been at the forefront within the fast-changing regional and international dynamics. Indeed, North Africa region, as an emerging market, has been of great interest for other powerful external actors after the 2000s. The fact that in addition to the US, the economic relationship of both China and Russia with North African countries as well as the entente between the two major powers¹¹⁴, at the same time, each having competing power interests, has reshaped the geopolitics of the region. The EU has found itself operating in a multipolar and competitive situation in North African markets and countering the aggressive strategies of these extra-regional major powers.

In the form of burdensharing strategy with North African partners against the economic threats; the EU, often referred to as an 'economic giant', has launched several economic policies and *ad hoc* trade instruments toward its southern neighborhood both before and after the Arab Spring, mentioned before in detail (in sections 2.1 and 2.2). As Dadush and Myachenkova (2018) posit, "the EU plays a very prominent role in North Africa's trade, representing by far the largest trading partner of countries in the region, on account of its size, geographic proximity, linguistic and colonial ties, and the existence of large North African diasporas in Europe". Therefore, its external balancing efforts against economic threats by allying with North African neighbors demonstrate how it has used economic initiatives to protect itself from these threats through close cooperation with them regardless of the success of these instruments. Miller (2012:354) contends that:

¹¹⁴ Russia and China work together in the Shanghai Security Cooperation Organization, the Eurasian Economic Union, and the BRICS association.

Defensive realism advances a multilateral management of the regional balance of capabilities. The regional order will be based on mutual balancing among the regional powers and the curtailment of attempts at reaching regional hegemony. According to the ‘off-shore balancing’ version of defensive realism, [the EU] will encourage the mutual balancing among the regional powers”.

From a defensive neorealist perspective on trade and economic fronts, the EU uses its economic power as a tool to protect its political and economic interests in its close neighborhood by adopting an offshore balancing strategy and so shifting burdens to its North African partners in multilateral and bilateral contexts that are central to EMP and ENP frameworks. With various incentives, funding and financial aids based on agreed partnership priorities and association agendas, North African states, in return, receive these instruments employed for overall regional economic and political development. In doing so, they intend to sustain the economic and political development of their own countries through these policy frameworks and reforms by operating within an expanded integration of markets, basically via the formation of the free trade agreements (FTAs). A good illustration of the burdensharing mechanism is the Agadir Agreement signed in 2004 and entered into force in 2007. It is an EU support project for three North African countries along with Jordan to whom the EU allocates funds in order to boost regional free trade integration, bring down trade barriers and so strengthen economic development through the creation of a sub-regional FTA, which ultimately creates trade opportunities for these countries as well as for EU investors and partners (Burke 2013:4).

After 2011, the EU has even furthered regional economic development objective through the creation of DCFTAs considered a fully new generation of trade and investment opportunities with the aim of extensive harmonization of legislation and regulations to EU standards (Dadush *et al.* 2017; Ghoneim and Lannon 2014:10). DCFTAs, within the framework of ENP, aim at deepening the development of commercial relations of the EU with North African states as a reaction to the Arab Spring so as to mitigate political and economic threats coming from the region including energy security. In December 2011, the EU has started preparatory bilateral negotiations on DCFTA with Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia. Yet, each North African

state has different characteristics in its own way, structure and the relationship it has with the EU, therefore the agreements have not moved beyond early stages as these are conditional upon progress (European Commission 2019d).

One could argue that in the absence of a strong North African regional bloc, the EU has mainly sought to increase the economic and political cohesion of these countries by supporting the ruling autocrats, through bilateral action plans based on the (revised) ENP and UfM, and/or through comprehensive multilateral agreements based on EMP. ENP, complementing the Barcelona Process, has provided additional bilateral opportunities to each neighboring country, supplemented by Action Plans (Wouters and Duquet 2013:237), although not each neighbor's specific expectations have been taken into account by the EU. These bilateral plans, based upon relevant country reports, have been core elements of ENP, hence taken as the main reference point for the implementation of the Policy. Regarding to North Africa region, the action plans were agreed and implemented with Morocco and Tunisia since 2005 and with Egypt since 2007¹¹⁵. Financial programs with North African states were conducted under MEDA I (1995–1999) and MEDA II (2000–2006). MEDA Programme was the major financial instrument of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership. There has been noteworthy financial assistance from the EU to the Mediterranean partners through MEDA I and MEDA II development assistance programs within EMP. In 2007, the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) replaced MEDA. All the MEDA Partners have also become part of the new European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). By this way, the EU has aimed at avoiding any militarization of political disputes among them. Moreover, multilateral action for economic prosperity and regional stability were also emphasized in both ESS and EUGS, as part of security and stability. Nevertheless, these multilateral mechanisms are regarded as successes as well as failures over time. Despite being key trade partners with Europe, North African countries are considered to have failed in achieving political stability, economic development, social unity and cultural advancement as a result of the fact that they have been governed in authoritarian ways for decades (Zoubir 2009b:978-979). This has limited a fruitful economic cooperation between the two sides of the Mediterranean, threatening the stability of the EU as well

¹¹⁵ ENP Action Plans for Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt could be found at:
https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/8398/%20ENP%20Action%20Plans

as the wider region. And finally, when the Arab Spring burst out, the EU has embraced the initial processes of transformation as a promising start. However, the result was that; a revised ENP with a combination of EMP with the inclusion of the so-called “more for more” approach was found unsatisfactory as a result of the low progress it has made.

In the form of soft-balancing strategy towards the US on trade and economic issues; the EU is engaged in internal balancing by exerting its economic power in North African markets in order to maximize its influence thus counter increasing US unilateral trade and investment actions in the region. One might claim that transatlantic partners, who share common interests in North Africa, such as energy and regional stability, have always cooperated in supporting economic growth, institution-building and democratic transformations in the countries of region with an aim to lead them to free market economy. Both actors have used FTAs, loans, aids and grants as economic policy tools for their political objectives. While North African states opened their markets, an environment for competition between the EU and the US has emerged. Therefore, it is argued, MENA region has turned into “an issue of division” between the EU and the US (Bindi 2012:32). Accordingly, they seek to pursue their own agendas in the economic and trade relations with North Africa (Youngs 2004).

