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**Efficiency of international organizations' conflict resolution strategies in
the midst of intra-organizational incoherence**

The Libyan civil war as a proxy stage

Doctoral Dissertation

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INTRODUCTION

December 24, 2021 was a long-awaited day for many Libyans, regional stakeholders as well as anyone who has been following the events of the preceding decade. After multiple unsuccessful attempts aimed at restoring stability and consolidating power of a party with sufficient backing as well as a sequence of internationally mediated peace negotiations and conferences, there seemed to have been a slight flame of hope for reconciliation. It appeared so because many lessons of the previous years' faults seemed to have been learnt, and universal recipes were combined with case-specific components as part of preparations. Notwithstanding, this election did not take place then, or any time since, which although cannot be labeled as a surprise for those who monitored the situation, it should not be regarded as a natural outcome of the circumstances either. Settlement in Libya is achievable but due to the occurrence of various factors discussed in this dissertation, it continues to remain a future goal for the moment.

Conflicts of the 21st century tend to be prolonging, even amid a seemingly unequal balance of power amongst parties. Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan, Iraq, Ukraine and Libya all carry such instances. Precisely, numerous cases of “never-ending wars” have arisen already during the first decades of the century also proving that big power intervention in itself was insufficient for resolution and the restoration of stability (Centre for Land Warfare Studies, 2021). Frequent characteristics they tend to carry involve statelessness, criminality and civilian victimization (IISS, 2022). These clashes are oftentimes rooted in unresolved issues of the previous century that are accompanied by religious extremism, private interests, corruption, nepotism and dwindling natural wealth, but they are also heavily reliant on state and non-state proxies (Helion, 2022). Importantly, these conflicts are increasingly non-conventional and non-binary inasmuch as lines of clear differentiation are exceedingly blurred providing room for a new generation of theoreticians on the concept of security (Hoffman, 2007). The era of predominantly large-scale direct confrontation among states' conventional armies is over,

it has been substituted by (1) localized state-based conflicts of limited intensity on the periphery of functional states, (2) more intense and heavily trans-nationalized civil wars mostly in weak and dysfunctional states that experience major external interventions, and (3) conflicts between armed non-state actors with increasing influence outnumbering state-based clashes, all of which are contributing to a tendency of averagely speaking less intense conflicts that are harder managed by either military or diplomatic means (Stepanova, 2020).

Also, a further privatization of war combined with the growing asymmetries result in combats with no clear beginning and no visible end in sight frequently in the midst of state-hood's decreasing weight (Münkler, 2003). An additionally alarming characteristic to be witnessed is the dramatic multiplication of actors and a disappearing recognition between local and external, combatant and non-combatant entities, which have also pulled in states that initially were not utilizing covert operational strategies to adjust their angle and adopt more agile methods involving proxies, deniability and private military companies (PMCs) among other factors (Eggel & Galvin, 2019). All the major indicators suggest that civil population suffered the most as a result of the negative effects of these changes, human costs of prolonging and violent conflicts became exceedingly meaningful (Hoffman, 2016).

Wars in the Middle-East are relatively better covered, they receive more attention in international broadcasts as compared to African wars. This also means that the characteristics of those are not as widely-known. Previous research proved that a general attribute of such conflicts is the lack of ideology accompanied by a lack of clear goals (Gettleman, 2010). One example supporting this finding is combatants' missing enthusiasm for taking major cities and capitals instead of rural areas. Another study on recent African conflicts proves the highly internationalized nature of combats – rooting in state weakness through ethnic or religious tensions – frequently involving proxies as well as Islamist groups (Davis, 2020). An additional relevant feature lies in the inability to consolidate either parties' power due to a lack of sufficient country-wide recognition that is followed by UN and foreign states' involvement as it occurred in the Nigerian and the Somali civil wars in 1967 and 1991. One shared aspect of these cases is that geographically speaking, neither of these countries drew their own borders which could

be one of the reasons behind their multilateral heterogeneity, which apparently seems to contribute to the mentioned failure to settle.

African conflicts in the post-World Wars era are particularly violent and regionally wide-spread. Whereas the Cold War conflicts in Africa were predominantly about intra-state and independence wars, the last 30 years brought about less-intense local clashes oftentimes neglecting universal rules of warfare, sadly resulting in cases of massive genocide, acts of terror, occurrence of war crimes, inappropriate treatment of prisoners. These decades have seen domestic struggles for numerous states with weak governments blackmailed by various groups resulting in a constant state of uncertainty combined with corrupt leadership. The resulting conflicts can be traced back to: (1) racial or ethnic differences, (2) religious fundamentalism, (3) debate over natural borders and shares of resources, (4) unjust division of political and economic power, (5) democratization of political and economic systems, and finally (6) the heritage of negative tendencies of the imperial rule (Besenyő, 2008). Subsequently, the new century witnessed the spread-out of jihadist conflicts as well that carried the following characteristics: (1) existence of political goal and ideology, (2) contribution to a global “cause”, (3) charismatic, but at the same time replaceable leaders, (4) targeting the government, security forces as well as civilian population if needed, (5) desire for partial local support, (6) financed by criminal activities, (7) experienced local and external fighters, and (8) aim to occupy territories (Nagy, 2018). According to Bakken and Rustad, the conflicts of the past years on the continent are either (1) state-based where at least one of the warring parties is a governing actor, (2) non-state-based where clashes take place among non-governing parties, or (3) unilaterally violent conducted by formally organized state or non-state groups (Bakken & Rustad, 2018).

The Libyan Civil Wars became real cases of 21st century African conflicts for multiple reasons discussed in this work. The country became a field of proxy war, which was not a unique feature over the decade, but that perhaps received less attention and coverage when compared to Syria or East-Ukraine, even if its relevance from a European point of view was unquestionable. It was apparent that there was a persisting commercial, political and security interest combined with a slice of historic bonding but the visibly taken measures seemed to be strictly normative and most importantly ineffective. This somewhat naïve initial approach then led to the process through which the wider-scale

exploration of underlying real motives took place. In this dissertation, the simultaneous utilization of theories on conflict resolution and proxy warfare has led to the exploration of interesting tendencies fitting well in the classic debates of international relations. Naturally, many aspects have changed since the beginning of this research, but those years were decisive in the development up to the current status quo.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS

The dissertation will follow a multidisciplinary methodology via utilizing and building on the results of various fields of academic research in order to present various aspects on the same subject. The interdependence among some of them will be visible and necessarily, some of them will be refuted to prove the accuracy of others in the selected case study. It is partially the lack of comprehensive and holistic definitions and terms that facilitate the coexistence of contradictory arguments. While this work acknowledges the many insufficiencies and loopholes they create in various fields from international law to international relations, it does not investigate the effect of linguistic challenges. Rather it places the focus on the pure presence of ambiguities but even more on their indirect share in nourishing various fields.

In seeking the answers of the investigated topic, predominantly two approaches will be used. The first one is going to be the perspective of conflict resolution since apparently it constitutes a significant role on the selected actors' agendas. Various contributions of separate dimensions of conflict resolution will be measured through qualitative sources while their efficiencies will not be neglected either. As the initial expectation on these efficiencies is that in many cases they will be far off from the hoped results, the exploration of potential reasons behind will commence. Today's international relations include powerful state as well as non-state actors and all of them have their ambitions in conflict resolution, as it is going to be presented. Nevertheless, the idea of this work is that these fail to live up to the expectations mostly due to individual and selfish sets of goals.

This is where the second approach will connect to the argumentation. Due to the complexity and exceedingly-interconnected nature of the global arena, certain aspects became less transparent that also included an introduction of new means of warfare. Specifically, because of this fundamental change, the second approach will be built

around the notion of proxy warfare. As it is going to be elaborated on, official conflict resolution agendas and deniable proxies can coexist, and they provide a comparatively advantageous way of intervention for actors seeking to avoid overt involvement. Most importantly, they carry the potential to enhance the enforcement of one's will while holding the umbrella against full-scale international condemnation and marginalization. Unfortunately, from the perspective of war-torn countries, the coexistence of these two support the prolongation and further escalation of conflicts themselves that by definition also means the failure of conflict resolution programs.

This dissertation argues that the Libyan civil wars constitute a new example of international proxy war inasmuch as a domestically rooted opposition gets amplified through cross-border contributions. Consequently, it also firmly counters hasty conclusions on the failed status of state for that cannot be established in the presence of such magnitude of foreign involvement. Moreover, the historic reasons behind tensions within multiple layers of society unquestionably created the ground for opportunistic patronages that are occasionally in misalignment with various international responsibilities. Given states' perceivably selfish preference of goals, this work somewhat pessimistically reasons those efforts on the true resolution of conflict will be ineffective as long as terms are not acceptable for stakeholders across the national border. It does not argue for the total ineffectiveness of non-state actors to swiftly resolve a conflict and maintain a high importance of humanitarian needs, but it states that unity is a key in achieving those goals. The underlying purpose of this dissertation is to present those elements that facilitated the outbreak of fights as well as the ones that have hindered settlement over the course of the past decade. As its hypothesis is going to argue, *international organizations' (IO) conflict resolution strategies in Libya proved to be insufficient because of persisting intra-organizational incoherence*. It is an expectation that certain members of these organization sought to benefit via enhancing their political, commercial or military influence at the same time standing by the official agenda in their outward communication.

Dependence between these two seems to be apparent and as this work is going to argue, if stakes are sufficiently high for states, IO agendas are secondary. Henceforth, paramount emphasis will be put on state-level investigation while IOs are also going to be part of the scope thus enabling a qualitative comparison. Bulletins, statements and

other rhetoric sources are not undervalued but due to their default pattern and oftentimes misalignment with actual aims, this work will predominantly rely on material of behavioral patterns. Certainly, in those cases where there is a significant overlapping between the two, the normative approach will be acknowledged. Similarly, domestic actors' relevance and local significance is most certainly recognized, but due to their operations' immense dependence on foreign support, they are only going to be discussed in a proportionate depth.

Invoked theories will be used in relation to the context of conflict resolution backed by an ambition to explore the dynamics of stakes and risks in states' allegedly selfish decision-making processes within current world-structure and with an abundance of various sorts of alliances carrying an articulated normative set of goals. In this context, regime theory, balance of threats and balance of interests are going to be cited for purposes of later analysis. On the other hand, theories applied in the context of proxy wars will be interpreted in various scopes including models on the relationship between master and proxy, their identity as well as dynamics between them. Essential ascertainments will follow on the possible interests of appliers that contrary to occasional misbelief may not be part of an exclusive zero-sum game. Lastly, implications on the exceeding hardships in challenging appliers of proxies will be drawn.

This work will rely on the case of Libyan civil war to prove the accuracy of the above-articulated allegations and its analysis will commence with the presentation of the selected five international organizations relevant to this combat. Their relevance resides in multiple dimensions, precisely in diplomatic, military, economic, humanitarian and geopolitical in either a regional or global context. The United Nations is the single most important organization of its kind and henceforth impossible to omit from any work involving conflict resolution, especially given the various embargoes it has imposed on Libya in accordance with its humanitarian agenda. Secondly, it would be a mistake to leave NATO out from the analysis considering the circumstances of events that occurred in the country during and after the military intervention. The European Union is also included by reasons of historic economic and commercial partnership as well as relative and absolute regional influence and geopolitical realities. Finally, the last two actors both constitute regional, geography-based alliances like the EU itself, but their inclusion is also

motivated by historic pieces of experience of Libya itself. These are the Arab League and the African Union that both have stood up in the name of conflict resolution.

As part of the analysis, these organizations' articulated agendas as well as their officially published roles and responsibilities relevant to the context will be used as independent variables while their perceived actions and behavior are going to provide the dependent. The initially expected result is that member state behavior is not sufficiently influenced by the described agendas of IOs they are members of. It will be argued that proxies provide the necessary means to execute their individual agendas ultimately overruling other goals. They provide the required lack of transparency that make any framework of punishment mechanism invalid in this context. Furthermore, intra-organizational bureaucracy and diplomacy provide additional tools for hiding misbehavior.

On the same token, the expected incapability of these alliances' conflict resolution efforts logically brings up the matter of individual Member States operating their proxy strategies. Conducting a comparison of these states' applied strategies constitutes a vital part of this work that is expected to highlight numerous obvious and some seemingly hidden correlations in behavioral patterns and direct influence over the endurance and escalation of conflict. Obviously, it would be impossible and fairly inadequate to list every member of these organizations and investigate them one by one due to the extensive number of them. Rather, the selection of investigated state-actors will depend on the following factors:

- Every permanent member of the United Nations Security Council will be investigated by reason of their global political, economic and military influence besides their frequent involvement within conflicts around the world.
- Every NATO member that either have deployed meaningful maritime or aerial forces or offered military bases to be used as part of the Operation Unified Protector in order to prevent the humanitarian disaster and to defeat the loyalists' militias will be listed.
- Member States of the European Union that either took on an active diplomatic role and on official terms used their diplomacy-provided options and attempted to

mediate peace, or have provided any sort of military or financial means to either party of domestic combatants are going to be involved.

- Any member of the Arab League that either carries strong ideological interests or have provably provided financial, military aid, or provided weapons and equipment, perhaps training to domestic combatants.
- Those members of the African Union that are either ideologically interested in the outcome of the civil war or are involved in a geopolitical struggle with outer state-actors within the Libya conflict.

Selection of literature to provide the sufficient theoretical support for the unfolding analysis is going to be composed of various sorts. The field of conflict resolution is a relatively young one, which in general contains a list of normative responsibilities, objectives and aspirations with the initial emphasis put on prevention and only then on resolution itself. This is the case in both state and non-state actors but arguably, these tasks get a more stressed emphasis in a non-state context where they are treated within the context of expectations and prestige. For this reason, the selected international organizations' officially declared goals in terms of conflict resolution will be listed and later analyzed in relation to the Libya case. Certainly, existing academic literature is also going to play its share, especially as part of proxy warfare that constitutes a well-researched field. Especially recent years have proved to be outstandingly fruitful as numerous new models relying on quantitative and qualitative sources shed a light on several previously unexplained anomalies. These are not only applicable within this work, but they also prove the accuracy of the main reasoning of the dissertation. Other non-state actors relevant to this case study include private military companies (PMC), terrorist groups and local militias that will be part of the investigation in a proportionate manner with regards to the scope of investigation.

