

REGIONAL DYNAMICS AND CONFLICT SPILLOVER IN NORTH AFRICA: ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF FOREIGN MILITARY INTERVENTION IN LIBYA

By

Olileanya Amuche Ezugwu
Olileanya.ezugwupgs@stu.cu.edu.ng

&

Kehinde Tola Benjamin
Tola.kehindepgs@stu.cu.edu.ng

&

Moses, M. Duruji
moses.duruji@covenantuniversity.edu.ng

Department of Political Science and International Relations,
Covenant University, Ota.

ABSTRACT

This study delves into the regional dynamics and conflict spillover in North Africa, with a primary focus on assessing the impact of foreign military intervention. The intricate interplay of political, economic, and security factors in this volatile region necessitates an in-depth analysis of how foreign military involvement shapes the dynamics of conflicts and their potential repercussions beyond national borders. This study adopts the theory of intervention, to understand the complexities of the regional dynamics and the impact of foreign military interventions in North Africa, particularly in Libya. By employing a comprehensive framework of qualitative methodology, this research aims to shed light on the multifaceted aspects of conflict spillover and its ramifications for regional stability and assess the consequences of foreign military intervention on state fragility, social cohesion, and governance structures within North African countries. The study considers various dimensions of the impact, including the exacerbation of existing grievances, the militarization of conflicts, the proliferation of arms, the fragmentation of societal cohesion, and the displacement of populations. It also explores how interventions have affected state institutions, governance structures, and social dynamics, ultimately influencing the stability of North African nations; particularly in Libya. Elucidating the interconnections between domestic conflicts and external military interventions, the study underscores the complex relationship between foreign military intervention, stability, and intrastate conflicts in North Africa, emphasising that these interventions significantly affected the political stability of North Africa; increasing intrastate conflicts and violence in the region. The study thus recommends the prioritisation of diplomatic and political solutions over military interventions, focusing on inclusive dialogue and conflict resolution mechanisms.

Keywords: Conflict, Military intervention, NATO, North Africa, Political instability

INTRODUCTION

The African continent is confronted with enduring predicaments characterised by conflict that shows no signs of abating. While instances of conflict between African states have witnessed a decline, there has been a notable upsurge in conflicts within states since the end of the Cold War. Notably, a significant number of conflicts that were previously in a state of dormancy were violently rekindled, as exemplified by the cases of Rwanda, Liberia, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Ethiopia. The 2021 Alert Report on global conflicts reveals that a substantial 82% of all recorded global conflict in 2020 comprised conflicts within states, with Africa contributing a considerable 44% to this statistic. Additionally, according to the 2020 Conflict Overview in Africa report, out of the 53 conflicts documented across the African continent, a staggering 45 were intrastate in nature, distinguished by armed hostilities and socio-political crises (Milián, Aspa, García, Arestizábal, Ariño, Ariño, 2021). This has resulted in tremendous setbacks for the continent as evidenced by recurring political instability, economic challenges and socio-cultural rifts among communities within countries in Africa.

Since post-colonial years, Africa has witnessed a multitude of foreign military interventions. Notably, both external and internal military engagements have experienced an upward trajectory in the twenty-first century. The reasons for such interventions encompass a wide array of factors, including the war on terrorism, humanitarian concerns, the pursuit of peacekeeping endeavours, rivalries, the preservation of spheres of influence, and sporadic endeavours aimed at affecting regime change (Policy Centre, 2017).

Since the early 2000s, the legitimacy and stability of states in North Africa have been considerably eroded due to a convergence of rebel factions, self-defence militias, and organisations affiliated with Al-Qaida and other terrorist entities. According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the confluence resulted in a marked escalation of political violence targeting both individuals and border regions over the years, rendering this period among the most tumultuous ever recorded in the region (OECD, 2020).

The advent of the Arab Spring; a transformative socio-political and economic phenomenon that emerged in North Africa and the Middle East over a decade ago, held profound significance for the region's inhabitants. There was a widespread expectation that the prevailing authoritarian regimes would ultimately relinquish their grip on power, ushering in an era of increased political participation, accountable governance, and enhanced human security (Çonkar, 2020). Regrettably, the actual trajectory has deviated from these optimistic aspirations, as the Sahel region and North Africa have been gripped by a mounting tide of socio-political, economic, and security turmoil. The repercussions of the Arab Spring have engendered a deep-seated instability that now pervades the entire Sahel-Maghreb region, giving rise to severe challenges (Zoubir & Abderrahmane, 2021).

