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# Between the Principled Pragmatism and the Normative Approach: Which Approach the European Union is following in Jordan?

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**Abstract**

**Objectives:** The study aimed to clarify that the European Union (EU) is trapped between its normative approach which seeks to promote the EU idealized values as emphasized by the European Security Strategy of 2003, and its principled pragmatism approach, which makes resilience building the governing rationale of the EU's engagement in the region, as illustrated by the European Union Global Strategy of 2016.This shift following the Arab Spring aimed to reconcile the EU values and interests, yet the study revealed the EU is trapped between these two approaches.

**Methods:** This study is built on a textual analysis of the literature on the EU's external action within the framework of the EU's engagement with Jordan, a partner of the EU, document analysis of their cooperation including their bilateral and multilateral agreements supported by semi- structured interviews with project managers of the 'EU Support to Jordanian Democratic Institutions and Development' along academics, politicians and civil activists from Jordan and the EU.

**Results:** The results of the study showed that with all the crises in the EU Southern Neighborhood, the EU has found itself trapped, where choosing the right path between its values, the normative approach and interest, the pragmatist approach, has been a challenge. Further, it revealed that the EU is incapable of fostering resilience sources including effective governance, social trust and legitimacy.

**Conclusions:** The study suggested scenarios the EU may adopt to reduce the rhetoric-practice gap and reveal the EU's commitment to its values including dropping the selective applicability of conditionality

**Keywords:** Entrapment, normative approach, principled pragmatism, resilience.

## بين نهج الواقعية القائمة على المبادئ والنهج المعياري: ما هو النهج المتبع من قبل الاتحاد الأوروبي في الأردن؟

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ملخّص

**الأهداف:** هدفت الدراسة إلى توضيح أن الاتحاد الأوروبي عالق بين نهجه المعياري الذي يسعى إلى تعزيز القيم المثالية للاتحاد، على النحو الذي أكدته استراتيجية الأمن الأوروبية لعام 2003 ، وبين نهجه الواقعي القائم على المبادئ، الذي يجعل المرونة الأساس المنطقي الحاكم لانخراط الاتحاد في المنطقة، كما هو موضح في الاستراتيجية العالمية للاتحاد الأوروبي لعام 2016 . إن هذا التحول قد حدث بعد الربيع العربي بهدف التوفيق بين قيم الاتحاد ومصالحه، بيد أن الدراسة كشفت أن الاتحاد عالق بين هذين النهجين.

**المنهجية:** اعتمدت هذه الدراسة منهجية تحليل محتوى النصوص للأدبيات الحالية حول العمل الخارجي للاتحاد في إطار شراكته مع الأردن، الشريك الاستراتيجي للاتحاد الأوروبي. كما أنها اعتمدت منهجية تحليل الوثائق لسياسات أردنية أوروبية مختلفة بما في ذلك اتفاقيات الطرفين الثنائية والاتفاقيات المتعددة الأطراف مدعومة بإجراء مقابلات مع مديري مشاريع من مشروع "دعم الاتحاد الأوروبي للمؤسسات الديمقراطية الأردنية والتنمية" بالاضافة الئ أكاديميين، سياسيين ونشطاء مدنيين من الأردن والاتحاد الأوروبي.

**النتائج:** أظهرت نتائج الدراسة أنه مع كل الأزمات في الجوار الأوروبي الجنوبي ، وجد الاتحاد نفسه عالقا ، حيث كان اختيار المسار الصحيح بين قيمه، النهج المعياري، و بين نهجه الواقعي القائم على المبادئ ، يمثل تحديًا. علاوة على ذلك ، كشفت أن الاتحاد الأوروبي غير قادر على تعزيز مصادر المرونة بما في ذلك الحوكمة الفعالة، الثقة الاجتماعية والشرعية.

**الخلاصة:** توصي الدراسة بعدة مقترحات قد يتبناها الاتحاد الأوروبي لتقليل الفجوة الحاصلة بين خطابه وممارساته و تكشف، بنفس الوقت، عن التزام الاتحاد الأوروبي بقيمه المثالية، ومن هذه التوصيات إسقاط التطبيق الانتقائي للمشروطية.

**الكلمات الدالة:** محاصرة، النهج المعياري ، الواقعية القائمة على المبادئ، المرونة

**Introduction**

Twelve years have already passed after the Arab Uprisings, what is known as the Arab Spring, and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region is still at an endless turmoil. Limited statehood and fail states are spread in the region as in the case of Syria, Yemen, or Libya. Other countries are trapped in endless political, social and economic crises as in Jordan or Egypt. In response for these uprisings, the international community support, including the EU, is crucial in order to restore stability in the region.

As these uprisings represent a turning point in the history of the region, the EU needed a quick response. The EU's strategic response came as early as 8 March 2011, with the Commission proposing "A partnership for democracy and shared prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean". This communication emphasizes the need for the EU to support the demand for political and economic reforms (Eurpean Commision , 2011a). This is clearly stated in the introduction of this document:

[We believe that now is the time for a qualitative step forward in the relations between the EU and its Southern neighbors]. What this indicates, is illustrated in the next sentence. [The commitment to democracy, human rights, social justice, good governance and the rule of law must be shared] (Eurpean Commision , 2011a, p. 2).

Additionally, it also proposes the "more for more" principle, through which increased support in terms of financial assistance, enhanced mobility, and access to the EU Single Market is to be made available, to those partners who most advanced in the consolidation of reforms (Tömmel, 2013).This approach was further illustrated in another joint communication on 25 May. This sets the launch of "A New Response to a Changing Neighborhood" specifying a review of the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) (European Commission, 2011b).

This response and the support for these uprisings just emphasize the EU's goal of transferring its values to the region. A goal that has been a corner stone in the EU's policies and has sought to achieve since the launching of its Security Strategy of 2003:

 [The best protection for our security is a world of well-governed democratic states. Spreading good governance, supporting social and political reform, dealing with corruption and abuse of power, establishing the rule of law and protecting human rights are the best means of strengthening the international order] (Council of the European Union, 2003, p. 12).

Hence, the EU saw in these uprisings the right moment to support the people's demand and achieve this old new goal. However, the internal and external crises that stormed the EU in 2015 and 2016 have revealed the inadequacy of its previous policies and the insecurity of the EU. This is clearly stated in the 2015 review of the ENP and the European Union Global Strategy (EUGS) of 2016.The introduction of the EUGS states that:

[We live in times of existential crises, within and beyond the European Union. Our Union is under threat] (European Union Extrenal Action, 2016, p. 10).