From a theoretical perspective, the motivations of both actors could be understood with respect to their distinctive international roles under the new world order of the post-Cold War era. According to Gilpin (1981:129), hegemony is a prerequisite for the formation of a liberal trade regime. The US, as a hegemonic power after the Cold War, has found free trade achievable and applicable. Yet, “given its political power, it has the resources to force or induce others to adopt liberal practices in their foreign trade” (Stein 1984:357). According to Layne (2004:109), by exhibiting aggressive intentions and bolstering hegemony, US policy, since the end of Cold War, is consistent with offensive neorealism. Contrary to the US, the EU has embraced defensive neorealism by mainly exercising self-restraint and pursuit of security through cooperation. It has followed moderate multilateral regional mechanisms and strategic alliances/partnerships rather than aggressive solutions. Given that, in consistent with the balance of power dynamics, diverging interests and perspectives held by the EU and the US have had an impact on their relative power positions in North Africa,

overshadowing transatlantic alliance. While both major powers were principally in favor of the continuation of a close transatlantic partnership, they have failed, over time, to act cooperatively towards North Africa as a result of different motivations and the competition over the economic advantages of the region. Arfi (2010:212) notes that while North African regimes have used the conflict of interest between the two major actors as an opportunity to follow own interests in preserving their authoritarian characters, “the United States is not going to give up its agenda for influencing the region, nor is the EU to abandon its self-styled declaration that North Africa is its historic sphere of influence”.

US trade policy towards North Africa, which is based on bilateral rather than a regional approach, aims at gaining regional and global influence (Zoubir 2009b:982). When the energy crises broke out in the 1970s triggered tensions, instability and interventions in the wider MENA region as well as revolutionary alterations in economic policymaking have also began where the US exerted its financial power and influence to a large extent. International economic institutions, such as the IMF and WB, provided important macroeconomic programs by producing financial incentives to each North African country in overcoming these difficulties, particularly during the 1980s and 1990s. In this respect, it is widely argued whether these organizations, albeit independent, have been somewhat instruments of US power and an extension of US influence in North Africa for its own geopolitical goals (Woods 2003).

Markedly, during the post-Spring era, American interest in deepening economic ties with the region, particularly with Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt, has increased further (Akhtar *et al.* 2013). Concurrently, after 2011, the IMF and WB also reengaged country-specific strategies for economic policy reforms in the same countries –Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt– despite widely held beliefs and criticisms that the region had severely suffered from the previous measures, yet the new policies would also been unsuccessful (Mackell, 2011; Mossallem 2015:3). One might also see US interest in North Africa after the Arab Spring in the remarks of US officials in which new FTAs were intended with Egypt and Tunisia in addition to closer economic relations with Libya¹¹⁶. In order

¹¹⁶ See: Remarks by US Senator Joseph Lieberman (2011), Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, https://carnegieendowment.org/files/Lieberman_Prepared_Remarks.pdf; John McCain, Lindsey

to facilitate trade in the broader MENA region, the US has formed 'Trade and Investment Partnership' (MENA-TIP).

Despite structural programs by IMF and WB as well as FTAs employed in North African states for decades, energy trade and arms trade dominate the economic relations of the US in the region in quest of maintaining its economic as well as military hegemony within global power dynamics. With regard to energy trade, as underlined in detail previously, the US wants to control regional energy demand and resources affecting global energy pricing strategies. With regard to arms trade, North Africa is an important arms export market for the US as well as for the EU, Russia and China. Indeed, arms relationships, part of global trade, are important for international major powers in terms of defense industry income. And yet, arms sales constitute an important balancing tool for rising actors in North Africa to exercise their influence regionally and globally. So, any alteration in arms sales may affect power balances. Today –at the time of the writing– the US is the largest arms supplier to MENA region (Thomas 2017). The EU (in particular France, Germany and the UK) ranks second, Russia ranks third and China ranks fourth on arms sales to MENA (Cordesman 2016). From North Africa, in particular, Algeria, Egypt and Morocco have been recipients of US arms.

Looking through the lens of soft-balancing theory, “relative power considerations count heavily in state calculations, that perceived and actual changes in relative power rankings do affect state behavior, and that states do care about how they fare politically and economically, even when their physical security is not at immediate risk” (Art 2004:180). In that sense, “there has been no “hard” balancing by Europe against the United States because the United States does not represent a direct military threat to Europe’s security”, and because “the United States is, after all, Europe’s ally and protector (Art 2004:180). However, while it is generally considered that the EU is bandwagoning with the US in North Africa due to common security interests mentioned before (especially within NATO), it has, at the same time, an inclination to soft-balance US power in North Africa in terms of increasing commercial ties and economic control of markets. To put shortly, it seeks to challenge US economic supremacy in North

Graham, Mark Kirk, and Marco Rubio (2011), “The Promise of a Pro-American Libya,” Wall Street Journal, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052970203388804576613293623346516>

Africa. But, since “the economic costs of breaking ties with the hegemon are too high, especially in an era of economic globalization”, the EU has chosen to pursue soft balancing rather than hard balancing. In that sense, the EU has followed internal balancing strategies by forming multilateral and bilateral initiatives based on coalition-building with North African countries, knowing that these initiatives, in return, mostly benefited the EU.

In line with defensive neorealism, Pape (2005:10) argues that while the US pursues an aggressively unilateralist policy, soft-balancing may possibly shift the balance of economic power against it. For example, the EU could increase its economic ties with North Africa that might put pressure on the US and reduce the number of North African countries cooperating with the US thus increase the economic costs of American influence on the region. On this front, a synthesis of empirical evidence on the EU’s observable behavior of balancing US initiatives, touched upon trade and economic interests in North Africa, could be seen in various instances. After all, the timeline of initiatives taken by the EU, throughout the decades, indicate that they were not random, and a direct result of its counterbalancing response that the US has endeavored in the region with an increased unilateralism.