Since 2011, the security situation in North Africa has rapidly deteriorated as a result of armed conflict, terrorism, illegitimate political coups, and transnational crime, which have stifled the optimistic mood that characterised the immediate aftermath of the so-called Arab Spring (Albuquerque, 2015). In 2014, Algeria, Egypt, and Libya were three of the five nations that contributed 65% of the member state component of the African Union's (AU) operational budget, demonstrating the region's home to some of the continent's most powerful - militarily and economically. Although there have been some positive changes over the past five years, such as the overthrow of long-time despotic rulers in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya in 2011, regional security has since deteriorated significantly. In addition to the region's recent military coup, the start of a civil war in Libya, and the emergence of an insurgency in Egypt, the Islamic State's regional growth has caused the terrorist problem to reach previously unheard-of levels. The need for third-party involvement to maintain international peace and security has grown in light of the recent increase in intra-state conflicts.

However, the increase in violence frequently associated with military intervention often comes at a high cost to both the target of the intervention and the intervening state (Kapral, 2004). Without fully assessing the reasons why a third party decides to contribute military resources to such endeavours, previous studies have concentrated on the effectiveness of such involvement. The problem of civil conflict is one of the difficulties the international community is facing in the post-Cold War era (Likoti, 2006).

Given that foreign involvement may operate as a destabilising factor, the impact of foreign intervention on political stability within developing governments is an important subject. If so, foreign intervention offers another potential trigger for the onset or reignition of intra-state conflicts, and oftentimes, foreign actors frequently intervene in many countries with the aim of strengthening the weaker state through financial or military support. How can official, intergovernmental, and nongovernmental interventions in foreign countries affect political stability is the study's central conundrum?

Past studies concentrated on how intervention affected intrastate disputes that were already underway. The influence of foreign intervention prior to a conflict occurring and whether foreign intervention stokes the flame of intra-state conflict are, nevertheless, topics that have received little research. This research aims to shed light on the impact of foreign military interference prior to the onset or continuation of intra-state conflicts. This inquiry aims to examine and explain how military interventions affect the networks of conflict in North Africa. It demonstrates how the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) 'Operation Unified Protector' in Libya, and other coordinated offensives in North Africa were all attempts to move the scales of power. But none of these initiatives has led to a long-lasting end to the bloodshed that still rips apart the region.

In light of the persistent challenges caused by intra-state conflicts, foreign military interventions, and the aftermath of the Arab Spring in Africa, this paper comprehensively examines and analyses the multifaceted dynamics at play. Utilising historical context, underlying causes, and recent manifestations of conflicts and instability in the region, this research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the factors driving the issues of foreign military interventions in sovereign countries. In addition, this paper spotlights the implications for governance, human security, and socioeconomic development in North Africa; especially in Libya.

This paper is divided into five parts: the first is the introduction of the topic; with comprehensive background details about the instability in North Africa and third-party interventions in the region. The second part is the literature review, which through the revision of past and present literatures, observed some gaps, concurred and contrasted what the authors have said. The third part of the study is the theoretical framework - which addressed the study aims through the lens of intervention theory. The fourth part which is analysis, findings and discussion explicitly examined the research aims, and through collected secondary data, examined foreign military interventions in North Africa, and its impact to the stability and development of the region; particularly in Libya. The final part of the study is conclusion and recommendations.

INTERVENTION THEORY

This study is grounded on the intervention theory, initially proposed by Edward Hallett Carr in 1939 as a response to the post-first World War challenges encountered within the international system. Carr's intervention theory endeavours to elucidate the motivations, justifications, and consequences of foreign military interventions in the affairs of other states or regions. According to this theory, interventions transpire when powerful states or international actors perceive a threat to their own interests or when they deem it their moral obligation to safeguard or advance specific values or norms

(Weiss, 2000; Syed, 2019). Various means can be employed to carry out interventions, including diplomatic pressure, economic sanctions, or military actions.