The dissertation's structure is built up alongside the rationale that pleads intra-society tension to be the main source of vulnerability upon which opportunistic foreign actors can capitalize. Thus, it sets out with a historic presentation focusing on those factors that have had significant influence on the development of Libyan society and culture in various regions within the country. It explores matters of regionalism versus statehood, the will of political mobilization or the lack of it, lack of bureaucratic

experience, state-structure evolution as well as tribal dynamics directly regulating politics. These are core matters to understand as they have controlled societal development of Libya and they are fundamentally different from the Western standpoints. Significantly from the perspective of this work, they have offered the means for non-domestic contributors.

The second pillar is going to discuss and compare the vital theoretical backgrounds of conflict resolution followed by proxy warfare. The first one constitutes a constant subject of academic debate involving classical views of realist and liberal schools of international relations, while the latter qualifies as arguably one of the most exciting fields within modern warfare given by recent tendencies. The connection between the two will not omit the issue of endurance of conflict since it has direct and significant relevance in both interpretations. This sequence is predestined by the nature of this work, and it is intended to provide a viable scientific foundation for the subsequent comparison.

What follows this is the presentation of foreign actors' evolving stakes in the Libya equation that is going to be transmitted based on a combination of empirical and qualitative sources with the supplement of quantitative dataset where applicable. This section will not fail to include Libya's role in global oil production as well as past years' market trends effecting partner countries' interests. Nevertheless, ideological, geopolitical, humanitarian and commercial interests are going to be the main argued constituents triggering potentially higher stakes, risks and ultimately involvement. Various types of involvement will also be addressed and a differentiation among aids of financial, intelligence, military, diplomatic nature, or alternatively the supply of equipment, weapons or training will also be drawn up. The obtained pieces of information will provide a qualitative ground for comparison.

Lastly, an attempt will be made to explore the decisive factors behind actual involvement and the ability to influence amid of opposing interests, while effectiveness of regime cooperation is also going to be measured. It must be noted that the qualitative sources on parties' involvement may theoretically be incomplete since the lack of transparency falls within the nature of proxies. However, this work argues that within an environment of such opposing interests, 'enthusiastic appliers' of proxies cannot avoid to

be reported on as the multiple cases will show. Importantly, not all of the investigated state actors are utilizers of proxy strategies within the Libya civil war but due to their compliance with the selection criteria, they are going to be part of scrutiny to present an adequate result. Consequently, they will aid the determination of normative actors' capabilities within a proxy environment.

In terms of the investigated timeframe, the starting point is naturally going to be the outbreak of riots and mass movements that soon developed to be a civil war, the first one. On the other end of the scale will be the GNA-proponent forces' march of summer 2020. The term civil war by nature suggests a domestic conflict involving local parties' struggle to triumph in order to achieve greater independence, ideological ambitions or political goals. Nevertheless, the anti-establishment foreign involvement in the early phase of revolution should not be left out as predominantly it has engendered the power vacuum. It will be argued throughout the following pages that the structure of Libyan society is an independent variable within fights that have had direct and significant share in the happenings of the past ten years. Conflict resolution agendas failed to address these relevantly while proxy methodologies built on their presence. And while the investigation of trends begins with the aforementioned outbreak, earlier historic events need to be brought in to fully understand underlying governing-principles. This is the primary purpose of the next section.

1. PERSPECTIVES ON LIBYA

Libya's history easily provides ground for over-simplification, generalization and a lack of comprehensive approach. Albeit the combination of these frequently lead to defective conclusions and analogies, an incomplete set of impressions influenced by personal experience or attachment have from time to time led to misinterpretations in the case of many states. Precisely, numerous misleading assumptions on Libya arose as a result of Qadhafi's reign. Nevertheless, the post-2011 fierce opposition and massive domestic tension can only be fully conceptualized when the roots of tribes, groups of peoples as well as individuals during the Ottoman period, Italian colonial decades, unsuccessful monarchy and era of dictatorship are all considered. Only then can one properly understand Libya's way to the current maze. The state of masses and its many times contradicting ideology are often referenced as the primary reason behind the state's missing modernity manifested by the lack of experience of institutions and the persisting preference of reliance on families and other sorts of local groups instead of a central authority (Harris, 1986). Notwithstanding, the following paragraphs will demonstrate that unpleasant historic experience, economic independence and the subsequent autocratic leadership have all contributed to a fundamental discontent in society, eventually developing into a civil war, as well as a safe haven for insurgent and terrorist groups such as the Al-Qaida in the Maghreb or the Islamic State that nowadays have a significantly less presence due to a set of concentrated attacks on them but which was a real issue throughout the past decade.

With the fourth largest territory on the continent, Libya is located in North Africa, at the southern coast of the Mediterranean and sharing continental borders with Egypt, Sudan, Chad, Niger, Algeria and Tunisia. The country consists of three provinces: Tripolitania in the North-West, Cyrenaica in the North-East and Fezzan in the South but the majority of the total population of approximately 6.6 million (predominantly Arab and Berber with a minority of Black-Africans including Tuaregs and Toubous) is

concentrated in the coastal areas due to the obvious advantages compared to the Sahara Desert in Fezzan (60 percent in Tripolitania, 35 in Cyrenaica and 5 in Fezzan). The prevalent religion is Sunni Islam but there is a considerable number of peoples belonging to Sanusi Sufi branch. Level of homogeneity was moderate even before the Arab spring, but the strong fragmentation of society was based on historic experience. Libyan society is fundamentally defined by tribal and local identities as well as heritages, and there is perceivable difference among tribes from the Western, Middle and Eastern-Southern parts of the country (Besenyő & Marsai, 2012). Some of these groups have had exceedingly great political influence over the centuries, but the nature of relationship among them is still not fully understood among researchers since there is no applicable measure to reveal its dynamics.

1.1. The Ottoman centuries

It occurred in the first half of the 16th century that the Ottoman Empire gained control over the coastal territories: Cyrenaica and Tripolitania. Predominantly, the following centuries entailed a somewhat loose exercise of power, in which the collection of tax due to the sultan preserved utmost importance. Two centuries later, French and British advancements commenced to endanger Ottoman interests and have directly led to a second occupation in 1835, which marked the beginning of a more than two decades-long lasting fight on the territory of today's Libya. An increasingly heated opposition that mostly derived its actions from aversion to bureaucratic control and taxation for the sultan has led to the birth of the first generation of heroes in the eyes of proponents of rebellion. Indeed, organized tribal uprisings spread out across the provinces and brought about the first sense of perceivable patriotic feelings, even though the Ottoman military's superiority eventually broke the resistance (Ahmida, 1994). The coming decades saw vital developments both culturally and religiously inasmuch as local families headed by Ottoman officers set out to consolidate the order in exchange for receiving political and economic benefits, while the Sanusiyya, a conservative Islamic movement with the goal of returning to the roots, quickly spread from Cyrenaica to all the surrounding territories and became a vital platform of opposition (Gall, 1989).

However, by this time it basically meant opposition not only against the *de facto* colonizers present but also to European states that threatened economic, political or other

interests of these territories. Naturally, this entailed a struggle against French and British pressure from every continental direction that severely hurt geographic and commercial interests and against which the Ottomans failed to act, only furthering the dissatisfaction. Ironically, the combination of these events provided common goals for the inhabitants of Cyrenaica, Tripolitania and Fezzan possessing various linkages and for the first time has led to the appearance of a sense of nationhood. In the meanwhile, relationship with Italy was steadily improving as the southern European country aimed at gaining its portion of the numerous advantages stemming from obtaining influence over territories at the southern shores of the Mediterranean. The eventual takeover might not have been possible had the Ottoman Empire possessed the same might and power as it had used to for the preceding centuries. Notwithstanding, the directed Italian penetration aimed at supporting the economy, which was awaited originally from the colonial master, all in vain. If the Ottoman era in the history of what we call Libya is to be evaluated, a somewhat odd conclusion presents itself. Without a doubt, the single most palpable weakness was the combination of inability, unwillingness and perhaps reluctance that hindered any development of economic circumstances that were under massive attack. Instead, emphasis was laid on setting up and preserving administration with little attention paid to the issue of identity (Vandewalle, 2012). Hence, military superiority could only provide success on the surface layer, but deep down the society's rules were circulating around tribal lines.

1.2. Italian ambitions: a change of colonial headmaster

Although Italy as nation state was one of the youngest of all Europe when it sent troops on the Libyan territories in 1911, the eventual move was preceded by a decades-long preparation that involved investments into various segments of the economies, weapon supply to back up locals' struggle as well as diplomatic efforts to avoid confrontation with other European states. Once the invasion commenced, the Italian army quickly occupied the major coastal cities but then struggled to break opposition, especially in Cyrenaica where the sultan was still being identified as religious and political leader. Still, opposing troops were soon forced to alter their approach and started to apply means of guerilla warfare but the First World War pulled much of Italy's concentration elsewhere, which provided the ideal opportunity for nationalist movements (Spaulding & Kapteijns,

1994) that culminated in the creation of the short-living Tripolitanian Republic. Simultaneously, as a result of a set of negotiations with British as well as Italian stakeholders, Cyrenaica was predominantly brought under recognized Sanusi control (Ryan, 2018), which also prevented possible tension at an economically and militarily critical period for the victorious Italy. Moreover, the residents of both Tripolitania and Cyrenaica were provided special citizenship rights to Italy and the newly established local Parliaments were meant to resolve the long-persisting issue of taxation (Raza, 2018). It would be a vague overestimation to claim that these have led to a successful settlement of the situation – especially given the fact that in Tripolitania experienced a level of tension it arguably had not previously – but the Sanusi order seemed to have taken the chance to consolidate its authority and signs of cooperation with Italy started to manifest.

The issue was more complicated than a challenge between the two original provinces. Arab and Berber tribes had their own division in Tripolitania while Bedouins and followers of the Sanusi were digesting the changed status quo that brought them a new Catholic colonial master against which many actions were committed in the name of jihad, but which also occurred to help legitimizing the rule of the new Amir and was willing to keep troops to defend his authority. Sayyid Idris of Cyrenaica was considered to be an acceptable candidate to unify the two provinces, but as the fascists rose to power in Rome, it became obvious that such agreement would be against Italian interests and Idris had to flee to Cairo. The subsequent new wave of occupation was a rapid and overwhelming success in Tripolitania and Fezzan, but the eastern parts of Cyrenaica once again represented meaningful challenge due to thousands of Bedouins applying means of guerilla warfare (Evans-Pritchard, 1946). But the coming decade exemplified that Italian fascists were willing to go beyond the Ottomans' involvement; estimations differ but a huge portion of the province's population was killed during this time (Evans-Pritchard, 1944).

Nevertheless, colonial intentions certainly had goals other than pure territorial occupation. Between the two World Wars, more than a hundred thousand Italian farmers and their families moved to the coastal areas of the Libyan territories and huge amounts were invested to establish a functioning agriculture and infrastructure among the harsh circumstances. However, this also entailed the oppression of Libyans in their own territories as they rarely received the same benefits as incoming Italians (Ryan, 2012).

The role Mussolini intended for the North African country might have eventually materialized, but the involvement in and decisions made during the Second World War ruined the ambitious plans. Precisely, Libya accommodated one of the decisive grounds, where German and Italian troops were defeated, after which a British Military Administration (BMA) was created in the coastal provinces and a French Military Administration (FMA) was established in Fezzan. The new status quo has brought about a so far unexperienced political freedom – when it came to governance – that entailed signs of nationalism as well as inter-tribal and inter-group struggle for influence. Representation of various groups became a major cornerstone as the number of parties and followers increased. Provided by the fact that the Ottoman centuries' heritage still persisted and tens of thousands of Italian settlers lived mostly in Tripolitania – as well as the numerous and different tribes and their political culture elaborated above – reaching an agreement on the future of the country seemed a challenging issue (Ahmida, 2005).

Notwithstanding, territorial integrity and independent governance were undebated matters throughout the negotiations by members of all three territories. In reality though, the question of governance was a thoroughly discussed and debated matter among the nations and the UN had to closely investigate before coming to a conclusion, while keeping in mind that the longer the process went, the further domestic parties departed from any sings of alignment. The Tripolitanian vision of total unity was incompatible with a Sanusi government demanded by the majority of Cyrenaica, which seemed to have created an unresolvable obstacle. As a matter of fact, maintaining territorial unity was not in the interest of most foreign governments. France, for instance, attempted to obtain total control over Fezzan and local population seemed to have accepted such an action (Vandewalle, 2012). For the rest of the states, Libya represented a geopolitical issue that had to be interpreted within the new Cold War arena, which entailed any potential gain of opposing parties was to be prevented. After a failed attempt to impose foreign trusteeships on the territories by Western nations, the UN finally created the resolution granting independence, which materialized on 24 December 1951 with the birth of the United Kingdom of Libya under the rule of King Sayyid Idris, who returned from his exile in Egypt.

1.3. Libya's first attempt of self-governance

“Libya combines within one country virtually all the obstacles to development that can be found anywhere: geographic, economic, political, sociological, technological. If Libya can be brought to a stage of sustained growth, there is hope for every country in the world”

(Higgins, 1959).

This new state faced an exceeding number of challenges. First and foremost, there existed no stable income. Locust plagues and droughts meant a constant danger for agriculture, directly harming commercial and capitalist aspirations. The latter also received a major damage as Libyans continued to identify the concept of modernity with the Italian colonial era, which brought them inequality, lack of representation and torture. Additionally, the state of infrastructure was in a poor condition and international trade routes have long been redirected to flow through neighboring countries. Moreover, no class structure evolved, which once again led back to the revaluation of tribal relations at a period when unemployment rate peaked. The fact that the independence was reached without war against the colonizer might trigger envy in the eye of some, but the truth is that the above hardships combined with the exceedingly high percentage of illiteracy composed a far from ideal situation to the new monarch.

Creating political, economic and national unity – in addition to the persisting territorial – now became the first and most important task. But the question was how can unity be created without a shared ideology, and how can a common ideology evolve in the lack of shared interests? The division also had to be interpreted in the urban – rural context, inasmuch as Tripolitania – that accommodated approximately two thirds of the total population mostly living in cities – favored a unitary government, while Cyrenaica and Fezzan preferred federalism where they would see tribal interests served better (Vandewalle, 2012). The peoples of Libya were aware of the role of the West in obtaining their independence and the new country received many sorts of aid from foreign governments, especially from the United States (including the establishment of military bases), but the promoted modernity still had a negative general estimation. King Idris shared these views and relied on proponents of a federal state in the coming years. The subsequently established structure of governance had multiple points of vulnerability

given the domestic diversities¹ and regional events – most notably with the rise of Nasser in the neighboring Egypt and his influence. The central government obtained only a limited amount of power while significant rights were granted to the provinces. Importantly, the right to dispose any sort of revenue resided with provinces, the state had no right to intervene in the economy and this proved to be the most essential matter. Namely, Standard Oil of New Jersey discovered huge and premium quality crude fields in Cyrenaica during the mid-50s, which was followed by numerous companies' explorations (Yergin, 2009).