The review of the ENP 2015 and the EUGS have revealed a different view of the EU about itself and the world. It revealed the need for a new approach which is set on principled pragmatism, built on resilience building. The Ultimate goal of this approach is to enhance EU's security, reconcile the EU values and interests and balance between them. However, 6 years following this policy and it seems that the EU is trapped between its values, normative approach and interest, pragmatist approach.

**Study Problems and Question**

The problem of this Study revolves around the EU entrapment between its values, normative approach and interest, pragmatist approach and its attempt to reconcile between them.

For this reason, the study's main question is:

- **How is the EU trapped between its normative approach and principle pragmatism approach in Jordan?**

To answer this question, the paper will proceed as follows: First, the theoretical framework, then, the EU's engagement with Jordan, a strategic partner of the EU in the region. Third, fostering resilience sources and the EU's entrapment in the case of Jordan. Finally, the conclusion and the implication for future research.

**Methodology of the Study**

This study is carried out in three steps. First, a discourse analysis of 15 EU official documents in order to illuminate the meaning attached by the EU to resilience, norms, and principled pragmatism approach in the EU-Jordan context. In particular, the study looks at how these notions are defined, what the scope of action is, and what mechanisms are envisaged for policy implementation. Key documents include the EUGS and Strategic approach to resilience, ENP policy reviews, as well as European Neighborhood Instrument (ENI) single support frameworks and Association implementation reports. While the study is based on the analysis of all sources, only some of them are quoted in the article for illustrative purposes.

Second, the analysis of the EU policies and its agreements with Jordan, with a focus on governance, democracy, human rights and the rule of law. These sectors were selected because they constitute priority areas of the EU cooperation with Jordan, and they are at the heart of both the bilateral and multilateral tracks of their relation. In the analysis, the focus on the bilateral track, which was designed as the main instrument to "create a closer relationship" between the EU and Jordan.

Third, textual analysis of the current literature on the EU's normative and pragmatist approach within the framework of the EU's engagement with Jordan, supported by semi- structured interviews with project managers of the '*EU* Support to *Jordanian* Democratic Institutions and Development' project (EU-JDID) along academics, politicians and civil society activists from Jordan conducted between May and November 2020, as this phase represents the final phase of the EU-JDID. The comparison between the EU's discourse and practices highlights a disconnection between the EU's narrative shift toward a pragmatist approach, resilience-local ownership nexus thinking.

**Objective of the Study**

The study has two folds: First, it aims to contribute to the current debate regarding the EUs' external action in the MENA region, in particular, following the Arab Uprisings. This debate that revolves around the EU instruments and policies in the region (Tocci, 2020) and the efficiency of these policies, through illustrating the existing rhetoric-practice gap in the EU policies (Fernández, 2013). Second, the study aims to illustrate the EU's entrapment between the two approaches and between its values and interest while attempting to reconcile between them.

**Importance of the Study**

The importance of this study stems from different reasons. First, the study adds value to this debate and through analysis of the EU strategic engagement with Jordan, it illustrates the EU's entrapment between the two approaches. Further, it will bring the research agenda on the EU foreign policy a step forward from the times sterile discussion on whether the EU 'actually' foreign policy has shifted to a different approach or not. In addition, it brings a broader understanding of how the principles of resilience and local ownership are translated from policy formulation to policy implementation. Moreover, the fact that it also links into broader theoretical debates in international relations about the role of values and ideas in international affairs further enriches the relevance and interest of the argument.

**Terms of the Study:**

- **Resilience**:

Resilience, as a word, stems from the Latin word "resilire." "Salire" means to leap or jump; the

suffix "re" indicates repetition, or backward motion (Aleassa, 2020). As for its origin, resilience is often traced back to the seventeenth century, however, the concept has been integrated into many scientific fields, with different definitions. Despite of this fact, all of these definitions have something in common, which is resilience is about the ability to bounce back after crises. In the context of this study, resilience refers to the process of patterned adjustments adopted by a society or an individual in the face of endogenous or exogenous shocks (Bourbeau, 2013).The definition presented here presents resilience as a process of adjustment. It's a dynamic process that makes resilience a systemic way of thinking to face internal and external adversities.

- **The EU, A normative power:**

According to Ian Manners whose article, with Francois Duchene's (1972) conception of the EU as a 'civilian power', has become a central and main reference in literature: 'the core component of normative power Europe is that the EU exists

as being different to other existing political forms, and this particular difference predisposes it to act in a normative way' (Manners, 2002, p. 242)

- **Principled Pragmatism:**

"Principled pragmatism" is a new EU foreign policy concept defined in the EU Global Strategy of 2016. It highlights that the EU must adapt and adjust to a "rapidly changing environment", and insert a dose of political realism in its foreign policy while continuing to uphold its principles. Yet, this approach does not illustrate whether EU values idolized in the Treaty on European Union, including freedom, democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights will take precedence over a pragmatic realpolitik analysis of the situation, or decisions will likely be taken on a case-by case basis (Mihalache, 2016).

- **The EU's entrapment:**

The concept of entrapment in this study refers to the entrapment of the EU in pursuing one of its key foreign policy objectives which is to promote the values enshrined in its treaties, including democracy, the rule of law and human rights and its interests of security, stability, or fighting illegal migration through adopting a pragmatist approach. It also suggests the entrapment between a normative approach which is a top-down approach and a pragmatist approach which is a local bottom-up approach. Entrapment illustrates the continuation rather than the shift in the EU policy in the region. The EU policies are just old wine in new bottles ( Colombo & Tocci , 2012).

**Previous Studies**

Following are some of the significant studies that dealt with the subject of the EU external action in
the world, with a specific focus on the MENA region:

1.    Manner study entitled, " Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?" has become a main theme in the broad literature. In his argument, he contrasts the notion of 'military power Europe' and attempts to set a new direction for the EU's international role. By examining the case study of its international pursuit of the abolition of the death penalty, he argues that the EU practice may be best understood as 'normative power Europe' (Manners, 2002).

2.    Seeberg study entitled, "The EU as a realist actor in normative clothes: EU democracy promotion in Lebanon and the European Neighborhood Policy" analyzes the difficulties for the EU in successfully promoting democracy in the (MENA) region. By examining the EU's role in promoting democracy in Lebanon, the article illustrates the vagueness of the EU policies in Lebanon. This vagueness implies that the EU pursues a realist agenda. He argues that the EU is a realist actor dressed in normative clothes (Seeberg, 2009).