In the context of foreign military intervention in North Africa and the escalating conflicts within the region, the intervention theory offers a framework to analyse the underlying motives and the resulting ramifications of such interventions. Powerful states and non-state actors alike engage in interventions within North Africa to protect their economic and political interests, such as securing access to valuable oil and gas resources, or to counter perceived threats to regional and international stability and security. Moreover, interventions may be driven by ideological considerations, such as the promotion of democratic governance or the suppression of extremist groups. The repercussions of foreign military interventions in North Africa can be comprehensively examined through the lens of the intervention theory. While interventions may initially strive to reinstate stability or resolve conflicts, they can inadvertently intensify tensions, foster animosity, and contribute to further violence and instability. Unintended consequences, such as inadvertent harm to civilians, the erosion of sovereignty, or the escalation of conflicts, are among the effects of foreign intervention within countries.

By applying the intervention theory, this paper endeavours to provide an all-encompassing analysis of foreign military interventions in North Africa, covering various aspects that shed light on the complexity and implications of such interventions. The study examines the motives behind foreign military interventions, considering factors such as geopolitical interests, security concerns, economic gains, and ideological influences. An in-depth analysis is conducted to identify the main external factors involved in military interventions in North Africa, including major powers, neighbouring states, and non-state actors. The paper also assesses how foreign military interventions have influenced the trajectory and intensity of conflicts in North Africa, with a specific focus on their role in the Libyan conflict and its spill over effects.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURES

Schmidt (2018), explains the effect of military operations on the networks of conflict in North and West Africa, where he showed how the French presence in the Sahel, NATO's Operation Unified Protector in Libya, and the coordinated attack against Boko Haram near Lake Chad were all attempts to move the scales of power in the regions. As he opined, despite all of these efforts, the bloodshed that continues to ravage North and West Africa has not been permanently nor sufficiently stopped; and as a result of the first shock, the jihadist and rebel organisations have grown stronger, and the influence of these interventions on conflict networks has been short-lived. In addition, since 2010, civilians in the area have suffered a growing price, underscoring the need for future actions to prioritise safeguarding civilians (Schmidt, 2018).

Interventions by the armed forces have been a consistent feature in the recent history of many countries in North and West Africa (Schmidt, 2018; OECD, 2020). Since the end of the Cold War, there have been no fewer than 20 major military interventions carried out in 12 different countries, ranging from Guinea-Bissau to Chad. These interventions have been carried out in an effort to prevent war crimes, restore political stability, or fight against extremist organisations. In a part of the world where wars between states are relatively uncommon, the overwhelming majority of these operations have been started by multinational organisations, military alliances, and regional economic communities (OECD, 2020). The 2011 Operation Unified Protector, which was carried out by NATO and initially consisted of enforcing a no-fly zone and a naval blockade against the regime of Colonel Gaddafi in Libya, according to Gertler was the most significant military intervention in North Africa that took place over the past decade (Gertler, 2011; OECD, 2020).

Although it suffered substantial setbacks in Iraq, Syria, and Libya in 2016, the Islamic State (IS) continued to be a formidable force and the subject of global concern. 2016 witnessed the continuation of the framework established by Operation Inherent Resolve, the US-led international coalition launched in September 2014 to combat IS. While the majority of IS members were still in Iraq and Syria, a network of foreign fighters and affiliate organisations operating in numerous nations on four continents helped to support its operations (SIPRI, 2017).

According to Smith (2017), the year 2016 witnesses a heightened focus on international security concerns in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. The region's dynamics were significantly influenced by the actions and involvement of foreign powers, while events within the region continued to reverberate across its borders and resonate on the global stage. Due to its strategic location and abundance in natural resources like oil and gas, the MENA region has turned into a battlefield where external forces vie for dominance both directly and through local alliances. They include the general lack of effective government in Arab nations and the ensuing rage and discontent, which in 2011 sparked a wave of populist mobilizations that at the time appeared poised to change the Arab world. The aftermath of the 2003 US-led coalition invasion of Iraq and the complicated relationships and rivalries between regional countries, most notably Iran and Saudi Arabia, are other causes of instability in the region, still being felt today.

The impact of a military intervention can theoretically be conceptualised as the establishment of a novel link between two actors. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2021), the inclusion of a third participant can yield six potential outcomes, contingent upon the cooperative or conflicting behaviour exhibited by the two primary players. In the first scenario, the mediatory power (A) assumes a conciliatory position and lends assistance to two actors (B and C) who are already engaged in cooperation. Consequently, a triangle is established, consisting of a consistent group of three actors wherein individuals connected through mutual relationships become affiliated. The French military operation known as Barkhane had provided assistance to the Malian armed forces, as well as certain militias aligned with its allied nations, throughout the eastern region of Mali. This type of intervention increases levels for cooperation and facilitates the formation of a broader coalition.