The subsequent rapid spread of corruption and an even elevated scale of internal tension were in alignment with later studies finding the negative effects of giant discoveries on societies (Tsui, 2011) and they have combined led to the abandonment of the federal structure in 1963. The new unitary government held greater and a significantly wider set of authority and was intended to resolve the stalemate induced by the post-colonialist federalism, which swiftly became outdated in the midst of enormous changes in Libya that occurred in only a decade. The Kingdom of Libya favored nationalists, but it certainly was not welcomed by those who would lose power and influence as a result of its introduction. A single national government was granted authority over all regions' matters, be it legislative, financial, commercial, etc. This flow of centralization was accompanied by a set of rational cuts in the size of the country's bureaucracy, and several ministries' establishment or reorganization (Khadduri, 1963). Although this restructuring had numerous advantages – that included the setting up of a quick and beneficial system through which concessions were granted to foreign oil companies and so revenues increased exceedingly – it was not able to exclude preferences in giving out influential positions to members of tribal elites. Multiple ministries and institutes were led by members of tribes supporting the King as corruption was constantly strengthening (Simons, 1996). As these incumbent leaders had a profound responsibility over the distribution of wealth, they have had direct contribution to the enormous increase of

¹ At the time, total population of the country did not reach 1.2 million, out of which the majority lived in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica with the highest concentration living at the coast. Fezzan was already at the time significantly less populated, which also contributed to its lower level of development. On the other hand, urban population was on a lower level in the comparison with rural at the time with approximately 23 percent living in cities and 40 percent living in tents (Besenyő & Marsai, 2012).

inflation. This negative trend was well-observed at high-level offices too and there existed several programs with the articulated goal to decrease social inequality – predominantly focusing on education so that the exceedingly high rate of illiteracy (approximately 90 percent) could be decreased, as well as advantageous housing loans that have unfortunately resulted in further rise of prices – but these proved to be insufficient, a rising unrest was tangible.

1.4. Coup and revolution

The king, reluctant to rule fully over the country was losing support, which was due to several reasons. Out of these, historians mark political exclusion to be the single most important. This meant King Idris continuously relied on a selected groups of individuals from selected tribes (mostly from Cyrenaica), which weakened the state as the people could not be represented. Furthermore, even though the era of 18 years of monarchy proved to be exceedingly eventful, the illiterate society – that shared very few mutual interests beyond family, tribe or region – could not actively benefit even from such unexpected advantages as the increasing oil revenues². All these occurred simultaneously with radio broadcasts spreading anti-western ideology that could not remain unheard in the midst of multiple Western oil companies, military bases and soldiers in country, let alone the role Western countries have had in the establishment of the monarchy itself. It was not a single *casus belli*, only the combination and eventual culmination of these factors that followed a revolutionary *petrostate* pattern (Colgan, 2010) and have led to a bloodless coup on 1 September, 1969 committed by a group of young officers under the flag of the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) – that became the most powerful authority after the 1969 Constitution – led by Mu’ammarr al-Qadhafi. All the members of the RCC came from non-prestigious tribes, middle-class families that were neglected in many ways under the King and they sympathized with the arguments of Nasser (First, 1975). On the other hand, they all lacked both experience and expertise³ (Davies, 1988).

² Additionally, the three provinces operated more or less separately for a decade and no unified country was formed.

³ In the Arab countries, Arab nationalism was mostly carried by the military.

Having all gone to Military Academies, none of them held the key to resolve the social, political, economic, or other issues that triggered their dissatisfaction in the first place.

Their goal was to restructure the political life through mobilization and destroy any bad heritage they have inherited from the monarchy. But the initial means failed the expectations as the so-called popular rule through Popular Congresses did not produce the necessary participation, regardless of enthusiastic campaigns and the Arab Socialist Union (ASU) was also not able to mobilize the masses. 1973 was a vital turning point as Qadhafi launched the Cultural Revolution – or as he often cited: the *popular revolution* – which was meant to erase any obstacle in the way of reforms. Suspending the existing laws meant the commencement, which was followed by a reversed approach: a bottom-up mobilization (Obeidi, 2001). Historically speaking, the timing could not have been more advantageous. Increasing crude prices on the international markets – as well as the appearing crises – combined with a new and financially more beneficial approach towards foreign oil companies operating in country (later their nationalization) all proved indispensable for doubling the size of army, as well as bureaucracy (Yergin, 2009). Distribution of wealth was fundamentally different as compared to the monarchy era, which could be exemplified by the far-reaching development of national infrastructure, financial support offered to private businesses (predominantly in the farming sector), increasing minimal wages and income-based loan benefits, health care related investments, as well as until then unforeseen budget spent on reaching higher literacy (Vandewalle, 2012).

1.5. The Green Book and the Third Universal Theory

*There is no state with a democracy except Libya on the whole planet
(Mu'ammār al-Qadhafi).*

Qadhafi was adamant in suggesting the revolutionary nature of the takeover, which he found to be a vital characteristic since it showed the selfless set of goals stemming from the people. After the first years and several attempts – with varying scale of success – in extending the revolution to every level of society in all distant corners of the land, he wrote his famous three volumes of the *Green Book*, in which he drafted his vision on society, state-structure and bureaucracy, economics, politics and in general his ideology

labelled as the *Third Universal Theory*. As the title suggested, the book set out to offer a new dogma that is distinct from Marxism as well as capitalism, and that is based on the underlying concept of governance of the people without any party or bureaucratic establishment. This was the fundament behind the stateless society, or as the official term later phrased the state of masses, the *Jamahiriya*. Qadhafi blamed the outdated institutions and the establishment for the failure of attempts at political mobilizations, and argued the new system offered an equal and fair way for citizens to directly make political, economic, social or other decisions effecting their life (al-Qadhafi, 1980). In line with these directives, a thorough redistribution of wealth commenced to provide equal shares from the peoples' fruit of labor and to erase differences persisting until then among classes.

Basically, the private sector ceased to exist, as the new conditions made it impossible to survive. Moreover, other signs implicated the dubious success of reforms too. Tens of thousands with higher-education have fled the country at a period when a significant shortage of technocrats prevailed and the only desirable export commodity of the country could still only be produced with the help of foreign experts and laborers in a decade severely hit by crises resulting in sharp falls of oil prices, boycotts and embargos, as well as international and intra-regional political tensions (Simons, 1996). Qadhafi ceaselessly argued that the new state was a victory for democracy but in fact, the real power and decisions rested with a thin group of elites that was not held accountable by the people. He also attempted to deter the importance of his role but the many *Revolutionary Committees* reported to him – and he appointed their members too –, which also commissioned him with an extensive web of domestic intelligence, control over the entire national press, the economy, police and military forces, as well as decisive influence in the legal bodies and the political arena (Vandewalle, 2008). Henceforth, the cultural revolution that also set out the mobilize peoples in an unprecedented way eventually deprived the general people of the possibility to make those exact same decisions that it was articulated to guarantee. In the midst of a seemingly lawless state, where political and economic decisions were based on a few individuals' interests ultimately led back to a stage, where the “masses” did not control the state.

1.6. Economic experiments and shortcomings of old politics in a new age

Let the free people of the world know that we could have bargained over and sold out our cause in return for a personal secure and stable life. We received many offers to this effect but we chose to be at the vanguard of the confrontation as a badge of duty and honor
(Mu'ammarr al-Qadhafi).

It cannot be claimed that the international storms of the following decades did not contribute to domestic politics' revise, specifically amid of Libya's role in global terrorism and stemming acts of retaliation. Precisely, financing, preparing and appraising plots committed against the West might have been in line with Qadhafi's way of fulfilling Nasser's agenda – even if seeking unity in the Arab world was slowly replaced by similar ambitions in sub-Saharan Africa – but gaining upmost notoriety in the international arena triggered strikes of various nature against the leader of this mission. One of these occurred in April 1986, when USAF bombed Benghazi aiming at the killing of Qadhafi himself and hoped that even if that goal would not materialize, it would at least provide a sign for those secretly opposing the establishment (Boyle, 2013). Neither of the two goals were met but it has led to the demolition of RCCs and several easing measures including political liberalization, border openings, introduction of *People's Courts*, etc. (Vandewalle, 1995). Notwithstanding, the multiple economic sanctions imposed by foreign states and the increasing list of casualties stemming from the Toyota War with Chad have led to several Islamist groups' uprisings that the army fiercely put down (Simons, 2003). Subsequently, economic reforms commenced in order to deal with international pressure, but these failed to live up to expectations, leaving the population in a struggle to get through daily life.

Apart from this, there existed many obvious signs necessitating the change of course including the extremely high import ratio, approximately 30 percent unemployment rate, the dissolution of bipolar world order, and the international community's interpretation on Libya as the single biggest supporter of global terrorism. Having run out of real options, Qadhafi agreed to comply with a list of demands in exchange for lifting trade embargoes and sanctions, as well as the country's return to markets. Subsequent years brought about privatization, emergence of private banks and stock exchange, tax reforms

– all in sheer contrast with *The Green Books* – but as these did not provide short term ‘returns’, they have often been in the center of Qhadafi’s rhetoric (Vandewalle, 2012). In truth, the country was in deep need of economic and political reforms, but due to a set of reasons including the lack of institutional background, constitution and appropriate national bureaucracy, the below issues became increasingly visible:

1. rightful grievances could not adequately be addressed
2. revelations on the needs of younger generations, many of whom returned after having been graduated at Western Universities (transparency, accountability, representation), were not compatible to be factored into policymaking
3. efficiency of the still being adopted means of the Jamahiriya on attempting to aid standard of living – that included an equal distribution of oil wealth among the people – were questionable, at best

1.7. On the way towards civil war: an inevitable uprising

The rise of economy and living standards of most inhabitants in the last few years of the regime is incontrovertible. Libyan crude was still an exceedingly demanded commodity, while a newly arisen group of entrepreneurs started their businesses during a time when foreign direct investments were finally allowed to be made in country. On the other hand, the sense of revolution has by this time substantially weakened amongst citizens⁴, who have allegedly been part of the greatest political participation but in fact had no real control or influence. Very much relevantly from the perspective of later events, national identity did not materialize during these four decades of ‘mass mobilization’⁵. The final nail in the regime’s coffin came from outside. Namely, an enormously promising and later thoroughly debated region-wide movement, the *Arab Spring* started to spread out and reached Libya simultaneously with the above described issues’ exacerbation. Considering the earlier history of the country, it is not surprising that the first revolt has

⁴ At the time of the 1969 revolution, the Libyan population stood at 2 million, in 2000 it was 5.5 million and in 2011 it summed a total of 6.6 million. Life expectancy at the time when Qadhafi came into power was at 54 years, meaning that not a meaningful portion of the population had memories of the revolution.

⁵ This was above everything else because Qadhafi himself was shifting from one element of identity to the other: switching among Libyan, Arab, Islamic and African; urban, rural and tribal.

taken place in Benghazi⁶ on 15 February 2011, which then quickly spread across the whole of Cyrenaica (Garland, 2012). Even though Qadhafi had military superiority in all aspects, diplomatic support was being directed to the newly created *Transitional National Council* (TNC) of the East. The eventual intervention of NATO – *Operation Unified Protector*⁷ – was required in order not to let the revolt die just months after its outbreak and to try to avoid further fracturing of the society (Haesebrouck, 2016). Nevertheless, this latter could not be achieved since tension was palpable between loyalists and rebels, but also amongst proponents of a regime change (Schnelzer, 2016). Rebels – backed by Western know how and air support – gained ground, occupied several major cities in Tripolitania before finally killing Qadhafi in Sirte on 20 October. By the time, islamist groups’ influence in governance has grown immensely, which led to the establishment of a political party⁸ in Benghazi on 10 January 2012.

1.8. The role of tribalism

The end of the 42 years of constant stateless revolution left behind a still predominantly tribal society in a country that could hardly carry the attributes of modernity. The lack of practical background impeded any form of conflict-management among separate groups and tribes, while essential decisions made by individuals were still based on tribal preferences (Obeidi, 2001). Throughout the decades, Qadhafi often manipulated these tribes⁹ alongside his needs and strived for maintaining a balance among the biggest ones (Prashad, 2012). The dictator frequently played them out against each other, one fundamental principle of his ability to grasp power was a “tribal see-saw”, in which he always proved to be successful in getting the better end of the deals (Háló, 2012). But his

⁶ Because slowly under the 42 years of Qadhafi’s reign, the balancing act disappeared altogether to the detriment of Cyrenaica.

⁷ As per the United Nation Security Council’s resolution 1973 (UNSC, 2011), NATO’s operation was justified as it aimed to protect civilians against Qadhafi’s pushback on the Cyrenaican forces.

⁸ The party of Reform and Development that promoted the principles of Sharia law was led by a member of the Muslim Brotherhood, Khaled al-Werchefani.

⁹ Tribal identity carries prominent importance in Libya extending over family, societal, cultural, religious and economic bonds. Approximately 140 different tribes can be located in the country with around 30 of them carrying true political influence. Among these, the most powerful are: Warfalla, Magarha and Bani Salim (Kurczy & Hinshaw, 2011).

death brought a vital change in the status quo inasmuch as many of the armed groups were now challenging for greater control. With the total disintegration of central governance, some local tribes tried to fill the thus emerged vacuum and so they've become rivals (Marsai, 2014), which was also facilitated by the lack of any form of civil society under Qadhafi (Búr, 2011).

The first election held after his removal on 7 July 2012 demonstrated the extant preference of local candidates over others campaigning with state-wide programs. Almost half of the voters cast their ballots on nominees of the *National Forces Alliance* (NFA) at a turnout rate of 61.58 percent (BBC, 2012) that exemplified the further persistence of tribal association over political or ideological orientation, which is no surprise considering the above noted correlations. Every group and tribe were seeking greater influence, or recognition, e.g. the *Amazigh* was seeking to obtain constitutional assurances to secure their right to use their language and have initiated a movement for common political activism, which quickly spread out in the *Berber* cities (Lane, 2011). It would be a minor exaggeration to claim that the outbreak and subsequent spread of the revolution was a purely tribal-dynamics dictated process – since there existed regional, as well as city-specific lines of fracture – but due to several major tribes' junction and involvement (Reuters, 2011) overwhelmingly in Cyrenaica, their prominent role in the events is unquestionable.