3.    Silvia Colombo and Nathalie Tocci study entitled, "The EU Response to the Arab Uprising: Old Wine in New Bottles?" investigates the EU response to the Arab Uprisings and reveals the insufficiency of this response. This forces the EU to revise its European Neighborhood policy of 2004, yet, the implication of this revisions suggests that this response does not offer a radically new policies to the region ( Colombo & Tocci , 2012).

4.    Anholt and Wagner study entitled, "Resilience as the EU Global Strategy's new leitmotif: pragmatic, problematic or promising? "illustrates the rise and spread of resilience in international discourses about crises management. They investigate the different context that led the EU to adopt resilience, the implication of resilience as a policy and the value added of resilience, including opening up the EU agencies to new ways of thinking and providing a common ground for engagement (Anholt & Wagner , 2016).

5.    Stollenwerk et al study entitled, "Theorizing resilience-building in the EU's neighborhood: introduction to the special issue" attempts to theorize a theory about the sources of resilience. In their argument, they introduce three sources of resilience building: Social trust, legitimacy of (state and non-state) governance actors and the effective, fair, and inclusive governance institutions. They argue that if the EU seeks to build resilience, it needs in-depth local knowledge, and a clearly designed strategy to foster these three sources (Stollenwerk et al, 2021).

6.    Tocci study entitled," Resilience and the role of the European Union in the world" shows the shift of the EU to resilience, to be elevated into one of the five guiding principles for the EU's role in the world. She reveals how resilience epitomizes the philosophy of principled pragmatism enshrined in the EUGS, and it captures the transformative approach to complex change advocated by the EU (Tocci, 2020).

This study adds value and contributes to the current debate about the role of resilience as a guiding principle for the EU. The main claim presented here may be seen as contrary to the former claims. The author argues that adopting resilience is neither a shift nor a continuation for the EU policies in the region, yet, it may be seen as an entrapment. With all the crises in the Southern neighborhood, the EU has found itself entrapped, where choosing the right path between its values, the normative approach and interest, the pragmatist approach, has been a challenge and implementing this narrative turn, as appeared in its EUGS, translates into change is a real obstacle.

**Theoretical Framework**

The European Union's policy towards its Southern neighborhood has indeed witnessed different changes. Starting from the 'Barcelona Process' of the 1990s and the European Security Strategy (ESS) of 2003, the EUs' policy frameworks portrayed the EU as a normative power. The EU, reflecting on itself, saw the usefulness of its norms, consequently, wanted to export them to its Southern neighbors as a common interest for both (Manners, 2002). The strategic goal of the EU foreign policy has been to promote liberal democracy abroad. Building on the 1990s consensus that democratic states do not fight each other, the EU sought exporting the EU model of good governance and democracy to its neighbors as a fundamental goal to achieve internal security and enhance its influence internationally ( Bargués & Morillas, 2021).Thus, as the South was seen by the EU as unstable and a source of dominant threat, both the ESS and the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) of 2004 aimed to present a fit-sized policy to stabilize the EU Southern neighbors by exporting EU's norms. This narrative of duty-responsibility dominated the EU foreign policy discourse even during the initial response to the Arab Uprisings, as emphasized by the first review of the 2011 ENP and its so called "strategic option" that emphasize its support to the Arab Uprisings (Zielonka, 2013).

Yet, this review has been criticized. Some of the criticism includes the EU over-reliance on technocratic mechanisms of regulations. The EU externally designed policies and applied it in a top-down approach, led by international high representatives who "set" and "impose[d]" the political agenda and "punish[ed]" those local actors who did not fulfill it ( Bargués & Morillas, 2021). Further, through using a fit-sized policy, the EU has ignored each Southern state capacity and need. Hence, their compliance with this policy would be difficult.  In addition, the EU can be seen as dealing with its Southern neighbors as inferiors who need guidance without considering them as real partners.

For this reason, the second review of the 2015 ENP implies the significance of dealing with them as real partners and consider their needs. More importantly, stabilization has become the main principal guiding the EU's new strategy for security and prosperity. Hence, the measures set out through the 2015 ENP offer ways to strengthen the resilience of the EU's partners in the face of external pressures and their ability to make their own sovereign choices (European Commission, 2015). Achieving this required more differentiation and a greater mutual ownership approach that considers the need and capability of each member partner, flexibility and greater engagement of the EU members to support the Eastern and Southern partners (European Commission, 2015)**.**

Understanding this new shift cannot be understood in isolation from the EU's view about itself. Internal and external crises, within and beyond the EU, have transformed the EU's view about itself and the world. Thus, the EU′s optimistic view of Europe itself with the ESS opening assertion that:

[Europe has never been so prosperous, so secure, nor so free] (Council of the European Union, 2003, p. 3) has been transformed in 2015 ENP review with the acknowledgment of Europe's insecurity]  (European Commission, 2015).

This shift in the EU's view about itself, the neighboring and the whole world; the need to embrace insecurity narrative and the inevitability of shocks and crises transformed the EU duty-responsibility to threat- responsibility narrative (Reid & Evans, 2014)**.** As a result, building state and societal resilience of the EU, the Southern and Eastern neighboring states became the priority of the EU's foreign and security policy.

In parallel to this view about the EU itself and the world, this shift represents adopting a realistic approach for managing (not solving) crises and disputes. The EU does not live in the illusion that it has the power to determine the fates of states and societies in its surrounding regions. The political, security, social, economic, environmental, digital, and energy challenges these countries face are often so great that no external actor, beginning with the EU, has the power to fix (Juncos, 2018).

This acknowledgment forces the new shift to accept that crises and conflicts can only be managed temporarily, they tend to persist, reoccur and rarely disappear. Yet, this shift does not mean that the EU has simply abandoned its normative agenda, rather, the EU pragmatically faces the reality that this agenda is insufficient to an unstable region. Thus, building resilience is like a middle ground between over-ambitious liberal peace building and under-ambitious stability (Anholt & Wagner , 2016).