The intervening authority may opt to oppose each individual actor instead of providing assistance to two individuals who engage in cooperation. In the second scenario, a conciliatory strategy is employed to create a stable milieu characterised by the adage "the enemies of enemies are friends." This scenario occurs when a foreign force specifically focuses its efforts on engaging two distinct terrorist organisations. The French military forces have undertaken operations against both the Group for Supporting Islam and Muslims (JNIM) and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) in the region of Mali. The escalation of intervening power resulted in a corresponding rise in the frequency of attacks within the region, thereby leading to an overall increase in levels of violence.

The intervening power may also opt to adopt a partisan approach, whereby it supports one party while criticising the other. The third scenario, when "friends of friends become enemies," is anticipated to result in a situation characterised by discomfort. The emergence of a conflict between parties B and C has the potential to result in a shift in their allegiances. Instead of engaging in cooperation, one of the parties may opt to align themselves with the intervening power, thus opposing their previous ally. In the fourth hypothetical situation, both parties engaged in conflict receive backing from an external authority that intervenes in the conflict. In the aforementioned third scenario, wherein individuals who are friends of friends become adversaries, the implementation of this mediating approach results in an inherently precarious state of affairs. Given the inherent instability of this trio, it is probable that the rival factions will engage in a realignment of alliances, resulting in the formation of the cooperative triad as outlined in the initial scenario.

In certain cases, an intervening force may choose to engage in a mediatory strategy by launching attacks against both belligerents involved. This approach might lead to a further state of instability, characterised by the concept that "enemies of enemies are enemies." It is anticipated that the parties involved in the conflict will engage in collaborative efforts aimed at reducing their animosity, potentially leading to a situation akin to the second scenario described earlier, characterised by an escalation in acts of violence.

Finally, in theoretical terms, the triangle can be considered stable when the intervening power strategically aligns itself with one actor while simultaneously antagonising another, based on the principle that "the enemies of enemies are friends." It is probable that this intervention will lead to escalated violence, as it compels one of the two adversaries to partake in further combat.

Based on the analysis of six hypothetical scenarios presented, it can be inferred that military actions have the potential to influence the intensity of violence within a conflict, contingent upon the pre-existing interpersonal dynamics among the parties involved. The occurrence of violence can either increase or decrease as a consequence of each factor. The ultimate impact of an external intervention is contingent upon the behaviour of the warring parties, as shifts in their allegiance can lead to varying levels of violence. This assumes that the relationship between the intervening power and the warring parties remains constant over the course of the intervention, as previously posited. The potential for unpredictable assistance or injury towards belligerents has the capacity to foster cooperation among them. Real-world disputes often encompass a greater number of participants compared to the hypothetical scenarios presented. This underscores the need of an intervening party comprehending the pre-existing cooperative or antagonistic relationships among the involved parties.

Foreign Intervention in Algeria

The argument that revolutionary change could destabilise North Africa and the Middle East, spread turmoil, and fan the flames of Islamist extremism has been voiced openly by numerous government leaders. Some analysis shows that the Arab upheavals were part of an international plot to alter North Africa's political structure (Matarese, 2012). The idea that the uprisings are mostly being fuelled by Western nations and their Gulf allies, particularly Qatar, is widespread in Algeria. President Bouteflika in the speech he gave on April 14, 2012 cautioned that democracy cannot be imposed from the outside. Like all peoples who have experienced dominance, the Algerian people have discovered that no foreign party, no matter how democratic and advanced, can bring them progress and democracy, according to Bouteflika. It is debatable what is taking place in the name of democracy and respect for human rights nowadays. Because democracy, like development, cannot be imported or given as a gift (Allam, 2012).

For Algeria, following a series of military interventions in Libya, their decision and interference in the Libyan crisis was primarily influenced by strategic and security considerations. First, it thought that the intervention's humanitarian justifications were deceptive and worried about the precedent that the application of the "responsibility to protect" doctrine against the abuses of authoritarian regimes would create. Second, the regime was worried about how a change in leadership might affect the Western Sahara dispute and the balance of power in the area. Algeria thus views France, which had a significant influence on the NATO involvement, and its allies in the region, notably Morocco, as the greatest obstacle to its goal of regional dominance (Simon, Mattelaer & Hadfield, 2011).