First was the attempt of the EU to develop EMP framework including North African countries during the 1990s as a response to IMF and WB programs in the region, perceived as the rise of US economic influence, all of which produced financial incentives by using conditionality clauses that provides aid and assistance in the form of sanctions encouraging reforms in these countries. Second was the launch of ENP framework in 2004 against the increasing American role in North Africa when the US launched the Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative (BMENA) in 2004 at the G8 Summit, created for economic and political transformation of the broader MENA region. Arfi (2010:211) argues that “the 2004 EU new policy was a “preemptive” move seeking to shape, if not undermine, the 2004 U.S. Middle East initiative”. In this context, major financial instruments towards the region were initiated both by the US (as the Middle East Partnership Initiative-MEPI) and the EU (as the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument-ENPI). Thirdly, following the declaration of US National Security Strategy (NSS) of 2002 based on strong unilateralism, the EU as

well prepared and declared its first joint European Security Strategy (ESS) in 2003 as a counteract based on multilateral cooperation for its neighborhood. ESS was later updated in 2008 and redesigned in 2016, as EUGS, in line with the changing priorities and the geopolitics of the region dictated by the systemic conditions of the international environment. Orbie *et al.* (2012) posit that trade policy of the EU is an integrated and powerful external policy domain; therefore the Union's trade and security policies are interrelated. Indeed, it could be seen that all strategy papers of the EU (2003, 2008 and 2016) emphasize the importance of trade, development and investment objectives shaping its immediate neighborhood in terms of enhanced prosperity and security for Europe.

In the post-Spring period, as fourth, the EU has adopted various development mechanisms for North Africa region engaging in soft-balancing against US trade and development initiatives for the region such as MENA-TIP. The EU responded with the revised ENP and a set of policies directed at North African countries such as SPRING Programme launched in 2011 mentioned before. Moreover, above-mentioned formulation of new trade agreements (DCFTAs) after 2011 within the framework of ENP aims at deepening the development of strategic relations with North African states as well as decreasing US preeminence in the region (Tovias 2007:3; Hollis 2012; Youngs, 2004; Akhtar *et al.* 2013). Yet, Schneidman and Signé (2018) assert that the US is disappointed with the noteworthy economic partnership agreements that the EU has set up with the countries of the region where they have given the Union significant competitive advantage with the removal of trade barriers, undermining its American counterpart in the region. Last but not least, by using veto power in international institutions, the EU engages in diplomatic balancing, hence restrains the US from undertaking unilateral actions (Paul 2005). For example, even when European vital security interests were at stake with regard to transatlantic relations, the EU avoided US's unilateral decisions. Yet, as Zoubir (2009a:404) points out, "close trade relations continued even after the imposition of US unilateral sanctions against Libya". For example, when the US extended *the Iran and Libya Sanctions Act* (ILSA) for five years, the EU refused to impose these economic sanctions against Libya (Patten 2001).

In the form of soft-balancing strategy towards Russia on trade and economic issues: the EU seeks to prevent the rising hegemon from increasing its economic influence in North Africa, where the Arab Spring in particular prompted the upsurge of a multipolar regional environment in which extra-regional powers have involved deeply in economic relations with the nations of the region. According to Paul (2018), “the Western countries engaged in intense soft balancing at the UN” by imposing economic sanctions on Russia following its annexation of Crimea in 2014. One could expect that these sanctions would have broader impact on the Russian economy consisting of its trade, arms and energy deals with a variety of countries, including North African nations. However, quite the reverse, Russia has seen North African countries as alternative trading partners to undermine the impact of the economic sanctions enacted in a coordinated manner by the US and the EU. As Feuer and Borshchevskaya (2017) point out, Russia visibly seeks to restore its influence and great power status it lost in the 1990s after the demise of the Soviet Union. Since it has gained tangible political results from the Syrian conflict after 2011, “this relative military and diplomatic success has opened the way for Russia to rethink its role in the regional balance of power and rekindle its interest in North Africa as part of a broader effort to extend Moscow’s influence in the African continent” (Laaroussi 2019). In an attempt to balance major powers in the region;

Russia seeks to compete with the similar efforts from the European Union, the United States, and China in gaining key new strategic partnerships on the continent. Yet Russia is also reviving its longstanding tendency to exploit gaps and dips to take advantage of a perceived waning of Western support for North African countries specifically [] Russia cannot compete with China when it comes to providing commodities and products to North African countries. On the other hand, Russia can provide weapons in exchange for contracts and deals for oil drilling, resource extraction, and building civilian nuclear reactors in Morocco, Algeria, and especially Egypt. Moscow also wants to institutionalize an economic strategy that would allow Russia to open markets for selling Russian products, especially arms, and offering investments in the Russian private sector (Laaroussi 2019).

Against this background, Malka (2019) highlights that Russia has realized North Africa's geostrategic and economic importance, thus makes investments in infrastructure, technology, energy, etc. through strategic partnerships to earn "a future geostrategic edge". And, the Arab Spring has provided Russia with an opportunity to expand its strategic influence in North Africa (Zulfqar 2018:131). Via the same logic, it targets North Africa "as a gateway" to enhance its engagement towards sub-Saharan Africa to make deals for secure access and extraction of raw materials and natural resources of African continent (Laaroussi 2019).

For the EU, the growing assertiveness of Russia to rebuild new economic ties in North African countries, especially in energy and arms trade, signals soft-balancing against it. Yet, it could be said that these areas could provide a major source of economic strength to Russia in surpassing European power in North Africa. Considering energy, as was explained in detail before, while the EU makes attempts for diversification of energy, Russia, as a key energy supplier, continuously seeks to undermine or delay European attempts in North Africa. In terms of arms trade, Russia has deepened its reach and investments by signing arms agreements across North Africa, as the region is an enormous arms export market for the country. Yet, to reiterate, Russia ranks third in arms sales to MENA region. While the Arab Spring came as a surprise for Russia like Europe, the events in the conflict-prone region have at the same time provided new opportunities in arms sales and energy cooperation projects. Russia therefore started to pay more attention on its interests in each North African country since the outbreak of the events, signaling new avenues for a quasi-regional policy to mark its presence in the region – to a large extent in Egypt, Algeria and Libya and to a lesser extent in Tunisia and Morocco.