Although resilience has been integrated into the EU's humanitarian and development aid since 2012, it was, however, till the launching of the EUGS that resilience has prevailed as an appropriate policy to navigate this difficult, more connected, contested and complex world (European Union Extrenal Action, 2016).There are many reasons that led the EU to perceive the world as complex. Internally, the economic and the Schengen crises, as well as the rise of far-right wing parties challenged a coherent and ambitious foreign policy (Morillas , 2019). Externally, the violence and instability of neighboring countries, beside a global context of crisis of the liberal order and multilateralism and resistance of EU's values, norms and policies, made necessary a reshaping of interventions ( Bargués & Morillas, 2021). For this reason the EUGS has emphasized "state and societal resilience" to the east and south as an ultimate goal for the EU foreign policy:

[The EU will support different paths to resilience, targeting the most acute cases of governmental, economic, societal and climate/energy fragility, as well as develop more effective migration policies for Europe and its partners] (European Union Extrenal Action, 2016, p. 9).

In the EUGS, the commission defined resilience as the ability of individuals, communities, societies or states to adapt, manage, tackle and positively respond to crises (European Union Extrenal Action, 2016). Understanding the characteristics of resilience illustrates why it seems more appropriate. Resilience is perceived by the EU as a pragmatic approach with its ultimate goal of reconciling the EU values and interests (Badarin & Schumacher, 2020). In other words, as mentioned, resilience building is a middle ground between overambitious liberal peace-building and under-ambitious stability (Anholt & Wagner , 2016). It is a middle ground between, on the one hand, a principled, liberal foreign policy, which seemed difficult to achieve and even got resistance in the neighborhood; and, on the other hand, a realist foreign policy driven by interests and geostrategic calculations, which appears too far from European values and purposes (Tocci, 2020).

These strategic calculations have always been a big concern for the EU. Firstly, the geographic proximity makes the EU more vulnerable for any instability in the MENA region. The consequences of such instability, including the rise of forced migration to the EU, human trafficking or terrorism, clarify the EU's willingness to cooperate with even authoritarian regimes to tackle these challenges, even prior to the Arab Uprisings (Volpi & Cavatorta , 2006). Secondly, the EU's need for the MENA's energy, which has always been dominance in the EU's foreign policy, and even with a greater need following the Russian -Ukrainian war. This war reveals the necessity for the EU to verify its energy's sources and neglect its over reliance on the Russian gas which has been a political weapon used by Russia against the EU.

For this reason, the aim of combining both principles and interests is meant to overcome some of the shortcomings of top-down "liberal" approaches to democratization. Other characteristics reveal why resilience is more appropriate. The EU documents about resilience clearly clarify these characteristics. Tocci confirms that these characteristics are clearly notable in the 2013 Action Plan for Resilience in Crisis Prone Countries. She sums them up in the following: First, resilience requires all EU actors (humanitarian, developmental, political) working differently and more effectively together to achieve resilience objectives. Second, the EU asserts the need for integrating resilience in national policies and planning for development since it's the local government responsibility to achieve resilience. Resilience approach is characterized as people-centered and focused on the most vulnerable groups, hence, it's a bottom-up approach. In addition, resilience does not only aim to increase the people ability to absorb shocks and to cope with stresses, but it also constitutes an opportunity

for transformation, adaptation, and improving livelihoods and economic opportunities (Tocci, 2020).

To sum it up, resilience enables the EU to present it locally-owned and sustained processes of intervention, that are intended to correct top-down interventions which are more common in the 2000s (see Figure 1). The difference between the two approaches is probably less clear-cut than it is presented here. But the shift from normative approach to resilience helps to capture a tentative direction – underpinned by a widespread concern to evolve, learn and improve the EU external action.



**Figure 1: The Difference between Normative Approach and Resilience-Pragmatist Approach ( Bargués & Morillas, 2021).**

The figure illustrates the difference between the two approaches. Principled pragmatism through resilience emphasizes on a greater local ownership for the EU interventions and the need to enhance the local capacities. Doing that is through a shift from an external imposed agendas on the EU's partners to a locally-designed policies where the EU's offers its support and assistance (Chandler , 2014). This is the main goal of adopting resilience building, however, in order to pursue this goal, the EU should foster resilience resources.

(Stollenwerk et al, 2021) illustrate that there are three sources through which resilience can be fostered. The first is the design of open, inclusive, fair and transparent (state and non-state) governance institutions (Stollenwerk et al, 2021). As it will be argued, the main obstacle here is achieving this goal should make it local bottom- up approach and enhance the capacities of civil society institutions to make it an inclusive process, however, the EU is entrapped and still pursue a top-down central approach, with its focus on the main Jordanian political institutions.

The second source of resilience is fostering social trust to ensure dialogue, cooperation and positive interactions between different groups (Stollenwerk et al, 2021).However, this gap in Jordan is increasing, and although it is not the EU's responsibility to reduce this gap, yet, it can contribute to do so or support the government to enhance its efforts to do this since losing this trust will make the people unwilling to engage in a political process where they don't trust who governs this process. Hence, it hinders building inclusive political process.

The third source of resilience is the legitimacy of governance actors. This is linked to the perception that people have on how governors are responding to their needs and preferences, while delivering effective and inclusive governance (Stollenwerk et al, 2021). A crucial limitation here is that the legitimacy of the executive power in Jordan is stagnated and facing challenges. The legitimation of the monarch institution, the first component of this executive power remains relatively high. This is primarily due to historical-religious legitimacy as the ruling family being descended from the Prophet Muhammad, a denial of the rule of the Hashemite family would be a denial of the dynasty of the Prophet Muhammad ( Elkahlout & Hadid, 2021). Another legitimizing factor, termed the "neighborhood effect". A strategy, commonly used following the early years of the Arab Uprisings, of which dampened protests by providing Jordanians with a strong incentive not to follow a similar path to the destruction seen in neighboring countries . This view was accompanied by a sense that the ruling authorities responded wisely and quickly to Jordanian protests following the toppling of the Mubarak regime ( Christophersen, 2013).

However, the legitimacy of the government, the second component of this power is facing challenges. Considering the

process of forming government in Jordan, as it is appointed by the king .Adding to that, the successive governments are seen as inefficient and the king's himself intervention becomes crucial in order to instruct the government to achieve effective governance. Again, although, it's not the EU's responsibility, even it is impossible to interfere in such an internal issue, yet, as will be argued, it can get advantage of its position as an international donor who got acceptance by the government and public to support the government to increase social interest and legitimacy.

For this reason, this study will build on these resources to illustrate the EU's entrapment and the challenges it has in Jordan to foster resilience sources. However, the main focus will be on the first source, because enhancing the first source leads to foster the other sources as they are interrelated.