The concept of tribalism is a subject of debate among academics – and in some cases criticism due to its indication on lack of development and modernity (Hüsken, 2009) – both in a general and the Libyan context. On the other hand, there exists research arguing that tribalism does not mean a fixed relationship and that tribal affiliation is not necessarily in a sharp contradiction with a sense of national feeling as it is completely possible for state laws and tribal regulations to coexist without undermining any form of national authority (Cherstich, 2011). This work is on an agreement with those arguing that while certain principles of tribes and tribalism may be encased within society, there exists a constant evolution (Charrad, 2011) that is necessitated by fundamental needs of these groups of peoples, including a classical realist set of goals, e.g. for tribes that have enjoyed prominent role under Qadhafi, physical survival was at stake. While state institutions were falling apart at the dawn of civil war, tribes of various regions started to implement different means of guaranteeing their security. Revolutionary brigades

emerged in Misrata based on neighborhoods, while defense was organized for entire cities within Cyrenaica (Lacher, 2013). Conflicts arose between tribes in many instances about decades-long lasting issues including the historic occupation of land, support provided to loyalists as well as historic opposition that has been managed during the *Jamahiriya* (Ahmida, 1994). Consequently, the kindling national civil war also possessed a tribal dimension that was based on a territorially and ideologically more limited scheme.

In this struggle of gaining or maintaining power, stance was in many cases object to role during the preceding years, numerous clashes among neighboring tribes throughout most of the country – with the exception of Cyrenaica – manifested both the goals of parties and the incapability of TNC to manage the situation (failure to settle conflicts and prosecute crimes committed). The revelation on the alteration of tribal balance of power might be the most significant factor here, inasmuch as tribes of Cyrenaica started to outweigh the historically most powerful alliance of *Warfalla*, *Maqarha* and *Qadhadhifa* tribes while those attempted to preserve their influence as much as it was possible (Lacher, 2013). To use a phrasing which is not alien to Libyan politics, tribal actions in the hinterland represented the bottom-up mobilization, while revolutionary militias' role in major coastal cities could rather be characterized as top-down mobilization. Most certainly, the widening discrepancy among constituents of the first one stemming from the exclusive insistence on own agendas hurt the chances of the latter and has directly contributed to the incapability of all parties and alliances to take complete control. The struggle between the old and new elite truly began.

1.9. The new Civil War

Several attempts were prepared in order to reform the political landscape in the aftermath of the 2012 election – led by the General National Congress (GNC) –, but lacking the necessary support, most of these proved to be short-lived experiments and no new constitution was created, while tension was culminating as manifested by armed groups' occupation of ports essential to the country's energy sector that directly hit exports of the hydrocarbon sector and national incomes as well (Warfalli & Shennib, 2013). GNC was constantly losing ground as the headquarter of the National Bank was occupied by armed groups (Reuters, 2013) and even the small form of political discourse was disappearing

between liberals and islamists, the difference between standpoints created an environment with no room for compromise.

A new wave of intensification within the post-Qadhafi era arrived in May 2014, when General Khalifa Haftar¹⁰ – the later commander of the East – leading renegade troops-initiated *Operation Dignity* and attacked Benghazi, which resulted in the unified standup of Islamists and jihadists against a common enemy (BBC, 2019). Simultaneously, a Misratan-led coalition has managed to obtain control over Tripoli (Pack, 2019). But regardless of his courageous statements and promises, Haftar was unable to take Benghazi at the time. As opposed to the clashes with relatively limited territorial importance outlined above, this string of events represented a higher-level opposition; two loose camps fighting for greater recognition and power. In fact, both Tripoli and Haftar faced hardships making their allies comply with their orders. The result of the June 2014 elections ultimately induced a split within political leadership. Henceforth, from this point Libya had two opposing governments: Tripoli in the West and Tobruk in the East. The rivalry between the Tripoli-based Government of National Accord (GNA) and House of Representatives (HoR) located in Tobruk – as well as the Libyan National Army (LNA) – provided a platform for the deeply-rooted societal issues to come to surface. Even though local and tribal elite competition hindered a national alliance, there existed proof on the sense of nationhood in the country (Lacher, 2016). Subsequent months brought an occasionally questionable process of international mediation led by the UN, which eventually resulted with the Skhirat agreement that created the Tripoli-based Government of National Accord and appointed Fayez al-Sarraj as Prime Minister.

The GNA – was supported by the UN and was recognized by most governments around the world – and had politically and militarily influential members in its Presidential Council (PC). Furthermore, the National Oil Corporation (NOC) and the Central Bank were both directed from Tripoli, which theoretically speaking should have

¹⁰ He used to serve in the Libyan military with Qadhafi and in fact, he was contributing to the coup of 1969. In the Toyota war, he was captured after which he turned against his previous boss. He became a CIA asset on the ground and unsuccessfully attempted to remove the dictator from power. Later he moved to Virginia and lived the two decades preceding the events of 2011 there. His subsequent international recognition was to a great extent due to French diplomacy's prominent recognition of him.

provided a strategic advantage for the GNA – though the coming years’ events radically decreased its capacity to influence matters concerning these two. On the opposing side stood General Haftar leading the LNA and backed by Tobruk. Importantly, frontlines between the two were not exact as there were members of proponents of Tripoli and Tobruk in both establishments (Toaldo, 2016). However, the rise of Haftar also marked a period when the relevance of Libyan Civil War started to spread across the borders. An increasing number of signs started to indicate the development of a predominantly domestic combat into another classic proxy war involving numerous foreign state and non-state actors, where declared and real goals might not necessarily align.

The hasty process of getting the Skhirat agreement under the roof necessarily meant that the most problematic points were not handled properly, while the new structure with the GNC accommodating members from the two parliaments created once again new problems in the form of a new division: pro and anti GNA groups. Still, the creation of GNA had an undebatable advantage from a UN perspective, since that carried a legal basis for any subsequent action and support while simultaneously also collecting the “constructive actors” that sought stability, development and peace. This of course was motivated by the preceding years’ negative flow of domestic political dynamics. But a campaign of Haftar and his supporters aimed at portraying the GNA as a pawn has increased skepticism around the foreign support of Fayeze al-Sarraj, which then provided a legitimate debate in the eye of many who urged a purely Libyan agreement that of course was impossible to reach before (Marsai, 2017). It proved a vital factor that by this point Haftar meant the only alternative to the GNA that many external actors valued and henceforth supported through various means. But there was a need for some sort of palpable proof that the commander indeed outpowered the UN-backed government, which came about with the following months’ military success through which the Libyan National Army (LNA) under Haftar’s command took over a significant part of the oil infrastructure. Still, it took a significant foreign support and years before he could take Benghazi, a milestone he most likely would not have been able to reach alone.

This aspect became crucial on the Libyan ground, and it proved to be decisive from a movement of frontlines point of view. It would not be appropriate to claim that a system of alliances has evolved since interests of various parties were far from coherent, nevertheless an increasing number of external actors took on a supporting role towards

one or the other domestic party. Certainly, we could not talk about overt involvement, but multiple sources of information pointed out the existence of these, as it is going to be shown at a later phase of this dissertation. These contributions meant a palpable support to combating domestic actors (e.g. with these, Haftar was finally able to take Benghazi on 6 July 2017 after years on powerless attempts) but it also brought about a further escalation as events in Libya speeded up. The LNA was expanding towards the West until it finally initiated a siege on Tripoli in April 2019. At this point, a new trench of war unfolded, which was meant to be broken by newly deployed Russian mercenaries in the region alongside air strikes connected to the UAE. For the first time in a while, it seemed that the fight was about to be decided and the UN-backed government's days are running out. But then suddenly, a change that fundamentally altered the status quo took place: Turkey stepped up firmly by the side of the GNA.

This was not without antecedents. Earlier, Ankara sent supply and arms to Tripoli militias, but the major turning point occurred when Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj and President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan signed a bilateral agreement on security cooperation and shared maritime border (Cohen, 2020). Subsequently, months of Turkish military support has led to the fallback of Haftar's brigades from Tripoli during the summer of 2020. Nonetheless, Russian mercenaries were able to strengthen control outside of Turkish sphere of influence during the retreat, enabling the persistence of influence in East and South Libya. Moreover, Russian efforts after this were focused on strengthening the defense infrastructure that has also solidified the lines of interest zones between the parties (Iddon, 2020). At the time, multiple external states hastened their mediation efforts, which later manifested in several international conferences on peace with the involvement of the relevant domestic parties (Moscow, Berlin as well as an attempt in Rome). However, these efforts were not successful, as the terms were not acceptable for Haftar. The general attempted to use the time of truce during these negotiations to prepare for new waves of attacks, but government militias and their backers slowly started advance. He was not only pushed out of Tripoli, but as a result lost significant internal and external support and backing alongside with prestige. This brought his vulnerability on the surface. During the time that passed since then, a new election was held in February 2021 (that precedes the general elections to be held on 24 December 2021), which resulted in the election of Mohamed al-Menfi—an Eastern diplomat—as the leader of the

Presidential Council, while Abdul Hamid Dbeibeh—an influential businessman from Misrata—became the interim Prime Minister of Libya. Whether the to be elected government will succeed in consolidating its power remains to be seen. What can be concluded based on the past decade’s experience is that external actors’ interests are going to be decisive. A good sign of hope is that currently, these external parties seem to have arrived at a fragile but promising agreement.

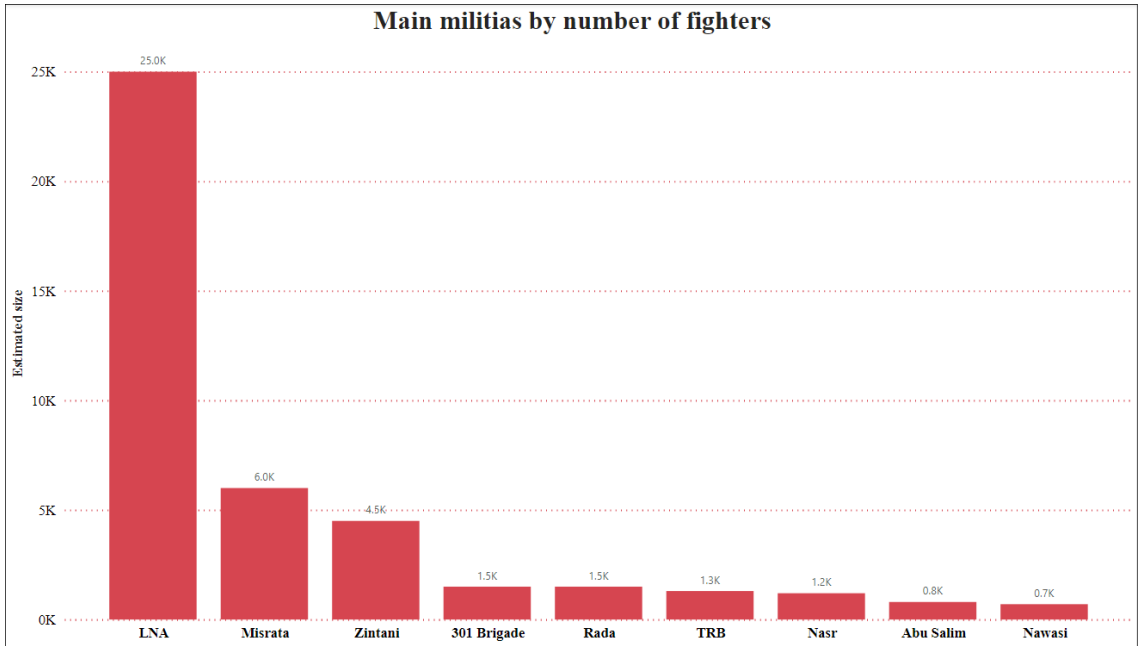
Finally, numerous scholars and academic figures have argued over the course of the past decade that Libya became a failed state due to its weak or complete lack of statehood. This work strongly refutes these allegations because of the following reasons. Even though the country’s history did not comprise unitary processes within society i.e. similar to those that occurred in Europe throughout the centuries, this first chapter thoroughly explained that the post-colonial era provided opportunities to secede. Contrary to the fact that significantly different regions and peoples were merged via the relatively late birth of the country and that many further challenges were imposed by the Qadhafi reign, national territorial integrity remained untouched¹¹. The lack of similar sense of identity was without a doubt present – predominantly between Tripolitania and Cyrenaica – but it did not lead to a separation as regimes followed each other. One might reflect on the destructive heritage of the Qadhafi era that indeed created real sense of grievance that culminated with the outbreak of the revolution. Nevertheless, no serious attempts were made to fragment the territorial integrity of what we call Libya by either of the two major opposing parties. Presumably, local preferences rooting in tribal standards contribute to the nature of the ongoing war that seems to carry no sufficient domestic superiority between actors, but this does not equal with a complete statelessness.

Over the years, the GNA-LNA opposition has received the greatest share of international attention to a huge extend due to media broadcasts and articles, but as the previous pages have also suggested, it was local militias mostly involved in the fights. Moreover, the non-recognition of various governments has also rooted in these tribes’ actions and stance. In fact, one reason behind the unsuccessful internationally mediated processes of peace was this double-sided conceptualization of Libya by the external

¹¹ This is not to suggest it was due to state development. Probably, it is as much because of state-based international system and external forces that keep Libya together in this sense.

parties. The post-Skhirat happenings have clearly proved that neither of the two were as unified as the media coverages presented them to be or as they have been handled throughout a sequence of negotiations, nothing could be farther from the truth. Burton’s report clearly describes that both of them were “an amalgamation of different armed groups and militias, many of them with strong local identities and connections as well as influence over the state and public funds in their part of the country. [...] As for the GNA’s forces, those fighting for it are more united by their opposition to Haftar and the LNA than any loyalty or commitment to the government of Tripoli” (Burton, 2020).

Table 1



Created by the author based on data obtained from the article of Jason Pack (Kingdom of Militias: Libya's Second War of Post-Qadhafi Succession)

The most prominent militias in this group were the Libya Dawn (from Misrata), the grouping labelled as the Libya Shield and the Battalion 166 that operated at various locations (BBC, 2016). Still, by the beginning of 2019, LNA got strengthened enough to start a South and then Westward quest, but this was also not a result of some newfound unity, rather a set of fragile alliances made up of temporarily matching short-term goals.