Although Russia did not have particular interests with regard to Tunisia and Egypt before the Arab Spring, since 2011, it has seen these countries as potential to enter into their markets, thus it has started to bilaterally cooperate on arms sales and nuclear energy, in particular. Zulfqar (2018:131) asserts that "the loss of Iraq as the major importer of Russian weapons was a setback to its interests in the region but after the US refusal to sell arms to Egypt in 2013 following the military takeover, Russia stepped in and signed arms deals with the Egyptian government". In 2015, Russia also

signed a deal to construct the first nuclear power plant in Egypt to begin in 2020 (Middle East Monitor 2018a). With Algeria, Russia has strengthened the bilateral relations in the military sector since 2001 (Feuer and Borshchevskaya 2017). Indeed, from North Africa region, Tunisia has never been a major arms buyer, though Algeria and Egypt have been the major arms importer countries, reflecting the dominance in their military characters explained previously. According to a report by Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) for 2018 trends in international arms transfers, Algeria and Egypt have been ranked fifth in the world amongst the five largest arms importers between 2014 and 2018.¹¹⁷ Bearing in mind the timeline of the Arab Spring across North Africa, it could be seen, in the same report, that “the four countries in North Africa (Algeria, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia) accounted for 75 per cent of African arms imports” and “their arms imports increased by 20 per cent between 2009–13 and 2014–18” (SIPRI 2018:7). In the post-Spring period, Russia has made a massive arms deal with Algeria which seeks to diversify its arms purchases increasingly away from the US (Middle East Monitor 2018b). Both countries have also increased cooperation in many areas, primarily in energy, not to mention cooperation between Gazprom and Sonatrach. With regard to Libya, while Russia has enjoyed good relations during the Qaddafi regime before 2011, the developments in the post-conflict Libya largely threatened Russia’s interests, since substantial arms and oil industry agreements signed in the Qaddafi era were upended. Within the context of political power vacuum, Russia, an opponent of the NATO-led intervention in 2011 as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, has sought “to secure investment projects in a post-conflict Libya” (Ismail 2019). Considering Morocco and Tunisia, the longstanding regional partners of the US, Borshchevskaya (2017) argues that “traditional US allies Tunisia and Morocco have edged closer to Moscow in recent years”. Russia has made efforts to develop economic relations with these countries through cooperation agreements in various sectors.

The EU, eventually, has grown worried against Russian aggressive arms and energy trade policies in the region, thus it has sought ways to counterbalance its influence. Russia explicitly pursues its interests to compete with the EU in North Africa

¹¹⁷ 2019 SIPRI Report could be found at: https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2019-03/fs_1903_at_2018_0.pdf

over time, through above-mentioned means of “promising attractive investment options, carrying out energy projects, and signing an increasing number of contracts and arms deals, as well as building nuclear reactors, diversifying imports and exports from North Africa, and establishing Russian military bases to monitor the southern Mediterranean region” (Laaroussi 2019). In terms of energy economics and counterbalancing Russian dependency in energy, as was explained, the EU has been strengthening its relations with principal energy partners in North Africa in order to mitigate vulnerability to external influence, at the same time bandwagoning with the US in energy security.

In terms of counterbalancing growing Russian arms trade diplomacy in North Africa, the EU is engaged in internal balancing by reinforcing competitiveness of its capabilities and fostering investments in own defense industry so as to increase its arms sales to North Africa¹¹⁸. Furness and Houdret (2019) argue that “EU member countries are major exporters of weapons to Algeria, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia, accounting for around 25 percent of their arms supplies between 2008 and 2017”. The EU’s latest Security Strategy set out in 2016, namely EUGS, proclaims “the importance of a sustainable, innovative and competitive European defence industry”, which could be viewed as a soft-balancing tool. Another relevant illustrative example of the EU’s soft-balancing of Russian arms trade could be seen in the context of Western sanctions that include “an embargo on the imports and exports of arms and related materials” weakening Russian economy as well as limiting its ability to secure new arms deals (Khlebnikov 2019). As such, the EU, in cooperation with the US, would be able to undercut Russian share of arms market in North Africa. Moreover, the latest sanctions adopted by the US in 2018, namely the Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act-CAATSA, include further economic sanctions against Russia by the US in cooperation with the EU although these sanctions have triggered criticisms and opposition by the EU member states as they are considered against the economic interests of Europe.

¹¹⁸ SIPRI 2011 Report shows that the five biggest worldwide suppliers in 2006–10 were the US, Russia, Germany, France and the United Kingdom, compared to SIPRI 2019 Report explaining that the five largest exporters in 2014–18 became the US, Russia, France, Germany and China. 2011 SIPRI Report could be found at: <https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/files/FS/SIPRIFS1103a.pdf>

Before the Arab Spring, the EU member states provided major arms sales to authoritarian regimes, and yet they were competing with Russia (besides the US) in that regard. For example, before the Libyan Spring, SIPRI Report (2010) points out that France, Italy and the UK were competing with Russia for expected orders from Libya. Similarly, Furness and Houdret (2019) emphasize that the US, Russia, Italy and France increased their arms sales to Libya significantly within the last years of the Qaddafi regime before 2011. They also contend that “European countries continued to supply arms to Libya, and, since 2014, not only to the internationally-recognised Western government but also to its Eastern rival”. Paradoxically, this demonstrates that arms trade from Europe to North Africa has increased despite the negative impact of 2011 Arab Spring events on the political, economic and security interests of Europe in its southern neighborhood, together with the economic slowdown with the Eurozone crisis began in the early 2009. While the EU has made efforts to deepen its trade ties with the region, its incoherent approach has caused further conflict as these weapons have been used by Libyan groups (Furness and Houdret 2019). According to a briefing paper by the European Parliament (2017), during the post-Spring era, “the combined exports of major conventional weapons by EU Member States accounted for 26 % of the global total in 2012-2016, making the EU Member States collectively the second largest exporter of major conventional weapons in the world, after the USA (33 %), but ahead of Russia (23 %).

In particular, France’s increased arms sales to Egypt as well as Germany’s high-volume sales to Algeria provide examples of increased arms exports from Europe to North Africa (Khlebnikov 2019). These unprecedented increases are rooted in Europe’s need to counterbalance Russian arms sales especially in the post-Spring period. As mentioned above, Russia has made a massive arms deal with Algeria and signed arms deals with Egypt after the Arab Spring. While Egyptian arms acquisitions from the US have dropped significantly after the Arab Spring, Egypt, besides its increased cooperation with Russia, has strengthened its relationship also with European arms suppliers, especially with France (Thomas 2017:11). As a result, Egypt has been one of the main destinations of EU arms-export licenses in the post-Spring era (Immenkamp 2017). Khlebnikov (2019) asserts that “France is the major Russian competitor in Egypt, which imports 37% of its arms from France against 30% from Russia”.