Algeria's main concern was that an outside intervention in Libya would revive long-forgotten claims for sovereign identity made by ethno-tribal groups, aspirations that had already been strengthened by the Arab Spring's assurances of self-determination (Boukhars, 2013). The Algerian administration was persuaded that the collapse of the dictator in Libya would set off a disastrous series

of events that would result in an influx of refugees, an increase in the availability of weapons, and most concerningly, the return of skilled Tuareg fighters to their home nations. The second and third issues were seen to be the most explosive because they may strengthen international terrorist and criminal organisations, aggravate separatist aspirations, and spark simmering insurgencies.

Events that followed confirmed Algeria's appraisal of the hazards. The traumatic shock of the war in Libya immediately sparked the eruption of long-simmering historical resentments in northern Mali. Although local, national, and international reasons are inextricably entwined in the collapse of Mali, it was the Libyan war that gave rise to a full-fledged armed revolt in the North. The militarization of a region rife with internal dissident movements and prone to intrastate violence has increased as a result of NATO's failure to manage the weapons in Libya and stop their transfer into neighbouring nations (Boukhars, 2013).

The issue for Algeria, however, is that its neighbours and the world community look to it to adopt the position of regional stabiliser given its status as the region's military force and self-proclaimed role as a power broker (Daragahi, 2012). Its credibility and reputation are damaged when such a role cannot or will not be adequately carried out. However, Algerian foreign policy has so far appeared to be torn between the nation's wish to be acknowledged as a regional security leader and its unwillingness or incapacity to use its important skills to maintain stability in its borders and assist in restoring peace when violence does break out.

Foreign Intervention in Libya: Rivalry over the Control of Key Assets

In Libya, approximately 96% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is derived from the country's oil and gas reserves, and more than two thirds of the world's hydrocarbons are produced in the eastern region (Eaton, 2018). Many have argued that the foreign intervention to the Libyan crisis is primarily fuelled by desire for control of hydrocarbon resources, and stability of the flow of oil, whereas internal conflicts within the country have been influenced by competition over the control of infrastructures, and the revenue generated from the sale of these resources (International Crisis Group, 2015). In order to control the so-called oil crescent, this competition has evolved into a military war. Four of Libya's six hydrocarbon export terminals are located in the oil crescent, a region on the Gulf of Sirte's eastern coast, and more than half of Libya's crude oil exports depart the nation via this route. As a result, numerous oil terminal crises had taken place. For instance, in the 2016 and 2018 oil terminal crises, western countries led by the United States intervened to make sure that the oil flow from eastern Libyan ports continued uninterruptedly in accordance with the agreements that were in place (Winer, 2019).

Foreign Intervention in Egypt

Following the Arab Spring and the escalation of the Libyan crisis in North Africa, Egypt's political stability in terms of freedom score has relatively remained unchanged. According to the country's Freedom House report, Egypt's freedom score was 6, its civil liberty score was 5, and its political rights score was 6 (Freedom House 2012). However, Egypt was not free during this time period, as President Mubarak ruled the country autocratically; putting critics behind bars, with suppression, as well as by maintaining numerous states of emergency. Freedom, civil liberties, and political rights all scored 5 out of 7, indicating that they were only partially free in 2013 (Freedom House 2013). Due to the fact that Morsi won the presidency and the Muslim Brotherhood gained control of the majority in parliament in the partially free 2012 election, the country returned to being unfree in 2014 and continued to be so (Freedom House 2014). The Muslim Brotherhood-led government consolidated power, which led to a centralization of authority. Critics of the government, opposition figures, and civil society activists faced repression and persecution. There were allegations

of human rights abuses, including instances of torture, extrajudicial killings, and suppression of peaceful protests, further eroding civil liberties and the rule of law.

According to Yumitro and Estriani (2017), aside Libya, the damage that foreign intervention caused to these uprisings is most seen in Egypt. The beginning of the revolution and the anti-Mubarak demonstrations had the potential to transform Egypt into a free democratic state but was thwarted by the militarily dominant government that occupied the country. While the military was not in charge of making choices, even though internationally recognised to be powerful, the US and the Gulf states were making the decisions; merely utilising the military as a weapon to install regimes in Egypt suitable for their national interests (Bellin 2018).