Notwithstanding, during these months it proved to be sufficient as the continuous expansion contributed to the taking of some of the most vital pieces of national infrastructure. As this had a clear message, the UN reacted and pursued to coordinate an alliance-forming, similar to that on the LNA's side, however, escalation of these events has ultimately led to what later became known as the Second Libyan Civil War (Pack, 2019). Subsequently, various militias remained an important factor in shaping the development of fights. The above table is designed to provide a high-level overview on the size of the most important ones. Although these numbers may suggest a sharp advantage on the LNA's side, the noted power of 25 thousand fighters already includes affiliated Chadian and Sudanese auxiliary forces apart from the base force of 7 thousand.

2. CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND PROXY WARFARE

The title of this chapter might trigger questions in the mind of the reader as theoretically speaking the two concepts stand in strict contrast to each other. Recognizing this strange anomaly, the following pages are going to attempt to build up a logical argumentation explaining the structural correlation between the two. The sequence of their theoretical introduction will follow the fundamental notion of the dissertation arguing that while the first one is a widely emphasized and, in a way, prestigious contribution to international peace and stability alongside the protection of human rights and humanitarian goals, the latter offers precious advantages for those who wish to preserve anonymity or at least want to avoid full-scale accountability. Importantly, an actor may simultaneously apply means of both thereby aligning with internationally expected norms and maneuvering behind publicity – through which essentially damaging conflict resolution's prospects of success.

It was the simultaneous combination of the removal of regime and fragmentation of state structures that have led to an increased heterogeneity of identity politics and the fractionalization of Libya's military sector (Hüsken & Klute, 2015). As it was suggested in the previous chapter, the civil war and its fueled chaos were stemming from historically inherited problems: violence and inequality (Ahmida, 2005). The NATO military-intervention was at the time the single external involvement, which later proved to have created further ground for domestic violence while it also has immensely reduced room for other types of actions (O'Sullivan, 2015). The most important criticism it received might be related to the intentional arming of multiple anti-regime groups, thus changing the natural dynamics of the conflict itself and moreover limiting the potential of a more humanitarian development of conflict resolution (Kuperman, 2013). On the other hand, the structural inequalities that have been present in the Libyan society for many decades contributed to the fractures that were well-visible over the years.

It is clear that Libya—arguably more than ever before—developed into a ground of battle for political agency. An equally vital recognition though has to be made on the long persistence of this environment inasmuch as the tendency of conflict not only did not show a decrease after the revolution itself, but in fact an increasing intensity could be witnessed years later that naturally concerned efforts of conflict resolution too. The local efforts in this sense cannot be neglected since multiple examples showed the efficiency of influential individuals—mostly older members of tribes and groups—in negotiating ceasefires, reducing the level of violence, approaching towards mutual standpoints at the lowest level (Collombier, 2016). Having mentioned this, the exact accuracy of tribal-level mediation processes cannot be measured due to a similar set of limitations that apply with regards to foreign politicians of states. Also, even if their relative influence in providing security and order has increased over the past decade, social mobilization led by tribes of Libya forms a topic many researchers remain critical about (Cole & Mangan, 2016). Still, some cases suggest that the most successful peace-brokering efforts in Libya proved to be those where national mediation efforts were exceedingly limited and neutral local actors were involved (LANA, 2015).

2.1. Comparing existing theories and perspectives on conflict-resolution

“There is no such thing as conflict resolution in the Middle East and conflict has no end; instead “mowing the grass” keeps adversaries at bay, even though the practice itself sustains animosity between the belligerents” (Cohen, 2012).

The history of mankind comprises a long list of wars that throughout time became more sophisticated and advanced, but just as humanity’s nature remained unchanged throughout the millennia and centuries, the fundamental principles of warfare did not alter either. As Scottish historian, Niall Ferguson has pointed out in his book titled *The War of the World*, the twentieth century was the single most violent of all up to date (Ferguson, 2009). Certainly, the two World Wars were the biggest contributors to this negative milestone, but even the bipolar world has provided bloody clashes from Korea to Vietnam, Egypt to Afghanistan, Israel to Iraq and Iran, etc. The two superpowers participated in such conflicts in either an overt or covert, direct or indirect manner but they have never faced directly each other having been assured of mutual destruction. This was above everything else supported by the rapid development and growth of the nuclear

arsenals. The Cold War ended, and tensions were replaced by enhanced and wide-scale global cooperation. Unfortunately, it seems the era of unparalleled technological development, the more instant and freer media coverages, military power, more emphasized recognition of human rights and education combined have not led to the elimination of violence—even if we allegedly live in the most peaceful time. Samantha Power, the USA's former Representative to the UN argued that deterrence—through bombings, termination of aids or increased military presence, etc.—can also be used to avoid genocides (Power, 2013). However, recent tendencies suggest the equation is more complex. Similarly, a wide scale of sanctions has often proved to be the favored tool applied as part of deterrence strategies, but the practical benefits gained through these are doubtful in the eye of many. For instance, humanitarian disasters were especially seen as a side-effect of inappropriately managed sanctions (Moret, 2015). Still, the early phase of the 21st century showed signs of hope as the number of average casualties per conflict annually has dropped significantly (Wallenstein, 2007).

Intra-state conflicts constitute a significant part in today's international arena, and they trigger an increasing size of research to raise understanding and eventually, to facilitate resolution. Contrary to a few extreme views regarding the incomparable and unique characteristics of every given conflict denying the use of universally applicable rules for remedies, numerous studies set out to expand knowledge on the topic. Still, an increasingly accepted notion is that cultural, political, and historical context play a crucial role behind every conflict inasmuch as their familiarity enables the researcher to obtain information on the underlying motives and goals as well as proneness to influence (Stern & Druckman, 2000). This view determines that proper research of conflict resolution requires case-specific queries as opposed to a general scientific approach. This work does not intent to take a side in this opposition but acknowledges the multiple ascertainment both have provided to the scientific discourse, and it includes aspects from both of them. The task is an exceedingly complex one due to the scope and nature of challenges posed amongst significantly different conflicts. Moreover, clash of interests between external practitioners of conflict resolution oftentimes deepens the base opposition. When these actors get actively involved instead of carrying the status of a neutral outsider, new layers are added that in turn can lead to a violent escalation (Cramer, et al., 2016).

The only cornerstone of current conflicts that seems accurate relates to their elevated complexity. And while from a mediator's perspective, it is extremely challenging to avoid a deteriorated relationship among certain parties to occasionally develop into a *de facto war*, browsing the list of conflicts of past decades proves that these combats are often enduring, their resolution is hard. In his breakthrough work, *Man the State and War*, Kenneth Waltz has ascertained that the simplest independent variable of peace is surrendering by either party. However, the father of *structural realism* also stated out that the likelihood of this in our modern world is exceedingly limited (Waltz, 2001). Some argue that a war will not break out as long as at least one of the interested parties cares primarily about peace (Betts, 1994). Notwithstanding, one cannot neglect the lessons learnt through Neville Chamberlain's policy of appeasement, which refutes the accuracy of such statements.

As it is the case with many other concepts in international relations, there is not a single, universally accepted and adopted definition on conflict resolution. Moreover, a lack of clear terminology triggers the existence of different wordings when referring to the same, or at least similar concept. This work will rely on the term *conflict resolution* for investigating certain parties' aspirations for facilitating truce, resolving opponents' obstacles while simultaneously protecting humanitarian and civil rights. There exist various means to execute conflict resolution strategies since violent or non-violent interventions can take many forms. One fundamental aspect here is the aim practitioners seek to reach, whether it is the termination of violence, the alteration of relationships or a broader set of goals. What Galtung described as a decrease of violence versus the transformation of relationships (*negative peace* and *positive peace*) applies perfectly within this context (Galtung, 1969).

As it has already been drawn up in the Hague Convention in 1907 (ICRC, 1907), mediation is a vital component in conflict resolution process. In a study focusing on the occurrence and rationale behind mediation, Bercovitch argued that it is the endurance of fights, insufficient efforts by the stakeholders, approaching standpoints or a certain level of openness that might result in the initiation of this form of conflict management (Bercovitch, et al., 1991). However, if the standpoints of domestic stakeholders are not sufficiently close, these aspirations remain void. For instance, if the parties are confident enough and continue to neglect any form of political settlement, they are likely to extend

violent actions (Crocker, et al., 2004). The related consequence predominantly is a long-standing war where additional wounds, victimization and grievances are nurturing an environment of intense fragmentation and diminished subsequent state-building efforts (Hampson, 1996). An additional probability under such circumstances is what the academic literature labels as “*forum shopping*”, which refers to the abundance of competing mediators that unwillingly remove any form of leverage over the combating parties via providing them with various alternative ways, including the opportunity to win time and prepare¹² for later phases of the conflict (Crocker, et al., 2001).

Nevertheless, mediation is the most frequently applied form of intervention as part of conflict resolution processes. In fact, a full list of cases cannot be set up because not every one of them is being pursued on an official level. As a result, researchers’ opportunities to conduct close to fully comprehensive studies receive significant limitations, narrowing the list of selectable cases to official meetings and statements extended by the perceived actions in the aftermath and the related interpretations. Specifically, secrecy has a prominent role in negotiations due to an assumption connected to its beneficial role in enhancing effectiveness (Druckman & Druckman, 1996).

A fundamental challenge of research on mediation as part of conflict resolution efforts have for a long time been the definition of success. Precisely, what measure to rely on while determining if the involvement in the course of actions indeed proved to be successful. There exist various interpretations on this. Some of these acknowledge the efforts when they are followed by partial or full settlement and above all, a total ceasefire (Bercovitch, et al., 1991), while other angles focus on alterations in the level of satisfaction of the stakeholders (Kleiboer, 1996), the emergence of a tendency whereby stakeholders’ opposition and engagement to peace process decreases (Stedman, 1997), improvement in terms of human rights, self-determination and democratic participation

¹² Competing domestic actors that are not committed to the peace-process can use a short truce to adjust and prepare their brigades for a subsequent strike. This in turn further reduces credibility among the opposing parties, as well as towards the external mediator—even if the intentions of it were not aligned with those of the given domestic actor.

(Stern & Druckman, 2000), and a differentiation between short and long-term¹³ goals behind interventions (Woodrow & Chigas, 2011). Another aspect emphasizes the relevance of a quantifiable decrease of violence claiming roots of conflict must be identified and then eliminated leading to the resolution or at least reduction of the conflict itself (Hoffman, 2014). Measurement of efficiency may also be discussed on the subjective – objective axis, whereby the former relates to perceptions of goal attainment, while the latter refers to the creation of agreements and their quality (Chaban, et al., 2019). Finally, this does not often receive sufficient awareness, but it needs to be outlined that satisfaction of all internal as well as external parties and every group of society may be a utopistic undertaking.

Notwithstanding these various views on success, there is another fundamental cornerstone when it comes to conflict resolution applied by external parties: clash of interests. Indeed, the struggle and competition for regional and global influence have not neglected conflict resolution strategies of states. For example, a recent study revealed how rising powers—depending on their regional priorities and soft power strategies—prioritize their self-interests via a “holistic multilateral approach”—comprising of mediation, peacekeeping as well as development cooperation—within the current international conflicts while carrying roles of peace brokers (Dal, 2018). The most obvious triggering component would be to counter negative regional effects stemming from the existence of a conflict. This is what Dal refers to as the spillover effect of negative externalities.

One important aspect of recent conflict resolution strategies is that the abundance of wealthy foreign states seeking a resettlement in local conflicts is in itself insufficient. Furthermore, studies prove that there exists a differentiation in terms of sensitivity to – and support to fight – violence at various geographic locations, which is determined alongside interests (Wu, 2006). Major relevance lies in this finding due to the post-Cold War practices. Precisely, the official and visible level of willingness and responsibility in seeking conflict’s settlement have arguably reached an unprecedented level, even if there

¹³ A vital differentiation has to be made between those short-term goals that circulate purely around the secession of fights and the long-term ones that aim at resolving intra-societal oppositions and rebuilding state capacities.

is room for improvement in terms of strategy-harmonization. Toolsets now could appear to include sufficient funding, expertise, logistics, diplomacy and in general mediation. Having listed these, the scale of success is a topic of constant debate (a long list of disputable items includes the Israel – Palestine, Rwanda, Congo, both of the Sudans, Sierra Leone, Liberia, etc. cases).

Unfortunately, the enormous changes in world politics at the beginning of 90s have not brought a shortage of conflicts, inasmuch as several bloody civil wars, genocides and ethnic cleansings continued to take place world-wide. Arguably the most important new factor in terms of conflict resolution was the emergence of NGOs as mediators as well as conflicting parties at the time (Lederach, 2003). Additionally, some studies argue that the past decade's dominant motive circulated around a sort of self-reflection of actors in the context of given conflicts as well as around the recognition of transnational corporations increasing role in their resolution (Cobb, et al., 2020). These would suggest that the appearance of a new form of actors, the NGOs palpably influenced aspirations in the conflict resolution arena. However, as many other notions before, this matter was up for a debate among academics.

2.1.1. The Regime Theory

The 20th century saw the rise and spread of multiple major international organizations and institutions that carry significant relevance in today's conflict resolution agendas through mediation, embargoes, various aids, etc. Although these organizations do not possess supranational authority and operate within an anarchic world-structure, some supporters of predominantly the liberal branch of the field of international relations argue that cooperation amongst stakeholders is feasible and when it occurs, it constitutes a regime (Krasner, 1983). These regimes are expected to set the rational standards of behavior with which every member must comply theoretically increasing the long-term efficiency of their cooperation (Axelrod, 1985). Considering the potential danger that defections would trigger, retaliation strategies for all regime members have been drawn up, a clear set of rules were laid down to avoid misunderstandings or exploitations (Oye, 1986). There is no agreement though between liberals and realists in relation to the extent of role international organizations occupy in these regimes. While liberals impute salient importance to them in connection to cooperation among stakeholders, realists argue that

every cooperation that arose did so alongside the interests of powerful states that continue to dominate the international arena (Krasner, 1982). For the purpose of this research, relevant international organizations are going to be taken as regimes and their success will be measured based upon member state compliance and alignment, while “defections” will serve as proofs of exploitation. The case study is expected to reveal the real strength of these regimes.

2.1.2. The Balance of Threat and the Balance of Interests

A strong connection can be explored between the upper mentioned regimes proper functioning or the lack of it and the notion of the balance of threat (BoT). Precisely, this theory—which updated the original neorealist balance of power theory—determines that cooperation among alliance members is directly dependent upon the level of threat they perceive from other states. Accordingly, alliances of strong and weak states are raised alongside a shared sense of outside threat which might be of relative and absolute power, geographic and perceived intentions-wise natures (Walt, 1985). Such balancing alignments are henceforth only as strong as the sense of those sorts of threats, while their lack may lead to incoherence.