According to SIPRI 2019 Report, while France's arms exports rose by 43 per cent between 2009–13 and 2014–18, a total of 44 per cent of French arms exports went to the Middle East, of which Egypt became by far the largest recipient of French arms during that period. The same Report shows that in the post-Spring era, Germany has been one of the main suppliers to Algeria, and France has also been one of the main suppliers to Morocco. In fact, Morocco, at odds with Algeria due to long-standing issue of Western Sahara, was increasingly driven for arms purchases during the recent years, thus has been one of the leading importers of arms in the region.

In the form of soft-balancing strategy towards China on trade and economic issues; the EU seeks to prevent the economic rise and expanding influence of China in North African markets. Historically speaking, China became a net importer of energy in 1993, which had a significant impact on its future foreign policy towards which its economy began to develop rapidly, particularly after the 2000s. Within the context of its growing need for energy resources, China has given more importance to resource-rich Arab states in MENA. Eventually, its global opening-up as a rising power in trade links, new markets and investment opportunities, along with its entry into WTO in 2001, linked its economic and investment strategies towards North African countries ever more often. In 2004, China-Arab States Cooperation Forum (CASCF) was established as an initiative for formal dialogue between China and the Arab League, including all North African states, to cooperate on many fields including trade. Guofu (2013:12) highlights that since the inception of CASCF, China-North African relations have intensified greatly.

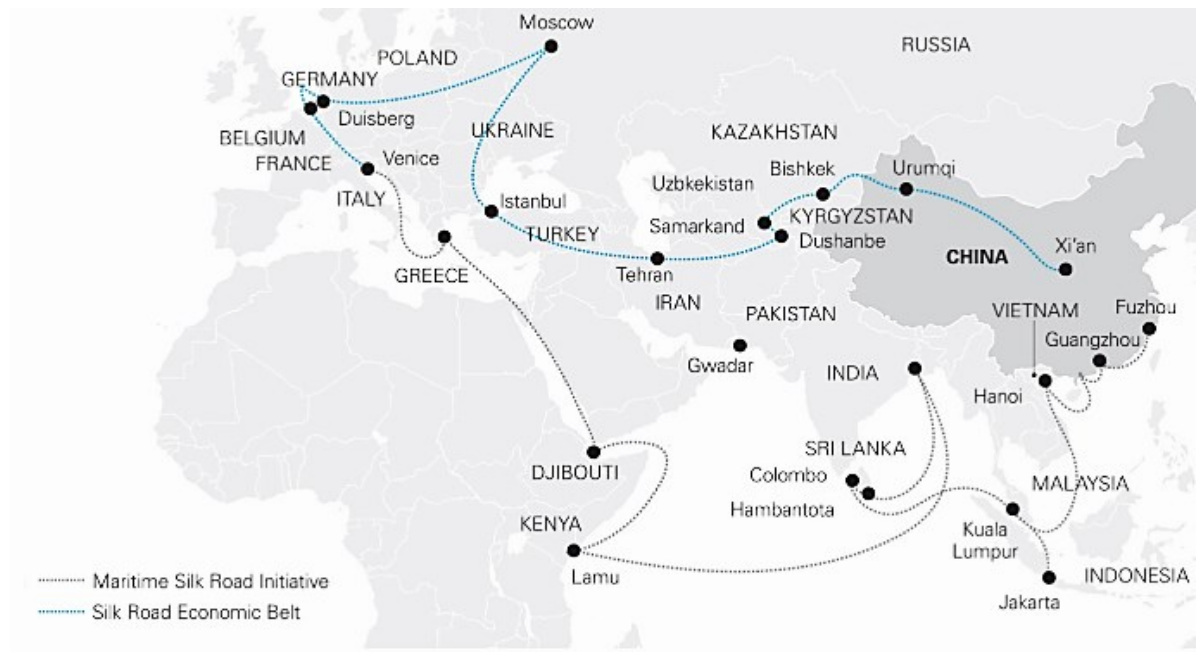
In the meantime, while China's economic influence has increased in North Africa, the EU's relative influence in the region has reduced followed by the European financial crisis in 2008, of which the EU could only provide limited aid toward the region since European states also largely suffered from the crisis. Although the EU continued to devise further mechanisms for its neighbors, China's economic policies necessary for their economic transformation but without strict preconditions, unlike the EU's, have been embraced by North African countries quickly. The EU was aware of China's rapprochement "into Europe's resource-rich backyard" and concerned with its deeper cooperation with the broader Africa region, therefore it started to pay more

attention to balance China's growing presence in the region (Godoy 2006). In 2006, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said that Europe must not "leave the commitment to Africa to the People's Republic of China" asserting that "[Europeans] must take a stand in Africa" yet emphasized "a fair dealing with "[African] natural resources." This indicates the EU's awareness and concern along with its strong will for a defensive policy towards growing Chinese power in its periphery. Within a defensive neorealist stance, the EU, aspiring to maintain its status-quo and strengthen its position in North Africa among other major powers like China, has sought to further its ties hence continued to develop various regional mechanisms involving its Southern Arab neighbors over the past decades. The EU's launch of UfM (in continuation of EMP), in 2008, as an enhanced multilateral mechanism covering the North Africa region as well, could be considered as a broader strategy to offset other major powers along with China's increasing commercial ties in the region. UfM that has promoted economic integration and many reforms with North African countries could then be considered as an internal soft-balancing mechanism valid today and practically in line with the Union's changing priorities within the geopolitics of the region dictated by the systemic conditions of the international environment.

Significantly, with the formal launch of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in 2013, China began to build a more expansive and dynamic economic network throughout Eurasia (Figure 5). Freeman (2017) argues that in the new global world, where the US has gradually withdrawn itself with an increasing indifference to international consensus creating a leadership vacuum, "China is being drawn into an ever-greater role in global governance". "This is the context", he continues, "within which China has been inventing new international financial institutions like the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, the New Development Bank, the South-South Cooperation Fund, the China Silk Road Fund, the Maritime Silk Road Management Fund, and the Maritime Silk Road Bank". Jonathan Hillman, director of the Reconnecting Asia project at CSIS describes the BRI as "a vehicle for China to write new rules, establish institutions that reflect Chinese interests, and reshape 'soft' infrastructure" (Kuo and Kommenda 2018). To this end, for some, BRI is seen as a similar project of the US when it had established its hegemony and influence over Western Europe with the Marshall Plan after WWII (Lubin 2018). In a similar vein,

BRI, regarded as an imperialist project, is also conceived to “retrace Britain’s imperial past” (Hillman 2019).