**The EU -Jordan Historical Context**

The EU has always looked at Jordan as a strategic partner and an actor of stability, due to its role in promoting stability, moderation and inter-faith tolerance in a region full of turmoil. The EU's interest in preserving Jordan stability stems from three main aspects; the first aspect is its role in the Middle East Peace Process and its support to the two states solution, as the only possible path for a lasting peace in the region (El-Khazen , 2021). The second aspect is its role as a host for refugees, since it continues to be the second host country of refugees per capita in the world (United Nations Jordan, 2021) . The final aspect is its role in fighting terrorism, as a member of the international campaign against terrorism, Jordan has been playing an active role in the United States led Global War on terror  ( Ayasrah, 2009). Further, it has proved heavyweight in the fight against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and an active partner in the international led coalition to combat ISIL fighters. These aspects illustrate the urgent need to support such a significant partner. To ensure that, the EU Delegation for Jordan works on the implementation, the following up and the advancement of their bilateral relations in different fields.

Regarding the history of their relations, it has developed on the multilateral and bilateral level. On the multilateral level, the history of Jordan-EU relation goes back to the 1970s, when the founders of the EU started to design various processes to guide their relationships with Mediterranean countries. These processes were implemented through several policy frameworks including the Global Mediterranean Policy of 1972, the Euro-Arab Dialogue of 1973, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) Barcelona Process of 1995, the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) of 2003/2004 and its reviewed policy of 2011 and 2015, as well as the Union for the Mediterranean (UFM) of 2008 (Youngs, 2015).

On the bilateral level, the EU and Jordan signed an Association Agreement in 2002. It is the main block for their cooperation. It has created a strong partnership across many sectors. In October 2010, the EU-Jordan Association Council agreed on an Advanced Status' Partnership, which has led to an increase in the scope of their political cooperation, greater integration, an approximation of economic legislation and the reduction of trade barriers. Jordan-EU strategic partnership has further advanced this agreement. What is more, Jordan was the first Mediterranean country to conclude such an agreement.  The EU-Jordan Action-Plan, which governed their cooperation from 2012-2016, strengthened this advanced status. In 2014, the EU-Jordan Association Council negotiated and signed a Mobility Partnership that aims to improve the management of mobility and migration (Press and inforamtion team of the Delegation to Jordan, 2021).

In parallel to the 2015 European Neighborhood Policy review, the EU and Jordan have adopted the EU-Jordan Partnership Priorities. Under the Partnership Priorities, their collaboration is designed to foster these objectives mutually: i) macro-economic stability, sustainable and knowledge-based growth; ii) reinforcing democratic governance, the rule of law and human rights; and iii) regional stability and security, including counter terrorism. Further, Jordan signed the 2016 Jordan -EU compact, after London conference for supporting Syria and the Region. The compact aims at improving the living conditions of refugees and their host communities (Press and inforamtion team of the Delegation to Jordan, 2021).

These objectives are at the heart of resilience resources building, and fostering them means fostering Jordan's resilience as a whole .Yet, this has not been an easy task and there are many obstacles that hinder achieving such a goal. The following section maps the EU work in Jordan to foster resilience's sources.

**Mapping the EU's effort to foster Resilience's Sources in Jordan**

A deeper look at the Partnership Priorities of 2015 reveals that the objectives of this policy are the essence of the EU

universal shared values. However, achieving them would be through resilience, and this section trace the EU work to foster these sources.

### *The design of the governance institutions*

The first source of resilience is political or governance institutions. These institutions are designed for rule-making and/or the provision of public goods and services. The main straightforward functional argument, which – in international relations – has been made by rationalist institutionalisms, is that governance institutions – from (non-state) judicial systems to educational institutions, or public health governance – must be "fit for purpose" in order to be effective (Stollenwerk et al, 2021).

The literature reveals that it is difficult to agree upon a single perfect model for *good efficient governance* suitable for all possible conditions ( Jameel & Asif, 2019).One main theory that aims to set this model is good governance theory. This theory sets some basic principles according to which a good government, whatever its form, must be run. The good governance theory is linked to governing methods and structures. It was first introduced by the World Bank in supporting developing countries. It reflects principles of good governance. Such principles include accountability, responsiveness, transparency, public participation, or efficiency ( Ekundayo, 2017).

The World Bank Index captures some of these principles and their appropriate design. The design of those institutions is to be inclusive, transparent, open and fair (The Global Economy , 2022). Yet, the MENA region lacks this kind of political institutions. One main cause of the Arab Uprisings on the first place is the lack of pluralistic and inclusive institutions. The MENA Economic Monitor of 2015 finds that the Arab uprisings were triggered by growing and broadly shared dissatisfaction with the quality of life. Ordinary people were frustrated by their deteriorating standards of living, reflected in a shortage of quality jobs in the formal sector, poor quality public services, and the lack of government accountability (The World Bank, 2015).

Consequently, fostering resilience shows the importance of supporting institutional reforms related to public administration. A deeper look at the Jordanian case reveals the need for political reforms to enhance the governance effectiveness, and political and civil liberties as the following charts indicate:

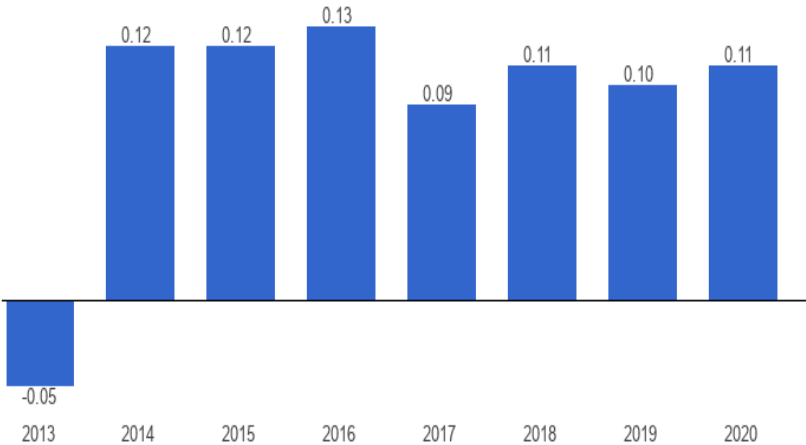**Table 1: Jordan Government Effectiveness (The Global Economy , 2022).**