Another approach is that of the balance of interests (BoI), which importantly acknowledges the presence of simultaneously present rivalry amongst stakeholders’ interests, and that at such times a lot depends on policymakers’ stance (Thakur, 2013). This again can be seen in connection to the prior mentioned regime theory inasmuch as perceived risks and goals related to actors’ interests have a contribution not only in cases of extra regime contexts, but in intra ones as well. Countless historic examples could be listed here to highlight the difficulty of establishing middle ground among opposing security-related, economic and other types of national interests on a domestic, regional and international scale. Measuring all the factors present in today’s conflicts—assuming there is a room for compromise—requires complex equations (Flitton, 2013).

2.1.3. International Organizations in today’s conflict resolution

In order to be able to conduct a subsequent analysis of efficiencies of relevant regimes’ conflict resolution strategies, their declared goals and culture must be drawn up first. Only then can an estimation on the significance and level of cooperation be made. Whereas the

debate amongst liberals and realists is going to continue to enrich the field, involvement of the Libya case will further the depth of this subject.

Regional organizations carry significant potential to resolve regional conflicts, but they often lack the practical advantages of having both normative and operational capabilities (Tanner, 2010). Various thoughts have evolved around the increased role of nonstate actors – most notably international organizations (IOs) – within modern intra-state combats theoretically combined with the loss of states' relevance in conflict resolution. Arguably, the new international settlement facilitated the spread of such views as universal rights and humanitarian missions started to receive paramount attention. This aligned with the increase of intra-state conflicts that has a few to investigate the potential correlation. Some argued that modern conflict resolution strategies have blocked the natural development of these wars and directly contributed to the endurance of conflict through humanitarian missions (Luttwak, 1999). It falls beyond the scope of this work to determine whether this idea of zero-sum game is accurate or not, but it will aim to measure the impact of IO activities in relation to the Libya civil war.

Oftentimes advantageous geographic positioning, greater legitimacy, potentially better understanding of root causes, stronger regional influence and thus, rationally speaking a higher chance of preventing and resolving conflicts are among the regularly quoted pros of proponents supporting regional actors' conflict resolution instead of external bodies. However, the past decades' empirical experience highlights a poor ratio of success (Pinfari, 2013).

2.1.3.1. The European Union

The significance and weight of the European Union increased from the 90s that manifested in the accession of new members, introduction of common currency, agreement on various policies and norms. To date however, it lacks a united army, which many argue is the greatest obstacle in the further enhancement of strength (Hill, 1993). Still, it has its own arsenal – that includes mediation, crisis management, stabilization, etc. – with which it sets out to be a potent actor including aspirations for conflict resolution. However, there is an internal debate among technocrats and politicians of the EU peacebuilding framework – coordinated by the Common Foreign and Security Policy

(CFSP) – that relies on liberal inter-governmentalist and neo-functionalist thoughts (Visoka & Doyle, 2016):

- protection of human rights and civilians
- ensuring human security
- mediation and normalizing relationship among opposing parties
- restoring security
- supporting democratic processes
- strengthening the rule of law
- providing humanitarian aid
- supporting economic recovery
- externalization of own model of integration

Specifically, the prevalence of the inter-governmentalist elements is argued to be the main reason behind the inability to evolve a high-level coherent approach and avoid nationalist agendas' overruling actions. Nevertheless, neo-functionalism does contribute to EU conflict-resolution strategies, and it has been utilized throughout the past decades on multiple occasions in order to understand the uniqueness of the given cases.

Justification for involvement during past decades was provided by several treaties and instruments of the EU. The Maastricht Treaty recognized the three pillars of the Union – including foreign and security policy – and allowed involvement over the borders, while the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) laid emphasis on close cooperation with Southern and Eastern neighboring countries, and the Euro-Mediterranean partnership – as well as the Union for the Mediterranean – seeks to enhance trade and investment among the EU and the South Mediterranean countries. These all gained an elevated importance with the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty:

“Preserve peace, prevent conflicts and strengthen international security, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, with the principles of the Helsinki Final Act and with the aims of the Charter of Paris, including those relating to external borders” (EUR-Lex, 2008)

Thus, all aspects of conflict-resolution became declared foreign policy goals for the EU, and this reflects in its numerous subsequently adopted strategies. Nevertheless,

these strategies' opportunity to fully or at least partially succeed is hindered by an internal lack of coherence. Indeed, fragmentation is a recognized issue and its complex governing dynamics – often involving intra-organizational political opposition between groups of member states (Wong, 2008) – constitute a separate field of research (Smith, 2008). Another comprehensive research elaborates on the lack of coherent system – a form of either horizontal or vertical hierarchy – of norms within the EU that would systematically regulate a common approach to conflict resolution (Forynski, 2014).

The European Union throughout the past decades became the most frequent mediator in civil conflicts on a global scale (Scalera, 2018), which—to a great extent—was led by its experience-based capacities of transformative soft power (Visoka & John, 2015). Oftentimes these were appended by the combination of coercive diplomacy, most notably economic and trade sanctions, as well as various forms of aids, but the success of them is questioned on the basis of perceptions on credibility, coherence, impartiality, and general evaluations on strategies (Chaban, et al., 2019). Notwithstanding, an exceedingly incoherent policy of external action (Thomas, 2012) left room for many doubts when the issue of efficiency arose and unavoidably, this had an identical effect on opposing member state foreign policy coherence too¹⁴. Similarly, the EU was occasionally not able to represent itself with a good record of credibility in the eye of conflicting parties, which hurt its influence in taking the role of effective mediator. According to earlier research, credibility conveys significance when it comes to combating parties' consideration on offered help or posed threats (Beardsley, 2009). In some cases, with the EU this was overshadowed by the issue of impartiality¹⁵ that may directly affect credibility negatively, even though Elgström proved the existence of strong counterexamples (Elgström, et al., 2018) as well.

¹⁴ In general, it is disadvantageous and frequently contra productive to have opposing foreign policies between member states and the EU as a whole, even though sharing common views unilaterally is highly challenging.

¹⁵ It would be a major flaw to neglect the multiple economic, security and political interests the EU holds in various regions. This comes natural from the member state interests often resulting in contradictory strategies.

2.1.3.2. NATO

The single most fundamental difference between the EU and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) conflict resolution agendas lies within the scope of commitment and capability inasmuch as a predominantly normative means constitute the EU's toolset, while NATO obviously relies mostly on military power (Manners, 2006) – either as a form of deterrence or via direct intervention. Nevertheless, other forms are also utilized such as mediation between warring parties (e.g. in Yugoslavia), but it is impossible to value its effectiveness outside of the presence of NATO's role and military capability. This organization that was originally established to provide security during the Cold War still proves to be relevant today both politically and militarily in relation to extraterritorial crisis-response and conflict-resolution.

Justification of NATO's role in the post-bipolar age was a matter occasionally questioned by Moscow throughout the past decade. However, great efforts were made to address and oppose those allegations – suggesting outdatedness – that would condemn the organization. A set of new missions include enhanced cooperation in the Baltics and Eastern-Europe, as well as causal interventions (e.g. in Libya). Another set of critics refer to the increased politicization and prevalence of a narrow set of Member States' will (Cornish, 2004), as well as a negative development into a *two-tier alliance* – exemplified by the Afghanistan intervention –, in which shared proportional contribution to common defense interests ceases to exist (Sevastopulo, 2008). The mission of NATO today can be described via the following points:

- prevention, or at least reduction of risks stemming from conflicts
- maintaining coherence among Member States on defense agendas
- ensuring the security of Member States
- maximizing stability through peacebuilding
- fighting global terrorism
- promote credibility
- response to humanitarian crises

Stabilization and conflict-resolution motivated agendas of the United Nations (UN) have frequently been supported by NATO during the past thirty years. Precisely, the UN

Security Council (UNSC) resolutions have oftentimes been followed by direct involvement of NATO troops (NATO, 2006). Certainly, an alliance of such magnitude is expected to acquire and develop the necessary defense capabilities easier than individual states. Nevertheless, the prolongation of conflicts and policymakers' underestimation of risks compose an efficiency issue for NATO (Yoshizaki, 2009).

2.1.3.3. The United Nations

Article 1 of the UN Charter declares the maintenance of international peace and security a key principle of the intergovernmental organization and Chapter VI empowers the UNSC to act in order to ensure the prevalence of these goals (UN Charter, 1945). As the single greatest alliance around the globe, the UN possesses a unique authority within the international arena that also entails reputational costs for any belligerent, rogue or disobedient actor reluctant to cooperate (Fjelde, et al., 2019). Over the course of the 75 years of history of the UN, various sorts of experience were developed with regards to conflict-resolution, including the revelation on the advantages of engaging with local communities within war-torn countries. United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKOs) have in many countries attempted to facilitate state building via taking on the role of mediator among different identity-based groups within a community (Smidt, 2019). Still, efficiency of UNPKOs is debatable, or better said symbolic since the second largest deployed military force (the blue-helmeted troops) seems to be unable to resolve the nearly 50 conflict zones impacting the lives of approximately 1.5 billion people around the world (Autesserre, 2019). Moreover, the most recent shift in policies focused on prevention, rather than resolution – albeit the common issue of promptness of bureaucracy subsists here too – through various tools of international politics (Bercovitch, et al., 2008). Nevertheless, the main focus of the UN in order to decrease the number of conflicts today can be summed up through the following list:

- implementation of embargoes in conflict zones
- fight against poverty and illiteracy
- combating environmental degradation
- vindicating the rights of peoples
- peacekeeping operations
- protection of global norms

Strategies in pursuing these goals include preventive diplomacy, preventive disarmament, and prevention of genocide following the logic of responsibility to protect (R2P) that must be applied once the given state is unwilling or unable to act (UN, 2020). Enforcement of these points might be subject to political, economic or – worst case scenario – military means. Nevertheless, it's not just the speed of the bureaucratic system that poses a challenge and impedes successful conflict-resolution / prevention. Abuse with the right to veto of the 5 permanent UNSC members is an eternal topic amongst researchers too.

2.1.3.4. The Arab League

Arguably, there are not many locations around the globe, where conflict-resolution carries greater relevance than in the MENA region. In this part of the world, the Arab League holds some similar characteristics to those of the UN as its Charter describes the seek for peaceful settlement a priority, but it also differs due to a lack of structure, hierarchy and fully specified means (AL Charter, 1945). As a result of this latter factor, there have been amplifying voices calling for reforms of the regional organization recently (Nasur, et al., 2017). Furthermore, efforts concerning mediation by the Arab League can only commence if and when parties at stake approve, which might not always be the case due to fear of unfavorable biases, etc. (Youssef, 2014). Moreover, earlier studies suggested that even when mediation is engaged, efficiency of the Arab League compared to other regional alliances is extremely weak (Nye, 1971). To be precise, many critics were directed towards the incompetence of the Arab League as a regional actor to prevent, mediate or resolve conflicts over the last two turbulent decades, and some believe the root causes of these can be traced back to the foundations (Barnett & Solingen, 2007). Notwithstanding, the most significant current criticism is related to non-intervention in civil wars and other bloody combats (Pinfari, 2009). Humanitarian crises are unfortunately common events in the region providing a further ground for attack.

One counterargument that could be raised here is the support the Arab League provided on multiple occasions backing up UN Resolutions in defense of the populations (e.g. Libya and Syria) as well as AL member states' contribution to aerial operations or

supporting of fighting factions. It's member states had major contribution¹⁶ to the creation of the Skhirat agreement and consequently the GNA itself in Libya. Still, a combination of hesitant and insufficient mediation, a proven record of limited success at times of intervention, vulnerability to external influences in the midst of intra-member state incoherence¹⁷ meaningfully connected to outdated institutional structures and dynamics all contribute to the Arab League's organizational inefficiency in conflict-resolution activities (Nasur, et al., 2017). Historically speaking, the AL was not able to resolve major regional crises and apart from questions on Israel, political alignment was always an issue (Sever, 2019).

2.1.3.5. The African Union

Conflict-resolution strategies of the African Union (AU) are in line with the UN Charter, and they imply a familiar mediation-based agenda. However, when humanitarian and human rights are threatened – especially in cases of civil war –, it has the authority to intervene (Hanson, 2009). If such scenario occurs and the member states agree on the need to act, the African Standby Force (ASF) is the instrument that may be deployed, but it is overly reliant on NATO and EU support partially because it lacks a sustainable funding system (Security, 2010), especially since Libyan contribution accounting for approximately a quarter of the whole budget was cut (Williams, 2011). Articulated goals of the AU include (Ezeibe & Oguonu, 2014):

- promoting peace, security and stability
- prevention and resolution of conflicts
- peacebuilding
- combating terrorism
- protection of human and humanitarian rights

It would be inappropriate to claim that the various bodies of AU are functioning according to their articulated goals – which is manifested by the infrequency of their

¹⁶ Mostly Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco.

¹⁷ There are multiple layers of division among the member states including the ones around wealth, political system, historically inherited grievances, and geopolitical struggle that all hinder swift alignment and execution of shared directives.

sessions –, since bureaucratic burdens, contribution (Albert, 2007) and a combination of occasional lack of know-how and equipment all constitute areas in need of development (Makinda & Okumu, 2007). By the same token, the AU possesses the right to sanction its Member States when fraudulent behavior is perceived, but these have rarely brought the desired results due to the upper reasons. All these combined hinder the evolution of a successful conflict-resolution strategy of the AU.

One ever-returning argument within the context of African wars is the necessity to provide local solutions to local problems. Nevertheless, this notion of subsidiarity receives criticism because of frequently missing cohesion among the African Union's member states (Babarinde, 2007). Partially this lack of cooperation also contributed to the limitation of the organization's role within the Libyan conflict resolution. The research of Gelot and Welz highlighted the dominance of the responsibility to protect (R2P) as part of a predominantly liberal set of ambitions within the AU's conflict resolution strategy in Libya via definitions of multiple schools of international relations. Examining the Libya case from 2011, the scholars determined the AU's approach in the midst of fighting as immensely naïve and pointed out the exceedingly restricted room for movement the AU possessed as the situation developed (Gelot & Welz, 2018). Moreover, lack of capacities and sources oftentimes lead to the inability of AU to pursue its strategies, even if there would be a sufficient level of agreement among member states. This is what prevents the AU from playing a truly active role in resolving the conflicts of the African continent (Tarrósy, 2018). As György Suha put it, this chronic lack of financial and material sources denies the otherwise proactive AU from being a more efficient actor of conflict resolution on the African continent (Suha, 2017).