Figure 5: The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) - the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road (MSR)



Source: World Bank

On the other hand, North Africa is expected to benefit from growing investment opportunities from China as part of BRI (Eid-Oakden 2017:8). If BRI is largely realized, “it will open a vast area to economic and cultural exchange, reducing barriers to international cooperation in a sixty-five-country zone with seventy percent of the world’s population, fifty-five percent of its GDP, and well over half its current economic growth” (Freeman 2017). As a component of this strategy, China seeks to increase its presence throughout Mediterranean coast and ports, particularly in Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco, and invest more in infrastructure projects (Malka 2019:2). Certainly, BRI along with its sea route part, namely the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road-MSR mentioned before, involves European continent with the potential either to benefit or damage the competitive advantage of the EU market in its south affecting its broader economic interests. In that, China’s investment on ports based on BRI, for example, are questioned by European countries whether it could lead to China’s dominance for shipping industry hence increase its political influence in the long run (Nouwens 2019). While the EU stands not opposed to participating in BRI in principle,

this seems to really matter for the EU. After all, the prospective results of the Initiative are rather uncertain, and when finished, it is likely to change the balance of power within the EU's geopolitical neighborhood. Godement, and Vasselier 2017:12) argue, for example, that BRI may isolate the EU leaving it on the defensive.

According to Pape (2005) and Paul (2004), soft-balancing engages in using international institutions and diplomatic arrangements to counter a hegemon. In consistent with soft-balancing theory, through international institutions the EU could shift China's economic power and increase its costs in BRI. While China has invented new international financial institutions, the West still controls global financial institutions and multilateral development banks, such as IMF and the WB, hence decides the agenda and sets up the rule of the game dealing with global trade (Zhang 1999). As a matter of fact, these institutions require accountability, transparency and good governance. If not, they might sometimes threaten with imposing economic sanctions or blockades. So, the West still preserves its influence. Lubin (2018) argues, these factors might threaten China's economic security for the future. In order to promote the strategy, BRI might be possibly co-financed through multilateral institutions such as the WB, European Investment Bank or European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and other multilateral development banks, besides others. This has the potential to "fundamentally change the nature of the BRI, because these banks need to follow strict 'open-content' rules that forbid them from preferring contractors from any particular country" (Lubin 2018). And as a result, China "will have to share decision making with its institutional partners", including the EU. So, it could be argued that this will give the EU to balance China's powerful influence in decision-making. However, as mentioned above, China, to offset these efforts has already set up new institutions to offer aid without preconditions, creating alternative to European aid.

From a broader and multipolar picture of geopolitical tensions and instability in North Africa such as the Arab Spring, China, despite itself also affected negatively, has traditionally followed its principle of non-interference, and cautiously advocated more diplomatic ways in resolving regional conflicts (Guofu 2013:12). For instance, as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, it criticized the 2011 NATO-led

intervention in the post-conflict Libya and called for a ceasefire instead. From a defensive neorealist perspective, by doing so, China strengthened its position as an alternative partner to the West while protecting its own economic interests and diplomatic ties with the countries of the region (Kausch 2014:4). In 2016, Chinese government issued its first Arab policy paper, outlining its strategy toward the Arab countries. It emphasizes that China approaches the region strategically, thus promotes cooperative relations based on mutual benefits and peaceful development¹¹⁹.

As was evidenced by Eid-Oakden (2017:8), “trade between China and North Africa amounted to around \$4.4bn in 2004, but by 2014, it had grown by 20% annually on average to reach \$28.7bn”. Expectedly, overtaking from the US by 2010, China has become the world’s largest energy consumer. Yet, not surprisingly, by 2016 it has become the largest investor in MENA surpassing the US (Middle East Monitor 2017). Moving towards an economic super-power status, its need for access to vital resources has led China to an intensified engagement in the energy-rich countries of North Africa. Especially after 2011, China has mainly focused its investments on Egypt, Algeria and Libya. As mentioned before, in its cooperation with North African states, China mainly seeks to gain the control over energy flows through these countries, thus purchases equity shares in proven energy fields. Whereas energy remains of crucial importance for China, in various other trading areas, “the economic relations between China and North African economies (Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia) are expanding rapidly in recent years as both an important trading partner and increasingly as an investor into the region” (Elshehawy *et al.* 2014:187).

China is an important arms exporter, albeit not as technologically competitive as the United States, Russia and Europe (Cordesman 2016). Boening (2014:88) contends that “beyond economic involvement in the EuroMed, China is now concretely and effectively integrating itself militarily in this region with the definitive intent to exclude the West”. As 2019 SIPRI Report shows, China has been able to become one of the five largest arms exporters in the world in 2014-2018, surpassing the UK, by concentrating

¹¹⁹ See further details on China's Arab Policy Paper, by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in 2016 at: https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1331683.shtml

its efforts on military technology and industry. Yet, it has accelerated efforts in North African arms trade market that is dominated by the US, the EU and Russia. For example, according to the same report, China has become one of the main arms suppliers to Algeria in 2014-2018, during which period Algeria's military spending enormously increased.

Large investments by China in transportation and infrastructure projects in North Africa have had a large proportion, primarily in Algeria and Libya (Elshehawy *et al.* 2014:190). In exchange of infrastructure loans, Chinese energy firms expect benefiting from resource extraction (Alves 2013). Ultimately, the growth in bilateral relations in Sino-North African trade has enabled the states of the region to relatively decrease its dependence on European markets. Meanwhile, the EU has called Chinese aids within the wider Africa region as “charity”, notwithstanding very concerned with the spreading Chinese influence in the region. In 2018, the EU has further signaled stronger involvement in the broader region aiming to create new comprehensive continent partnership between the two sides against Chinese rise (Fox 2018).