Operation Unified Protector: NATO's Role in the Libyan Conflict

Launched in March 2011, Operation Unified Protector, led by NATO, was initially conceived as a military intervention aimed at mediating the conflict between the rebels and the government of Libya. Its primary objectives encompassed the enforcement of an arms embargo, the establishment of a no-fly zone, and the safeguarding of civilians and civilian-populated areas from potential attacks (NATO, 2012). However, the original mission's purpose, centred on civilian protection, gradually transformed into a sustained air campaign targeting Libyan forces, even in regions where active rebel pursuit was absent. Consequently, this campaign ultimately facilitated a regime change. Following the assassination of Muammar Gaddafi in late October of that same year, the Operation was concluded.

Unfortunately, the 2011 crisis in Libya did not end despite NATO's intervention, but continued, as fighting broke out between different rebel forces. Political rivalries between two major factions - the General National Congress (GNC) and the House of Representatives (HoR), sparked the Second Libyan Civil War in May 2014 after several years of unsuccessful attempts to establish a new national government. Along with terrorist organisations like the Islamic State and Al Qaeda, other ethnic or local militias and armed groups fighting on both sides were also engaged in the crisis. The primary participants in the Libyan crisis saw their political clout significantly transformed by NATO's intervention.

According to the 2021 report from OECD, the Libyan military had a substantially better network posture than the opposition forces up until the intervention's halfway point in 2011. The National Liberation Army's (NLA) ratings on the Positive-Negative index before and throughout the campaign are compared with those of the Libyan military to highlight how unlikely it would have been for the uprising to succeed without the intervention. Despite the NLA's perceived weakness by the PN after the intervention, it was better equipped to face off against the different militias formed from former Libyan military units after the latter's dissolution in October 2011. The NATO operation could be seen as a success, similar to the cases of the Malian and Lake Chad interventions. It caused the Libyan regime and its military to fall, which put the NLA in a better position than the pro-regime organisations that were still fighting it after the operation was over (Latcher, 2019).

The Positive-Negative (PN) ratings show that the NATO mission had a detrimental effect on people, similar to Serval and the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) operations. Although the operation started with the intention of safeguarding civilians, it had a severe negative impact on their status within the combat network. The civilian PN scores declined during the interventions without significantly changing after the interventions finished, which reflects a general tendency for civilian populations across all three treatments. This demonstrates the general inadequacy of these kinds of interventions to establish the political circumstances necessary for a complete halt of violence. It also illustrates how crucial civilians continue to be in today's armed wars.

Mark Lynch in his writing 'The New Arab Wars: Uprisings and Anarchy in the Middle East.' called attention to the role that foreign interventions played in the Middle East following the initial uprisings in the Middle East. He contends that regional powers took advantage of the Arab Spring to strengthen their position in the area. When the Arab Spring upheavals were most intense, a large number of stakeholders

from many different nations intervened in an uncoordinated way. While some of these operations supported various warring parties militarily, others did not and had no humanitarian objectives. The goals of interventions also swiftly altered as the circumstances on the ground changed. Interventions frequently lacked neutrality and supported particular rebel factions, which led to the competitive arming of rebels and financial backing for rebel organisations, raising the possibility of further violence (Lynch, 2016).

In contention, Ianchovichina and Abu-Bader (2018), states that non-neutral and non-humanitarian military interventions are problematic because they change the chances of victory for the opposing sides, either directly by providing military aid or indirectly by providing incentives to raise resources for the fighting, or both. By fueling inter-group animosity through alienation, this in turn amplifies identity-based polarisation and raises the likelihood of conflict. This kind of intervention also has the ability to lessen the rebels' incentives to defend the local populace by reducing their reliance on local support and the intensity of battle and the casualties that go along with it. This less positive retroactive assessment of the 2011 intervention was a result of a confluence of shock and disillusionment at the ensuing instability, anarchy, and conflict. Although there is no exact data, a widely accepted estimate at the beginning of 2016 stated that there were about 2000 militia groups operating in Libya, all of varying sizes and allegiance (BBC News, 2016). Although a UN-supported Government of National Accord was established, oil production began again, and by the end of the year, IS had been driven from its main base in Sirte to other parts of the country as a result of US airstrikes. Nevertheless, 2016 did show some progress toward normalcy, the nation remained perilous, nonetheless, and political agitations persisted (Razzouk, 2016).