Lastly as George Ayittey phrased it, the notion of African solutions to African problems refers to a thinking mindful of cultural, heritage and tradition-wise similarities as well as differences that may tackle better the local problems than those taken from distant lands with very different historic experience that many times have resulted in failed and instable systems. This would mean a different sort of governance and importantly also from the perspective of this work, a different way of conflict resolution¹⁸

¹⁸ With the inclusion of an arbiter, representatives of the combating parties, as well as civil society or the victims.

because the past decades numerous examples have clearly proved the inefficiency of external ways whereas there exist African examples for various settlement strategies. The proverb he quotes says that “when two elephants fight, the grass gets trampled or hurt. To resolve the conflict, the Western approach requires direct face to face negotiations between the two elephants. The African approach requires the participation of the grass as well. [...] Whereas Western jurisprudence emphasizes punishing the guilty, traditional African jurisprudence upholds 3Rs: restitution, reconciliation and restoration of social harmony” (Ayittey, 2014). This approach might be accurate. However, due to the already mentioned limitations and shortcomings that developed throughout the years in Libya, the AU was not able to take on a significant position in the conflict resolution process and by the end of the examined period, its relative influence as compared to other international organizations as well as states has become extremely marginalized.

2.1.3.6. Summary

Based on the above, it seems that mediation efforts are the only widely shared means within the selected IOs toolset, regardless of their efficiency. Additionally, most of the IOs do not have a standing army and only operate through member state contributions that in some cases are weakened by financial or bureaucratic hardships, while the EU plays no part in this aspect. Similarly, economic and commercial sanctions are not common means since in many cases they can only be invoked on the basis of alliance partnership among member states, while this type does not apply for NATO being a military and defense organization. Obviously, this matter is highly politicized and consequently, a lot depends on the members’ stance, especially when the conflict-zone lies on the territory of the given regional alliance. The below chart thus summarizes the theoretical toolset of these IOs – based on historic examples – when it comes to conflict resolution.

Table 1

Conflict resolution toolset of selected international organizations

Regime	Military	Mediation	Economic & Commercial
European Union	–	+	+
NATO	+	+	–
United Nations	–	+	+
Arab League	–	+	–
African Union	–	+	–

Importantly, cooperation among different international organizations in conflict handling might—and in the Libya case did—occur. A trilateral effort among the EU, AU and UN has been able to provide tangible success in relation to improving the humanitarian situation of migration. This entailed a division of tasks on the fields of fostering dialogue and improving coworking among special agencies with domestic counterparts, even though obvious political, financial, logistic and legal shortcomings were still palpable (Gatta, 2019).

2.2. Proxy warfare: a dominant kind of the modern era

Ever since the dawn of mankind, there existed wars. Wars that were fought for wealth, succession, fidelity, dignity, but most importantly power and influence. Throughout the past thousands of years, weapons became more efficient, tactics evolved to be more subtle, only for human nature to remain unchanged. The published wisdom of acknowledged statesmen living through various centuries and cultures reflects the complexity of war. From Thucydides's reminiscence on the *Peloponnesian War* and Sun Tzu's *Art of War* to Machiavelli's *The Art of War*, Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* and Carl von Clausewitz's *On War*, many have enriched the study of this field. The incomprehensible destruction caused by the two World Wars have exemplified that humanity has reached a stage of development, in which it became capable of conducting horrific acts with the potential to wipe out whole species while pursuing to achieve those same ancient goals listed above. However, the invention and subsequent proliferation of the atomic bomb has somewhat ironically forced the application of a less direct type of

warfare among equally, or at least similarly powerful actors. Indeed, it was the assurance of mutual destruction that bound the hands of superpowers during the bipolar years from directly heating up their competition. What followed was a combination of overt and covert involvement in conflicts from Korea to Vietnam, Egypt to Afghanistan, Israel to Iraq and Iran without ever straightly confronting each other. And so, this compulsion of unconventional warfare has triggered the exploration of more sophisticated manners, enriching the intricacy of conflicts.

Proxy wars spread out in a previously unseen magnitude. They did not constitute a new phenomenon for they have already been utilized from at least the Middle Ages. Notwithstanding, with the advancement of history, adjustments were carried out in order to reflect the changes within international relations (IR). One of these relates to the classic debate among proponents of the realist and liberal schools: the identity of key actors. Perhaps a fair ascertainment would be to claim that after the establishment of modern nation-state system in Westphalia in 1648, states possessed the greatest power and authority within the international arena. Nevertheless, by the second half of the Cold War era, an increasing number of non-state actors¹⁹ with significant influence also appeared (Kiss, 2006). In some cases, these actors grew wealthier, possess more leverage and influence than smaller states, while they also have their own interests—which some might argue is selfishly different from their base state's—and henceforth they truly are impossible to neglect. For this reason, within IR—that is up to date anarchic in nature—, both state and non-state types of actors are considered capable of applying proxy elements. It is not about rebounding billiard balls anymore as it was described at earlier stages within the field of international relations, though this minor slice of contact is the only perceivable information for ordinary citizens.

The essentially decisive dynamics of positioning, allegiances and treacheries among state and non-state actors occur behind the scenes (Ahram, 2011) and only occasionally get minor details disclosed to the public eye. Precisely, it was nation-states' revelation of their inability to fully control certain processes within societies, that has led

¹⁹ They could be organizations, groupings or even individuals that are technically speaking not directed, funded or supplied by governments. Examples include transnational corporations, churches and religious organizations, institutions, paramilitary armed forces, etc.

to a greater level of cooperation among state and non-state actors (Clunan & Trinkunas, 2010). Never has state sovereignty—as it became known in the post-Westphalia period—been in ‘greater danger’ than it is today. The simultaneous combination of the spread of non-state actors, as well as the unstoppable pace of globalization together triggered this vulnerability. There is no agreement on whether this is a positive or negative trend, estimations greatly depend on single individuals’ subjective political views. In a security context, the numerous gains of the current level of interconnectedness have been overshadowed by the increasing vulnerability posed by selfish actors’ quests involving proxy toolsets. Still, states remained the primary users of proxy strategies and for this reason, they will embody the core units of this research, as well.

2.2.1. Defining proxy warfare

A proxy is essentially an agent or a group within a country in contact with or allied with mostly a foreign actor, which is more powerful in political, financial or military, etc. terms but seeks to avoid direct confrontation. It is not necessarily a combatant unit since the reason behind their assignment might be other than the performing of military strikes²⁰. For instance, the Iraqi government backed by the United States after the invasion and removal of Saddam Hussein was meant to be a subservient ally in the consolidation of stability and fight on terror (Berman & Lake, 2019). Maintaining and hiring proxies have effectively become part of a country’s foreign policy as they are important tools for enforcing interests (Marshall, 2016). Needless to say, that the greater global presence a single actor pursues, the more of these proxies are being engaged. But for most states around the world, such allies are primarily employed on a regional basis reflecting also the geographic limitations of foreign policy aspirations. In order for such tactics to be successful, interests of the principal and the proxy must at least partially align. Once such an agreement exists, the agent may be aided through financial means, trainings, supply of equipment or weapons, intelligence, etc. in order to have better odds at succeeding. Success of the agent may not necessarily be the ultimate goal of the principal, in fact, there are instances where it falls beyond the boundaries of possibilities. In such cases, obstruction, distraction, hindrance of an undesired process, or purely the weakening of

²⁰ It might be of nature of political, economic and military, etc. tasks.

rivals might be the underlying motive to gain time or divide the attention of opponents (Barter, 2013).

According to the Encyclopedia of the United Nations and International Relations, a proxy war occurs between two states, supported by two larger powers that – for various reasons – are deeply though not directly involved in the conflict (Osmanczyk & Mango, 2002). This wording truly reflects Cold War era logic and closely mirrors the design of George Kennan, who—as father of the policy of containment—also developed the concept of psychological warfare, and applied proxies first in the race against the soviets (Hurt, 2017). It also promotes this era’s rationale that considered regional powers as constituents of a buffer zone enabling superpowers to interact the only way they could: covertly. The structure of the international environment exceedingly contributed to the several discoveries that were made on the potential of proxy wars around this time. States in need facing a far more powerful adversary only had to reach out for the other end of the scale, balance would establish itself. For this reason, third world countries represented the main stage of global rivalries (Bellows, 1979).

Another interpretation from this period claims that proxy war is an international conflict between at least two states where one or more of the parties to the war is/are asked or coerced to go to war for another state (Bar-Siman-Tov, 1984). This version contains several interesting aspects, like the inability—or perhaps the lack of will—of a party to act on a matter which is clearly of crucial importance, hence it decides to rely on an outer power²¹. Moreover, this work is quaint also in the sense that it postulates some sort of apparent bound between patron and client already prior to the actual request and it attributes to the foreign actor’s determination — or the lack of it — a decisive significance considering the future relationship of the two. Importantly, a fundamental differentiation is made through explaining that a foreign power’s direct and overt intervention by the side of a local ally does not fit the characteristics of proxy warfare, which by definition entails external covert support provided to a local actor. Today, there are also instances where central authorities of certain states by their executive power deliberately disperse means of intra-state violence among the population in an attempt to

²¹ In the midst of the chess game of the balance of power, this effectively meant the giving up on non-alignment and declaring the preference within the West-East competition.

forge their hegemony to be ‘coup-proof’, which then—through an eventual negative turn of events that result in the removal of authority—might lead to a status quo where militias and other PMC-like stakeholders become the core, at the same time opposing parties (Marshall, 2016). Finally, local actors of current times are regularly able to manipulate their patrons as well as the flow of conflict itself with much greater efficiency than in the past bipolar era.

2.2.2. The identity of patron and pawn

By the last phase of bipolarity, an essential question divided researchers of proxy wars: identity. This core concept has had a different path of development as opposed to in the case of study of IR inasmuch as initially, scholars claimed that only the state and non-state actors’ relationship qualified as proxy. Nevertheless, soon came the recognition of state-activated states’ role, fueling a productive debate and vital arguments over the topic. As part of this, one side argued that states themselves could not be proxies on the request of another state (Dunér, 1981) as that would eventually harm national interests (Hughes, 2012). However, others did not refute the possibility of a given state’s exercise of influence over the other, making it less directly follow its own strategy and becoming the requestor state’s proxy, a bandwagoner (Loveman, 2006). While this opposition is without a doubt fruitful for the field, it is also the reason behind different classifications when it comes to investigating conflicts, and ultimately it leads to different end-results in the quest of determining what past conflicts did qualify as proxy wars. For the lack of universally backed terminology opens space for obstruction and other forms of political challenges (Ucko, 2018). Still, there are other angles and theories that will help this mission of finding an adequate definition.

2.2.3. Frequency of proxy wars

It is impossible to obtain a comprehensive list of past conflicts involving proxies for obvious limitations. Notwithstanding, Tyrone L. Groh’s *Proxy War: the least bad option* represents a thorough categorization of 33 cases that have occurred during the Cold War (Groh, 2019). Considering that such conflicts constituted the only feasible way of superpowers for confronting each other if they wanted to avoid direct opposition, this

number is not extraordinary. Many of these cases were founded on ongoing civil wars²² at the time, but there existed some that only emerged through the application of proxies. In another work, Amos C. Fox determined 14 cases (Fox, 2019) within a timeframe starting from the US involvement in the Soviet-Afghan War and lasting until the Russia-Ukraine conflict. The writer does not fail to mention the wide range of utilization of proxies by not only actors like Russia and Iran, but the United States, too, which he thinks is in a comparative disadvantage due to a lack of paradigm²³. As the majority of these conflicts happened in the past decades—and many are still ongoing—it is obvious that proxies are a major constituent of present-day wars.

In a slightly greater scope of investigation, Benjamin V. Allison attempted to learn from common characterization inaccuracies and applied a quantitative approach with a timeframe lasting from the Vienna Congress of 1815 up until 2010 and identified nine superpowers and great powers. The results established that the greater powers rely on the use of proxies against each other, the less likely the occurrence of a direct conflict²⁴ is and the possession of nuclear weapons also furthers this tendency as the notion of deterrence has not lost from its significance (Allison, 2018).

In an attempt to decode the functioning of proxy warfare, many scholars have recently begun to rely on methodologies involving purely regional-based case studies with the purpose to offer an alternative approach and attempt to explore more on the rationale, which drives it. This was deemed necessary in order to reflect on the current challenges. Arguably, international relations reached the stage of *multipolarity*, in which a serious re-spreading of conflict-zones around the globe has led to the investigation of existing concepts' applicability. Seyom Brown foresaw the change of the system of hierarchy of the international arena and characterized it as a *global polyarchy*, where there are no clear patterns of power (Brown, 1988). Theoretically speaking, the unipolar

²² Forms of violent conflict on the territory of a state and fought by at least 2 parties (one of them might be a state actor, while the other is non-state) for greater control over autonomy, against repression or other means of injustice. Among the root causes we can find ideological, ethnic, religious, social-class or politically motivated reasonings.

²³ This is due to more frequent changes in foreign policy goals stemming from more diverse foreign policy conceptions brought about by succeeding decisionmakers.

²⁴ Certainly, this may very well be the intention of these powers.

movement of the United States has succeeded in the bipolar race and as such, it remained the only superpower but as a result of a list of domestic and international challenges, scandals (Benaim & Hanna, 2019) and unpredictability (Quero, 2019) that came subsequently, many started to question its role. Simultaneously, strengthening comprehension of the unaltered global anarchy urged these new generation of research to scrutinize regional cases with a consideration of classic doctrines (Larrabee, 2010).

2.2.4. The means of modern warfare: why through proxies?

The article of Andrew Mumford published in 2013 came as breakthrough revelation in terms of conceptualization. In this work, the author accurately identified proxy warfare to be amongst the most-utilized types of future conflicts and to support this argument—considering the historic and political realities—he drew up the four factors that in his view will trigger such engagements of states. These are the followings:

1. The palpable decrease of appetite within Western societies towards a long and costly military engagement, followed by a possible state-building.
2. The potential lying in Private Military Companies (PMC) in terms of avoiding direct involvement.
3. The increasing tendency of using cyberspace overriding geographic and other restraints along with providing vast grounds for indirect warfare.
4. The rise of China as a superpower to equal the United States through the economic interdependency of the two (Mumford, 2013).