CONCLUSION

This thesis has attempted to understand how systemic considerations drive European Union's foreign policy actions toward North Africa before and after the Arab Spring. It is primarily concerned with neorealism under the big tent of realism in general and defensive neorealism in particular. The study highlights that the defensive neorealist assumption that states seek security rather than power is consistent with the context of the EU's conditionality-based regional policies, which are essentially dominated by its interest-driven and security-seeking strategic priorities. It has been argued that the EU acts as a status-quo power in North Africa, influenced by the anarchic structure of the international system and largely motivated by security maximization across its wider neighborhood. In this context, the Arab Spring has been taken as a test case. Three hypotheses have been derived from the theory and interpreted comprehensively by using empirical evidence in the pre and post Arab Spring periods. In that, the study has attempted to find out all balancing variations of European foreign policy strategies toward North Africa explained from diverse causal factors (as shown in Table 2), which have brought about changes in the EU's behavior particularly from the post-Cold War to the post-Spring era with a particular focus on the period 2010-2013.

In this study, the EU is considered as a regional actor as well as a sub-system with its own dynamics from the perspective of the defensive neorealist paradigm. The thesis has fundamentally questioned whether the supreme aim of the EU in its North Africa policy is security and survival. As such, the study has determined whether and to what extent the EU builds up and maximizes its security in its southern periphery. The findings of this study demonstrates that the EU, since its establishment, has rather put forward a defensive posture towards its south, that is, a status-quo oriented behavior, while major powers of the world have gradually increased their interests in North Africa, a region where substantial changes in years along with the impact of the Arab Spring have brought about new regional set of threats located in or emanating from the broader MENA region. It is pointed out, in the study, that the uncertainty and structural

imperatives of the new regional and international system, after 9/11 in particular, have ultimately shifted the EU's interests and security situation across the wider neighborhood. It has accordingly set new priorities by making strategic choices in consistent with defensive neorealism.

The study has explained that neorealism offers a limited understanding of European integration thus it has clarified the place of the EU as a sub-system of the international system. Given the definitions, similarities and differences of the subdivisions of neorealism –defensive neorealism vs. offensive neorealism– the thesis has suggested that defensive branch of neorealism has a broader explanatory reach to European foreign policy behavior toward North Africa. Contrary to what offensive neorealism identifies the inherent goal of major powers to be a hegemon, defensive neorealism pinpoints the ultimate goal of major powers as survival. It has been discussed that the EU has always aspired to pursue moderate actorness in its broad role as opposed to aggressive solutions, hence it is firmly guided by defensive neorealism to bring more security. In this manner, defensive neorealism has proved a convincing analytical framework in the light of balance of power and balance of threat perspectives. These variants of defensive neorealism have provided further insight to figure out to what extent the EU tries to maintain its security interests and preserve its status-quo in its southern periphery.

By elaborating above theoretical vantage points, three hypotheses have been set out in order to explain and test through a set of shifting security patterns in the region (i.e. spread of terrorism, illegal migration moving northwards, rising insecurity and instability resulting from the Libyan failed state, as well as economic concerns and growing pressures on European energy security). The hypotheses have been thoroughly analyzed and empirically tested on these patterns in Europe's southern periphery. The aim has been to find out the relevant balancing behavior of the EU toward North Africa in the specific issue area, where necessary. The study has sought to determine whether and to what extent the Union has built up and maximized its power and security, confirming the continuation of its defensive posture.

The thesis has primarily argued that North Africa is of strategic importance for European security in historical and geographical perspectives. Particularly since the 1990s, the region has been one of the focal points where the EU has mostly faced enhanced collective security challenges. It is found out that besides increased American unilateralism at the doorstep of Europe, increasing interests and engagement of other external actors in North Africa, Russia and China in particular, raised European concerns. Evidence suggests that changes in strategic interests and the intentions of the EU have resulted in modifications in its preferences for regional and global strategies over the years. For example, the Common Foreign and Security Policy was established when the EU needed to strengthen its military capabilities during 1990s in order to give its policy a security dimension and improve its role as an international actor (European Commission, 2009). To take another example, within fast-changing geopolitical environment, the EU has continuously taken steps to enhance its security and defence with a more credible and updated security strategy to replace the outdated ones (i.e. ESS 2003 updated in 2008 and recreated in 2016 as EUGS, respectively). This tendency of the EU emphasizing deeper defense cooperation each time, including debates on the creation of a ‘European army’ over recent years, offers empirical confirmation of defensive neorealism.

Especially in terms of certain security issues, such as migration, terrorism, energy supply and trade, the EU has increasingly felt the need to create new mechanisms on a broader basis. In this study, it is claimed that these crosscutting security patterns, as defensive neorealism refers to, can be equated with causal variables that determine the EU’s external policies in its neighborhood under the umbrella of CFSP. It has been shown that the EU has set up a wide range of initiatives and frameworks for its former colonies to promote regional stability and prosperity. Yet, it has also been observed that these tools have largely served to the EU’s own economic, political and security interests and to protect itself from regional threats in the region. Moreover, it has been found out, in this study, that despite the formation of bilateral and multilateral structures of cooperation with North African countries for decades, the EU has established close relations with authoritarian regimes, and in fact, maintained its security interests and objectives at the same time, by using normative means and rhetoric of democratic promotion –albeit with only poor outcomes. This has supported

the assumption that the EU, regardless of the success of the instruments and mechanisms it has used towards its neighbors, is an interest-driven actor concerned primarily with own security maximization under the systemic pressure in line with defensive neorealism.

In this research, the Arab Spring presents a tangible and illustrative example to support the case study. It has been taken as a living test ground for the concrete implementation of defensive neorealism on the EU's North Africa policy. By giving the roots, primary causes and challenges of the 2010/11 Arab Spring, based upon relevant country analyses in detail, it has been claimed in this study that the events have transformed the regional political landscape of the region. This has therefore affected the existing regional balance of power dramatically leading to a redistribution of power in the region as an impetus for the security agenda of the EU. In this thesis, it has been highlighted that as the events took the EU by surprise, it was unprepared and hesitant at first, so a proactive and collective approach could not be facilitated for policymaking towards the region in the immediate aftermath of the events. Yet, with the new emerging threat perceptions facing Europe, the Union has collectively positioned itself in a new defensive posture depending on the security needs. Theoretically, it has been put forward that; growing regional security threats aggravated by the destabilizing effect of the Arab Spring have been the catalyst for the EU to launch and adopt arguably more coherent policies to obtain stability in the region by introducing new multilateral mechanisms and strategy-led new instruments with new governments. However, as this study has shown, despite a revised ENP and a set of new policies that the EU set forth in the post-Spring era, its prominently interest-driven rationale and attitude beyond the normative rhetoric has not changed fundamentally. In this sense, the Arab Spring could be regarded as an empirical confirmation in terms of reflecting European renewed, albeit continued, regional security agenda.