For the nations immediately involved in the conflict as well as its neighbours, these conflicts carried significant human and financial costs. Between 2010 and 2016, the economies of Libya, Syria, and Yemen all saw significant reductions and steep inflation hikes. The fight against ISIS and the decline in oil prices since 2014 have both contributed to the shaky state of Iraq's economy. Conflicts have also spread to other nations in the Middle East, leading to issues that are anticipated to last, such as financial strains brought on by housing refugees. An already structurally deficient region with little investment and, more recently, the decline in oil prices, which had a significant impact on economies that produce oil, has seen conditions compounded by violent conflict.

According to Gobat and Kostial (2016) there could be enormous macroeconomic devastation. One estimate places Syria's GDP in 2016 at less than half of what it was in pre-conflict 2010 levels. While Libya's GDP fell by 24% in 2014 as violence increased, Yemen lost an estimated 25% - 35% of its GDP in 2015 alone. Libya's economy is highly unstable due to its reliance on oil. The West Bank and Gaza provides a longer-term perspective on what might occur to growth in a precarious situation: its economy has been essentially stagnant over the past 20 years, in contrast to average growth of close to 250% in other countries of the region during that time (World Bank, 2015; Imus, Pierre, & Rother, 2017).

According to Tunisian Foreign Minister Mongi Hamdi, on 30 July 2014, Tunisia was facing challenges in managing the influx of refugees from Libya as a result of the resurgent civil conflict. Slavin (2014) published that around two million Libyans, constituting one third of Libya's population prior to the NATO operation, have sought asylum in Tunisia. It was estimated that around one-third of the population of Libya sought safety in Tunisia during the Second Libyan Civil War. In 2019, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) documented the registration of more over 45,600 individuals classified as refugees and asylum seekers within the borders of Libya. Also, the World Food Programme (WFP) reported that a total of 435,000 individuals have experienced involuntary displacement from their residences as a consequence of the ongoing violence (WFP, 2020).

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The complex relationship between foreign intervention and recurring conflicts in North Africa is still a pressing concern. Since 2011, foreign military intervention in North Africa has had significant and multifaceted effects on the stability of Egypt, Libya, and Algeria. The region has experienced

complex geopolitical dynamics, internal conflicts, and humanitarian crises, with each country facing distinct challenges.

In Libya, the 2011 NATO-led intervention aimed to protect civilians and topple the Gaddafi regime. While it achieved its immediate objective, the aftermath led to a power vacuum, exacerbating internal divisions and leading to the emergence of armed militias. According to the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), over 1,100 armed groups operated in the country as of 2017, contributing to ongoing instability and violence. The lack of a unified government and the presence of armed groups have led to a proliferation of weapons and human rights abuses. The 2019 Global Peace Index ranked Libya as the fourth least peaceful country in the world, highlighting the consequences of foreign intervention on the country's stability.

In Egypt, while foreign military intervention has been more limited in recent years, the country has been influenced by regional and international geopolitical interests. The 2011 Arab Spring resulted in political changes, but the subsequent military coup in 2013 further complicated the country's stability. The Egyptian military's crackdown on political opposition, including the Muslim Brotherhood, led to human rights concerns and internal tensions.

In Algeria, the impact of foreign military intervention has been more indirect, but regional dynamics have played a role in the country's stability. Algeria faced its own internal conflict during the 1990s with the Algerian Civil War, and foreign powers' involvement in neighbouring countries affected the security situation in the region. The country's government has been vigilant in guarding against potential spillover effects from conflicts in Libya and the Sahel region.

In addition to security concerns, foreign military intervention has also affected North Africa's economic stability. The conflicts in Libya and their spillover effects have disrupted trade and investment in the region. According to the World Bank, Libya's GDP decreased by 62% between 2011 and 2017, highlighting the severe economic repercussions of intervention. The humanitarian impact of foreign intervention has been profound, with millions of people displaced and facing dire conditions. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), over 600,000 Libyans were internally displaced as of 2014, while hundreds of thousands fled to neighbouring countries (Isabelle, 2014).