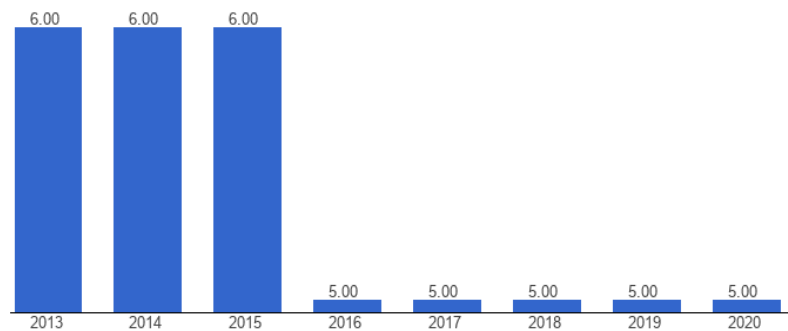

| Table Key:  -2.5 weak, 2.5: strong |
| --- |

**Table 2:  Jordan Political Rights index  (The Global Economy, 2022).**



Table Key:  1: weak, 7: strong

The first table about effectiveness captures perceptions of the quality of public services, the quality of the civil service the degree of its independence from political pressures, the quality of policy formulation and implementation, and the credibility of the government's commitment to such policies (The Global Economy , 2022). The second figure, the political rights ratings evaluate three categories: electoral process, political pluralism and participation, and the functioning of government (The Global Economy, 2022).

These tables illustrate the slow process of reforms in Jordan .At the same time, they support and emphasize the EU's position from Jordan regarding reforms. For the EU, Jordan is a partner who is committed to these reforms. An interviewee asserted that Jordan is on the path for these reforms, even if it is a slow process, and the EU works to support that. The Commission also asserts this:

[The EU has acknowledged the efforts of Jordan to move forward with ambitious political and economic reforms] (Council of the European Union, 2010, p. 2)

Two points to be mentioned here. First, considering the improvement of effectiveness that occurred from 2013 to 2014, -0.05 to 0.12, it must be noticed that it occurred just two years following the Arab Uprisings where the regime responded wisely and quickly to Jordanian protests following the toppling of the Mubarak regime, in order not to have the same destiny. This wise response is to be considered a main cause to save the country stability from having the same destiny as other Arab countries witnessed Arab Uprisings ( Christophersen, 2013).

Second, they may be read as a cursor for the EU entrapment between values and interests, as they indicate Jordan commitment to these reforms could not be as real as they are expressed in EU/Jordan agreements. Regarding to political and civil liberties, Jordan is considered to be at a distinguished position comparing to other Arab countries, although it still far from being democracy. Despite the legal political parties, the reform process which began in 1989, and the regular or less regular parliament elections, the country did not witness that positive change, as it stated in the 1952 constitution. Yet, this slow process might be in the EU interest as it might reflect fears that political change and democratization can, in the short term, lead to instability and have uncertain consequences (Afifeh, 2014).

At the same time, it is impossible to consider this slow change without considering Jordan geopolitics and the Jordanian political culture. This culture is deeply rooted and changes do not occur overnight in a society where tribes still play a great role. In the field of national security, a degree of success has been achieved because of the Jordanian tribes. The relationship between tribes and the government derives from its broad and clear framework. Jordanian tribes have been the main backers of the monarchy. From independence to the present day, societal institutions in Jordan, which include the monarchy and local governments, have relied on tribal communities not only to confirm national identity in the postcolonial world but also to ensure continuity of political and security support. For the government of Jordan, tribes have been the basis for allowing the state to govern. ( Al-Abadi, 2012).

For this reason, fostering political participation and enhancing the role of political parties takes a slow pace. When it

comes to the EU's work to enhance the effectiveness of governance in Jordan, it has always been a corner stone for their bilateral relationship, yet, the degree of Jordan commitment, as the charts show, is a controversial issue.

Some experts believe the EU can and should emphasize on a greater commitment to these reforms. An interviewee asserted the need to balance between stability and reforms, he emphasized the need to link their aid to reform, i.e. the use of conditionality- linking conditions to reform. The emphasis on the principle of conditionality regarding reforms has been also emphasized by another interviewee who asserted that conditionality advances reforms. As Jordan is a country with a great dependency on donors' support, this political conditionality will be an important tool to illustrate the importance of Jordan commitment to enhance effectiveness.

However, political conditionality has been a long tradition in the EU policies. Usually this takes the form of the European Commission (EC) and EU member states interrupting, stopping or re-directing bilateral aid flows. This has been in response to all sorts of violations of human rights or flawed election processes. The main reasons to apply such conditionality is: first, to respond to demands in donor countries not to provide aid to certain regimes. Second, to ensure that partner country governments cannot abuse aid to maintain the status quo. And a third reason is to create strong signals and incentive packages that favor or stimulate reform minded groups in power on their reform path ( Vanheukelom, 2012).

The inconsistency and vagueness of the application of this political conditionality indicate the entrapment of the EU between values and interest. It does not illustrate whether EU values will take precedence over a pragmatic realpolitik analysis of the situation, or decisions will likely be taken on a case-by case basis. For instance, the EU has abstained from criticizing Jordan's repeated suspense of elections as well as its hosting of former president of Sudan Omar Al-Bashir in 2017, for which the EU did criticize Uganda that same year (Anholt & Sinatti, 2019). The crisis in Syria, the presence of ISIS, and the challenges related to Syrian refugees have emphasized the importance of Jordan as an important actor for the EU and the need to support it apart from the EU values and Jordan commitment to reforms (Seeberg, 2016).

This vagueness challenges the claim of the EU as a normative power. This claim has been challenged in the broad literature, in particular within the context of the EU -Southern neighbors' relations where there has been an obvious rhetoric-practice gap observed. Most literature offers an interest-driven narrative of EU policies towards the region, in which security and economic concerns prevail (Seeberg, 2009). Even prior to the Arab Uprisings, the EU has not been reluctance to show support to authoritarian regimes, providing them with much needed international legitimacy and financial support, whenever this was necessary for its security objectives, even if this was against the proclaimed imperative of supporting democracy (Volpi & Cavatorta , 2006). This vagueness on the applicability of this conditionality may support such claims. As there is not a clear cut of how and when this conditionality to be applied.

When it comes to the EU entrapment between the top down, normative approach and bottom up, resilience approach, is better understood by a deeper look at the EU-JDID. The 'EU Support to Jordanian Democratic Institutions and Development (EU-JDID) is a four years program (2017- 2021).The programme consists of four different but interconnected components; Parliamentary Support, Electoral Assistance and Support to the Political Party System.  Those are implemented by the consortium-led by the European Centre for Electoral Support (ECES). As for the fourth component Support to the Civil Society Organizations, is implemented by the [Spanish Cooperation Agency, AECID](#). The programme has a budget of 17.6M EUR of which 15M EUR are funded by the EU, under the European  Neighborhood Instrument (ENI), 2M EUR are financed by Spain/AECID and 737,995 EUR by the ECES led consortium (European Center for Electoral Support, 2022).