The evaluation of the hypotheses has been the main theoretical contribution of this thesis. The findings of this study indicate that European balancing strategies in North Africa are grounded on three types of balancing behavior under defensive neorealism, which are; soft-balancing, bandwagoning and burdensharing (offshore balancing). *Soft-balancing* is defined as offsetting a potentially threatening actor or a

rising power, not directly or militarily, but rather undermining or hindering its actions through diplomatic ways. *Bandwagoning* implies alignment with the dominant side against external threats. *Burdensharing* indicates to shifting foreign policy burdens to regional partners through regional tools. In order to better understand the EU's strategic intentions towards North Africa rooted in these varied types of balancing; certain security patterns, which are critical issues for the broader region –migration, terrorism, energy security, economy and state failure– have been selected to draw a clear picture of the EU's security approach and direction embedded in these strategies. Accordingly, the findings of the hypotheses are outlined below:

In compliant with Hypothesis 1; the study demonstrates that under systemic pressure, the EU tends to balance against security threats –energy security, terrorism and the insecurity resulting from the failed Libyan state– by bandwagoning with the US power since these are common threats endangering European security as well as regional and global stability. With rising concerns in the post-Spring era, the EU has even more positioned itself in a broader defensive position by allying with the US due to shifting security patterns. In that, it has been found out, in this study, that instead of confronting the threats alone as a major power, the EU intends to asymmetrically ally with the US in order to balance against threats and the potential adversaries, which can be figured out as a clear instance of its bandwagoning strategy. Plus, it has been highlighted that European bandwagoning behavior is at the same time dependent on both fears of abandonment and disengagement by the US based on potential albeit partial withdrawal of the American power from the region indicating reduced security commitments to Europe. In line with defensive neorealism, all these concerns have created a powerful incentive for the EU to hold on with the US power to ensure own survival and bolster its status-quo within the complications of the region by allying with the strong. Additionally, in line with *Hypothesis 1*, it has been explicated that under balance of power theory, the EU tends to soft-balance US power in trade and economic issues in particular, trying to counterbalance its economic supremacy in North Africa due to increasing American commercial ties and economic control of markets in the region. In this study, it has been featured that the EU exerts its economic power in North African markets to offset increasing US unilateral trade and investment actions in the region. As an example, major past financial instruments towards North Africa

countries under the frameworks of EMP and ENP, as well as the latest ENPI and SPRING programs launched in the post-Spring period have been illustrated as soft-balancing tools.

In accordance with Hypothesis 2; the study shows that under balance of power theory, the EU seeks to prevent the growing assertiveness of Russia and China, from increasing their influence in North Africa, where the Arab Spring in particular prompted the upsurge of a multipolar regional environment where these extra-regional powers have involved deeply in energy and trade/economic relations. The study has indicated that although North Africa has predominantly led by US strategies for years, since 2010 Eurasian powers have extended their political depth and reach in the region. On this front, it has been claimed that Russia's and China's policies in North Africa have been motivated more by economic and energy interests. Since these powers are the most likely to challenge Europe's influence in North Africa, it has been shown how the EU relates to these great powers from a defensive neorealist viewpoint. The study has found out that Russia and China have realized North Africa's geostrategic and economic importance, thus have been continuously investing in the region through strategic partnerships. While Russia seeks to restore its great power status it lost after the demise of the Soviet Union, China has given weight to resource-rich countries of North Africa after the 2000s, in particular, due to its rapidly developing economy and growing need for energy resources. On this premise, it has been put forth in this study that with the growing engagement and investments of energy-hungry China in Europe's neighborhood along with the potential prospects of BRI/MSR project it launched in 2013, as well as the deeper involvement of the energy-superpower Russia in the region trying to prevent Europe's diversification efforts in energy supply, there has been a clear shift in the security landscape of the EU's southern periphery, testing the ability of the EU sub-system to sustain its interests and preserve its status-quo through balancing these rising powers. With a long-term defensive mindset, the EU has resorted to soft-balancing measures by using its diplomatic leverage in order to pacify and prevent the growing influence of Russia and China in North Africa. Of central importance, therefore, has become internal buildup of capabilities and reinforcing strategies of the Union via self-strengthening reforms and regulatory aspects to soft-balance these rising powers in North Africa. Despite new reforms and mechanisms of the EU in the post-

Spring period, it is evident that with the deepening engagement of Russia and China in critical security issues, the relative balance of power in the EU's geopolitical neighborhood has changed, leaving the EU somewhat isolated in these issue areas.

In line with Hypothesis 3, the study confirms that the EU tends to balance against security threats in the region –migration, terrorism, energy security, the failed Libyan state and economic threats– by shifting foreign policy burdens to its North African partners through regional means and tools. Guided by the basic neorealist principle of self-help, the EU has framed North Africa as a threat in terms of these threats. Since the new regional threat landscape of the post-9/11 era and then the post-Spring era have prompted Europe to take steps in threat balancing, multiple signs of burdensharing can be observed for all security issues. Despite its concurrent policy failures of ENP (2004 onwards) and UfM (2008 onwards) towards the Mediterranean, the EU has first and foremost focused on ensuring its own security and protecting the status-quo. It has been shown that in all the crosscutting thematic security patterns, the EU has launched several policies and *ad hoc* instruments toward the region in multilateral and bilateral contexts that are mainly central to EMP and ENP frameworks both before and after the Arab Spring. With various funding and financial aids based on agreed partnership priorities and association agendas, North African states, in return, receive these instruments employed for their overall regional economic and political development. With all the implications for burdensharing and alliance commitment, Europe's out-of-area mutual mechanisms with key North African actors frame the distribution of cooperative efforts on the EU level based on financial incentives for the EU.

Taken into account all hypotheses-testing through empirical evidence, to claim that defensive neorealism provides a persuasive theory to understand the actions of the EU toward its Mediterranean South would be a logical conclusion of this thesis.

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