Foreign military intervention in North Africa since 2011 has had wide-ranging effects on the stability of Egypt, Libya, and Algeria. Libya's situation highlights the consequences of a power vacuum and the proliferation of armed groups, contributing to ongoing violence and human rights abuses. In Egypt, the political changes and internal tensions resulting from the Arab Spring and subsequent military coup have impacted the country's stability. Algeria has been wary of the spillover effects of conflicts in neighbouring countries. The economic and humanitarian toll of these interventions has been significant, affecting trade, investment, and the lives of millions of people displaced by the conflicts. Addressing the root causes of instability and promoting diplomacy and regional cooperation remain crucial for fostering lasting stability in North Africa.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Utilising the case study of Libya, Egypt, and Algeria, this research investigates the intricate relationship between foreign intervention and state failure. Libya, characterised by weak institutions and a fragile state structure, endured under the rule of Gaddafi for an extended period. The Gaddafi regime actively fostered relations with Western nations starting from 2003, setting in motion a series of political changes that would later align with the perceived window of opportunity for regime change during the Arab Spring. Following the intervention, Libya underwent a marked decline, transitioning into a nation plagued by poverty and instability. Despite the professed humanitarian motives, foreign intervention significantly contributed to the state failure experienced in Libya. The underlying

motivations driving the intervention in Libya and other North African countries were predominantly rooted in self-interest, rather than the proclaimed humanitarian objectives of protecting vulnerable populations under the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) framework. The political end aim of the interveners as in the case of Libya, was the overthrow of Gaddafi, and the military mission changed to reflect the political purpose. This study underscores the importance of addressing the link between foreign intervention and intrastate conflicts in North Africa.

Consequently, the following recommendations are put forth to address the challenges posed by foreign intervention and prevent further state failure and conflicts in the region.

Firstly, it is imperative to strengthen state institutions as a fundamental step towards mitigating state failure. This entails focusing on enhancing governance structures, promoting transparency, and bolstering the rule of law. By investing in the capacity and effectiveness of state institutions, African countries can create a solid foundation for sustainable development and governance. Also, evaluating the motivations behind foreign interventions is critical. Intervening states should prioritise humanitarian concerns over self-interest and ensure that interventions align with the principles of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P). Robust assessments of potential consequences and unintended outcomes must be conducted, and diplomatic solutions should be sought before resorting to military actions. Transparent and accountable decision-making processes are essential to maintain the legitimacy of interventions. In addition, fostering regional cooperation is vital to address common challenges and conflicts in North Africa. Joint initiatives can be developed to promote stability, economic development, and security. By fostering dialogue and cooperation among North African countries, an environment conducive to resolving conflicts peacefully and addressing shared concerns can be cultivated.

Lastly, post-conflict reconstruction should receive significant attention and support following interventions. Adequate resources should be allocated to rebuild infrastructure, provide humanitarian aid, facilitate reconciliation, and promote socio-economic recovery. International support, both financial and technical, plays a crucial role in aiding post-conflict reconstruction efforts and ensuring the longterm stability of the region.

Foreign military interventions in North Africa have significantly shaped conflict dynamics within the region. They have influenced the duration, intensity, and outcomes of conflicts in countries like Libya, Mali, and Sudan. Furthermore, these interventions have led to destabilisation and conflict spillover in neighbouring nations. Armed groups have crossed borders, arms trafficking has increased, and refugee flows have resulted from intervention-induced conflicts. State institutions and governance structures in North African countries have been affected, with interventions weakening state authority, disrupting governance, and giving rise to non-state actors. The balance of power among regional players, such as Egypt, Algeria, and Tunisia, has been impacted by foreign military interventions. Humanitarian consequences, including civilian casualties, displacement, and humanitarian access challenges, have also been observed. Diplomatic efforts and peace initiatives have been crucial in mitigating the impact of foreign military intervention and resolving conflicts. The economic implications on North African economies, such as trade, investment, and natural resources, have been significant. Ultimately, this research sheds light on the complex dynamics of foreign military interventions in North Africa and their multifaceted impact on regional stability, security, and humanitarian situations.

By implementing the recommendations outlined above, policymakers can work towards fostering stability, security, and sustainable development in the region. Strengthening state institutions, evaluating intervention motivations, fostering regional cooperation, and supporting post-conflict reconstruction are critical steps in mitigating the risks of state failure. Furthermore, adherence to

international norms and principles of sovereignty, non-interference, and the responsibility to protect is essential to ensure the legitimacy and effectiveness of foreign interventions in the region.

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