The main objectives of this program are: strengthen the functioning of the House of Representatives in exercising its core parliamentary functions; enhance the functioning of the Independent Election Commission (IEC), which was established  in 2012, as a constitutional reform to run independent elections in Jordan; support the political party system in contributing to democratic governance and strengthen the contribution of civil society to democratic governance, policy making, and parliamentary monitoring, with a focus on women and youth ( Hodges, 2021).

The value added for such a program has been emphasized by the first three components. This was not only because of the huge budget allocated to the program, but also because of the huge scope and the objectives of such program. An interviewee asserted that the significance of EU-JDID stems from the scope and the design of the project:

[EU's support to democratic and electoral processes in Jordan, in place since 2007, was previously implemented through different modalities and interventions. While building on prior accomplishments, the formulation of this programme also benefited from lessons learned from past EU supported projects, as well as from the recommendations formulated by key local stakeholders concerning content and delivery support mechanisms].

Thus, this program covers main stakeholders, women, youth, and civil society organizations. Moreover, the idea of greater local ownership is much presented here, and this is also has been emphasized by another interviewee and beneficiary of the program.

[This is the third time for our association getting funding from the EU, but this time they gave more ears to our recommendations and we feel as partners].

For this reason, many value added are acknowledged by the stakeholders and beneficiaries. However, the entrapment is seen through considering the budget allocated to each component and the building capacities for each component. Even though, the interviewees have not specified each component's share, but they asserted that the first component got the biggest share, then the second component, and the political parties the smallest share of the three main components.  The civil society organizations also got even lowest share than the third component.

Even though the first components are key stakeholders and strengthening their capacities is crucial, yet the budget allocated to the third and fourth components should be, at least the same or even higher, if enhancing the political participation and fostering the bottom-up approach is the goal.

The importance of supporting political parties is fundamental because, as illustrated, of the Jordanian political culture and the significance of the tribe in the political life. Encouraging people to be more involved in the political life and to join political parties is not an easy task. In addition, there is a wide distrust in several of Jordan's political institutions including political parties. A newly released nationwide public opinion poll in Jordan by the International Republican Institute's (IRI) Center for Insights and Survey Research (CISR) shows dissatisfaction with the direction of the country and  distrust in political institutions. 49% of Jordanians said they do not trust political parties at all, while 47% do not trust the Parliament. 35 % of Jordanians do not trust the Independent Elections Commission (IEC). In total, 30% feel that the country is governed in the interests of the majority of people while 69% believe it is governed in the interests of a few (International Republican Institute, 2021).

These figures illustrate the huge gap of trust and the difficulty of creating inclusive political culture. More importantly, it signals the importance of political parties and enhancing their capacities. However, it is important to emphasize that the Jordanian constitution secures the right of gathering and there have been amendments for the political parties' law. The latest political parties aims to empower them and forbids any discrimination against their members, on the basis of their political views or political party-related activities (Merhej, 2022). Thus, it is crucial to support the political parties because it is their task to gain the people's trust. This requires training them to develop a strategic plan, prepare for electoral campaigns, train them on how to obtain funding for the party, and finally how to communicate with the community. For this reason, this challenging process requires more efforts, support and funding from the EU, yet, this is not the case here.

The task of civil society organizations (CSOs) empowerment seems even harder. Although organizations have the right to exist, and the number of Jordanian CSOs is ever-growing, there are many legal constrains that hinder their role regarding political participation. These constraints represent a main cause that makes people reluctance to establish or join a CSO with political objectives. As the right of establishing organizations is secured, at the same time, those organizations are under strict surveillance. To make sure that CSOs abide by the guidelines, every organization must register with the General Union of Voluntary Societies. This makes government surveillance of CSOs easier, and also common. Consequently, this leads to many CSOs restricting their work to what is permitted under tight law and to be mainly engaged in establishing social services rather fostering political participation ( Conrad, 2019).

As a result, the first step to enhance political participation is to overcome this sense of fear. This is only possible by raising people's awareness about their political rights, having political parties and local CSOs capable to do so. This requires enhancing the capacities of those CSOs, and this what the EU aims for through the EU –JADID, yet, through the budget

allocated to each component, it seems that CSOs are not a main stakeholder like the other three components . An interviewee and a beneficiary of the EU-JADID claimed that one project of the EU with a main governmental organization could equal all the funding available for CSOs.

Of course, this exaggeration only reflects the sense of dissatisfaction for the budget allocated to CSOs. However, another interviewee and beneficiary disagreed and showed satisfaction for the budget allocated. This interviewee asserted, as a main think tank in Jordan, the EU has been a main donor and supporter for their work in Jordan with no problem of funding.

These different points of view regarding funding stem from different reasons. The EU aims to enhance women's and youth participation through different activities, regardless of the local partner implementing such activities. As long as it has the potentials and the experience to do that, the EU supports its project. This makes some CSOs has the lion share of funding. For instance, in Amman, there are large organizations such as the National Committee for Women's Affairs, or the Women Arab Association which specialize in promoting women. Those are very expertise, yet the number of such experienced organizations is very limited. For this reason, while the EU aims at building local capacities, the selection of experienced organizations leaves the small organizations without such support, and that hinders building their capacities.

Moreover, while the EU aims to foster this bottom approach, efforts to tie this 'bottom up' approach to the more 'politically-led' aspects of EU human rights and democracy promotion have not materialized. Considering the Support to the CSOs, those CSOs that are devoted to fighting poverty, human rights and social services take most of the aid funded by the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) which mainly aims at supporting fight against the use of death penalty and torture,  strengthening women, and abolish discrimination. The lack of materialized support to the politically-led CSOs may also suggest that the EU is trapped between values and interest, as it might reflect fears that political change and democratization can, in the short term, lead to instability and have uncertain consequences (Afifeh, 2014).

Hence, the EU is trapped between the two approaches, and the gap of alignment between discourse and practice has not narrowed. Further, the top down approach still prevails in the EU discourse, despite of the call for a more bottom-up approach. For this reason, the EU is incapable to foster the first source of resilience in Jordan.

Social Trust and Legitimacy

The relationship between resilience sources are much related. Evidence from literature shows that good governance practices influence citizens' attitudes and behaviors towards the government. As good governance practices, by large comprised of responsiveness, accountability, and transparency, are important to satisfy the citizens (Mansoor, 2021).

Public trust and legitimacy are functions of good governance institution. Good governance needs to be achieved to attain the maximum level of public trust in the government as it advocates the government's idea to be inclusive and interactive with the public ( Jameel & Asif, 2019).

When it comes to Jordan, there is a huge trust gap. According to the Arab Barometer Survey, Jordanians consistently trust the military more than either elected or appointed officials. Figure 2 shows that, while Jordanian trust in the Parliament and Government has declined significantly since 2007, 95.3% expressed trust in the military in 2019 (Hartnett & al-Ajloun, 2022).

This figure illustrates how the trust gap is increasing. Specially, when considering the level of government effectiveness, as figure 1 reveals.  What is more, this trend is unlikely to change, as unpopular policies related to the economy fall under the government's responsibility. Unpopular policies are frequently blamed on the government, and the typical response is for a government to be dissolved in the face of popular protest. Furthermore, widespread perceptions of corruption is unlikely to change (Hartnett & al-Ajloun, 2022)

This illustration is crucial to understand the main challenge of fostering resilience sources of public trust and legitimacy. As for the EU, despite all its efforts to support the government, yet there is a limitation for its interference as the EU is committed to deal with Jordan as a partner with specific capacities and need. Moreover, the EU's interest in preserving Jordan stability and supporting such a generous refugees host reveal the need to keep this balance between stability and reform. Hence, the EU is incapable to decrease this gap of trust and increase the government legitimacy (Seeberg, 2016).
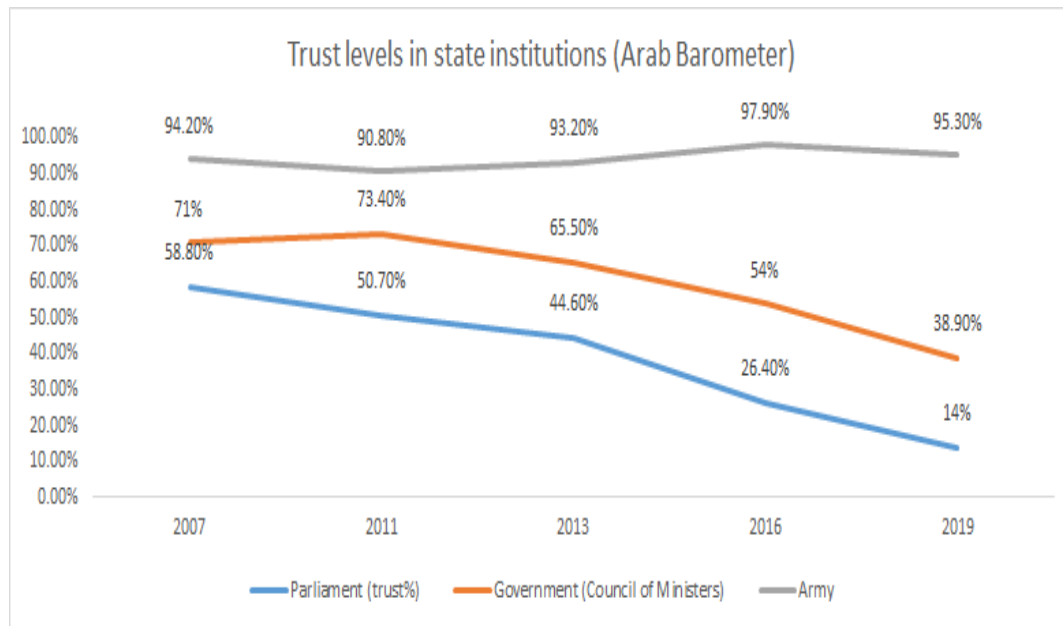
**Figure 2: Trust levels in state institutions according to the Arab Barometer Survey (Hartnett & al-Ajloun, 2022).**

### Conclusion

This study contributes to the current debate about the EU external action in the MENA region and reveals that the proclaimed shift in the EU's foreign policy following the 2015 ENP review and the EUGS of 2016 is an entrapment rather a real shift. The shift came as a response to different crises within and beyond the EU, yet, the EU has been entrapped. While the EU aims to shift from a normative approach to adopt a pragmatist approach, implementing this narrative turn translates into change is a real obstacle.

By investigating the EU's engagement with Jordan, this study reveals this entrapment. As the pragmatist approach aims to foster resilience and enhance local ownership, the EU needs to foster resilience sources; the design of governance intuitions, social trust and legitimacy, however, the EU seems incapable to do this in the Jordanian case. Further, the EU seems entrapped between a top-down approach and a bottom-up approach. To be able to foster resilience, the EU needs to embrace a bottom-up approach that enables building capacities and enhance local ownership.  On the contrary, the EU still pursues a top-down approach. The EU supports main political institutions and less support is given to other political institutions like, political parties or politically-led CSOs. These institutions need to enhance their capacities to achieve the open and inclusive governance design, hence, they need, at least, the same support to achieve the shift to a bottom-up approach.

Moreover, as an empirical research the study shows the entrapment of the EU between values and interest. As this shift aims to reconcile the EU's values and interest and bridge the observed rhetoric-practice gap, nevertheless, the EU's engagement with Jordan illustrates that this has not been the case.  Though principled pragmatism highlights that the EU must adapt and adjust to a "rapidly changing environment", and insert a dose of political realism in its foreign policy while continuing to uphold its principles, the vagueness and inconsistency of the  applicability of political conditionality contradicts such claims as it does not show that the EU values including freedom, democracy, the rule of law and respect for human right always take precedence, rather, decisions are likely be taken on a case-by case basis. As a result, this proclaimed shift and the observed rhetoric-practice gap reveals that the EU is incapable to reconcile its values and interest.

The final conclusion is that enhancing resilience sources and supporting political reforms in Jordan require different scenarios to be adopted by the EU including dropping the selective applicability of conditionality. This would reduce the rhetoric-practice gap and reveals the EU's commitment to idealized EU values. Moreover, as many interviewees asserted, the EU, as a main donor, is capable to enhance these reforms by getting advantage of its position as being accepted and

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welcomed by the government and the public, unlike another main allies or supporters to Jordan, who have a greater rivalry in the region with a greater political influence in Jordan, as the U.S. ( Pollock & Khan, 2021).

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