Maybe the most important revelation of this work is the characterization of proxy warfare to be somewhere between a total intervention and a non-intervention, never at the two extremes. Apart from this, he also agrees that it's possible for both state and non-state entities to have overt and covert operations against one another. His view aligns with other contemporary scholars, inasmuch as he expects governments of the future will be keen to avoid the *Vietnam syndrome*²⁵ and unprofitable wars. The combination of significantly lower costs and risks provide an unneglectable advantage in the case of developed states. Having elaborated on this, he does not forget to name the untraceable

²⁵ A concept labelled widely within US politics since the costly and unsuccessful involvement in Vietnam, which is meant to suggest the public's antipathy to overseas military involvements.

stances of local agents, whose allegiance may be fragile. Still, no thorough overview is provided on the potential negative scenarios of utilizing proxies, which is probably the only weakness of this work.

According to Raymond Hinnebusch, there is a sequence of key milestones (Hinnebusch, 2019) of a domestic unrest-torn state that commences with a non-violent mass protest, which fails to lead to a change of government largely as a result of hardliners blocking ambitions. What might come then is a revolution²⁶, in which case the outcome depends immensely on the social structure and its state of unity that is crucial against the presiding authority. If the revolution succeeds, there is a change of governing body that enjoys the support of the majority. However, counterinsurgency initiated by the previous government may lead to the failure of revolution that results in no change of power. When the preservation of power occurs through an external intervention, the government's monopoly over exercising violence and territorial control is broken and may trigger a failed state. Complexity increases if a counterinsurgency fails because the revolt gets external support, qualifying the theatre of conflict a proxy war with growing number of insurgencies. From this point onwards, the further escalation is imminent with the opposing parties' access to additional resources. Consequently, the influence of domestic participants over the outcome also declines somewhat. At this point, they depend on their master that encourage militarization and provide the necessary trainings and arms paving the way for a zero-sum game accompanied by destruction (Ajl, 2019).

It was the intention to establish a general theory on the proxy environments that led U.S. Army Major Amos C. Fox to draw up the main defining cornerstones (Fox, 2019). He reckons that political interest governs all limited time-framed military or other form of alignment among masters and patrons and their relationship is dominated by a running clock, referring to the inconsistency stemming from the constantly changing political wind. Consequently, the relationship might alter if:

1. The proxy grows strong enough to stand on its own after which it carries the potential to reach the desired goals without support.

²⁶ A suddenly outbroken violent intra-state conflict with the goal of challenging the governing party and eventually achieve a fundamental change in leadership.

2. The proxy receives further support sufficient to succeed from other actors.
3. The proxy succeeds in the originally planned goals and no further gain is estimated in an upheld relationship.

But the biggest achievement of his work is the creation of two models (Fox, 2019) through which the relationship between master and proxy is explored. The first is the *exploitative model*, which argues that the pawn's survival fully depends on its principal, empowering that with total influence. In such cases, the master is looking for tools to achieve a certain goal and if that cannot be pursued anymore due to a given reason, the relationship is terminated. On the other hand, the *transactional model* provides an environment where the proxy is independent hence cannot be controlled to the extent as in the exploitative case, but it's still in need for some extra support to succeed.

The *model of proxy conflict* (MPC) developed by Pavel Konyukhovskiy and Theocharis Grigoriadis discovered a major flaw within current conflict resolution strategies inasmuch as they argue that within a proxy combat, the simultaneous decrease of levels of confrontation only serves short-term success in terms of resolution, which eventually develop into another form of confrontation, thus directly contributing to the persistence of the conflict itself (Konyukhovskiy & Grigoriadis, 2018). The two researchers attribute paramount significance to what they refer to as 'the equilibrium level of conflict involvement', which defines the level of possible engagement of both principal and agent. When positive involvement persists alongside at least partially matching interests, the connection might be established and may be maintained as long as the distance between the parties' involvement does not increase immensely. In case such a negative balance evolves, the party with significantly lower level of involvement is prone to part the alliance and exit.

An essential point was provided by Roberta Goren, who has ascertained that a state, which interferes in another one's domestic politics through using a group (a proxy) within the destination country surely has political, or strategic goals that do not necessarily align with the interests of that group (Goren, 1984). Nevertheless, even if proxies are aware of these, their situation dictates a significantly smaller room for movement, and they have to incur the potential risks given that siding with a powerful foreign actor relatively speaking is still their best chance. Today, civil wars provide the

perfect environment for such intricacies, and they often suffer the consequences the presence of patrons induces. The most palpable of these is the hindering of effective and swift shift in power distribution hence the lengthening of the conflict itself (Powell, 2012), which is well-observable in numerous ongoing cases. Additionally, opting to apply proxies can be beneficial for multiple other reasons. Tyrone L. Groh states that a proxy war increases a state's ability to influence and control the outcome of an intrastate conflict, and he identifies four main categories (Groh, 2019) that might lead states to choose this indirect intervention—that stems from perceived barriers—, rather than the classic direct form, or nonintervention:

1. The risk of escalation increases if a state directly intervenes
2. Lack of domestic support may risk the sustainability of the intervention
3. Lack of international support negatively affects the cost/benefit ratio of the intervention
4. Lack of capacity makes direct intervention untenable

While his reasoning behind listing these points is accurate, it is also incomplete, or at least not detailed enough. It is a precise ascertainment that in an attempt to influence developments in a favorable manner, foreign actors often contribute to the escalation of a conflict. The classic scenario would be the deployment of regular troops in a foreign country, which often raises questions over state-sovereignty and clearly demonstrates that such forces have a comparative disadvantage against local proxies due to geographic knowledge, intelligence capabilities and lack of authenticity. Most importantly, in-country agents in most cases enjoy wider acceptance than foreign interferers (Byman, 2018). It often occurs that the appearance of an outer actor forges unity amongst adversaries, which is obviously a non-desired outcome. Then there is the issue of costs, which has two layers. One of them is of financial nature. Predominantly, the costs of sending troops abroad and maintaining their supply even for only a few months is incomparably more expensive (Daggett, 2010) than providing money to local agents (Prescott, 2019).

There are states that naturally value the cost of lives of their soldiers similarly significant and so use local agents so that their own soldiers would not have to be sacrificed. Also, history has proved that even the most powerful states may suffer

demoralizing defeats as a result of loss of domestic political support that emerged due to the seemingly endless involvement. Strategies involving the avoidance of sending regular boots on the ground entail not only financial, intelligence or political backing, but also the outsourcing of related tasks to private companies²⁷, as well as the deployment of unmanned weaponry, that unveils developments of proxy strategies over the past decades (Innes & Banks, 2012). These have proved their efficiency on multiple occasions – e.g. US involvement in the Soviet Union’s offensive against Afghanistan, or the Unmanned Aerial Vehicles’ (UAV) deployment during the occupation of Iraq (Woodward, 2002). Moreover, the ability of a patron to directly support a coup through its own agent fits well into the upper argumentations and carries the same benefit opportunities over a direct confrontation (Powell & Thyne, 2011).

Proxy wars carry the potential to decrease costs—be it financial, political, reputational, etc.—of those applying it but at the same time they might contribute to the endurance of fighting. It is a means of escalation in interstate conflicts as domestic participants get to obtain access to an abundance of resources required for upholding their stance and lowering their willingness for negotiations. These motives qualify such agents’ alignment with greater powers fairly easy to grasp. On the other hand, the comparative advantage of proxy wars over conventional combats lies in the patron’s support towards and reliance on the patron, which omits direct and visible involvement and does not disrupt its political goals. Trends of popular support towards direct military involvement in the United States suggest a strong influence over their occurrence (Dunning, 2011).

Another valuable addition of Groh’s work to the field is the admittance that states do not always intervene to help one party prevail. To demonstrate this, he created a model for the differentiation among the four types of proxy wars, which offers a state perception-based approach (Groh, 2019). The first one implies cases where a state is *in to win it* and provides significant support to a proxy participating in an intra-state conflict because this foreign intervener ascertains that the security and longevity related risks are particularly high and without such a prominent contribution, local agents would be defeated. Such a scenario most likely occurs in the absence of another foreign actor’s similar intervention. The second case refers to a *holding action* attitude, where foreign actors do intervene

²⁷ So that any sort of involvement could easily be denied in the absence of proof.

because they value stakes to be high enough, but the likeliness of materializing the desired outcome is low, so the actions are motivated by a secondary goal—e.g. winning time to influence better outcomes. The third is *meddling*, which entails an intervener's lower risks and henceforth only minor commitment. In these circumstances, gains would be welcome as they do not endanger any capability or prestige, but they are not really anticipated. Finally, if an intra-state conflict does not significantly endanger primary interests but an intervention might lead to another actor's inability to increase its influence, a state may decide to *feed the chaos*. This state possesses no interest in its proxy's triumph, but a prolonged conflict provides the opportunity to challenge its rivals.

Invoking the aforementioned pieces of literature, proxy war is a form of indirect intervention by one or more foreign actors (principal, patron or beneficiary) within a domestic conflict of another state through the support provided to local agents (proxy, client or pawn) by economic, military or other means to have higher chances of overcoming or at least damage these domestic, as well as other foreign opponents and rivals with the eventual goal to influence developments in a favorable manner. In many cases, such operations only further the chaos and destruction as other outer contributors also commence to apply their own proxies; reaction follows action. The various reasons impelling a state to invoke proxies recently made this restricted form of warfare the primary type for developed states. In fact, using conventional warfare among developed countries today became so unlikely that only the most extreme events (e.g. an attack on each other) would seem to trigger its implication. Henceforth, the comparative advantages of using proxies comfortably outweigh the occasional benefits brought by regular armies. It's the lack of exact international laws over various terms, blurry definitions of responsibilities and human resourcefulness that generate the always handy deniability—a tool of proxy-users—, which attributes these foreign actors to pursue their strategies given the lack of unquestionable proof of involvement. The combination of these arguments qualifies proxies among the most likely types of foreign interventions of the coming years. Identification of current conflicts is not less arguable, but it is nevertheless achievable through the right techniques.

2.2.5. Challenging proxies

An equally important aspect of this context is of course the methodology to eliminate proxy relations that in any way harm international peace and stability. Any state or

international organization aiming to challenge proxy appliers of warfare face a serious issue: funding. Throughout the past decades, insurgencies, warlords and actors marked as terrorists in third world countries could finance their operations through drug trafficking, ransom, trading with oil and art treasures and so on. In the absence of external buyers on the black market, these actors could not have persisted (Shelley, 2014). However, these assets traditionally trigger an abundance of purchasers, sometimes even a competition that is extremely hard to monitor or impede. In such a maze, technological, financial and other sorts of superiority available for advanced states are of no decisive practical value, thus other strategies need to be invoked to meet the eventual goal of securitization. As Eva Stambøl reckons, an organization like the EU can only fight unconventional security threats effectively if it seeks out for local proxies (Stambøl, 2016).

This however takes us back to the original issue since—as it has already been described—further involvement of additional local actors or support provided to these stakeholders indirectly leads to an escalation. It seems a sufficiently counter-productive approach then that even seemingly constructive conflict resolution strategies might lead to a stalemate within proxy combats. Consequently speaking, there exists a major gap within the environment of practical conflict resolution methodologies that on the other hand provides a significant opportunity for actors following dishonest strategies in any particular proxy war today. As a result of the presence of the multiple advantages stemming from reliance on such strategies, sufficient and proportionate condemnation or punishment cannot be inflicted on these actors. On the other hand, their behavior can directly ruin efforts of their “allies” within the respective international organizations or as this work too previously argued: regimes.

3. LIBYA'S RELEVANCE FOR EXTERNAL ACTORS

To date, Operation Unified Protector was the last NATO intervention initiated by Western States in the MENA region that was not vetoed by Russia in the UN (Ayhan, 2011). One uniqueness of this mission was the dominance of French and British Air Force in terms of contribution as compared to the general tendencies involving US leadership²⁸. The subsequent crises that have arisen stemming from happenings in the Crimea, East-Ukraine and Syria have led to a diplomatic tension and implementation of trade barriers among states of West and East. At the same time, other states have also got involved in disputes generating further turbulence within international politics. This tendency did not neglect Libya either that has various tempting factors to offer to foreign actors. Even though the conflict started as an internal struggle, it has led to the gradual development into a more and more international combat.

Throughout the past few years, a complex struggle has developed among an increasingly wide range of international actors attempting to carve bigger shares of influence in the Libyan stage. Political, normative and economic interests all have had their shares in this equation – although to different extent – and articulated goals often differed from perceived behavioral tendencies. The following pages are going to summarize what relevance that the North African state fulfills in regional as well as global actors' strategies and what type of manifestations have already taken place supporting the to be described allegations. The selection of actors discussed was motivated by their contribution to the war in a direct or indirect manner including military, financial, political or supply, etc. means. Inevitably, many of them have different stakes and interest for which they are willing to take a certain level of risk. Libya's location, its abundance of easily and cheaply extractable hydrocarbon resources, exposure to extremists and insurgents over the past decade as well as strategic advantages in the international

²⁸ This was then associated with the Obama administration's Libya policy: leading from behind.

migration routes flowing through its territory qualify the country strategically important sphere of interest for many. This is going to constitute the scope of the following pages' analysis that will conclude with a qualitative comparison.

3.1. Russia

Three decades have passed since the game of chess of the Cold War concluded and Libya is still a desirable and rational destination for the Russian Federation to enhance its regional influence by reasons of history on cooperation during the bipolar era and underlying commercial potential (John, 1982). Specifically, a combination of investments into and import from Libya's hydrocarbon sector²⁹ while also providing expertise and know-how might prove to be a win-win scenario for both parties (Warsaw-Institute, 2019). Additionally, one cannot neglect the potential advantages a successful obtainment of influence over the Libyan oil sector would mean for Russia in its relationship with the EU – which has been carrying the diversification of sources on its agenda for many years now, but the true breakthrough is yet to be reached. Recognizing these possibilities, the Russian President, Vladimir Putin first visited the country in 2008 and has dismissed the remaining debt Libya owed to Russia from Cold War era weapons' trade in exchange for an access to the port of Benghazi (Fasanotti, 2016). This latter was obviously designated to form greater presence in the Mediterranean – similarly as with the port of Tartus in Syria –, as well as the support of naval strategies furthering power-projection capabilities. Nevertheless, due to the soon-escalating situation in Libya, the Russian NAVY could not take benefit from this agreement for too long.

Russia did not veto the UNSC resolution 1973, but it abstained during the vote on the no-fly zone over Libya. Its official standpoint is the support of GNA (UNSCR, 2015) but its support towards General Haftar – which have manifested on multiple occasions via frequent high-level meetings, not to mention the supply of weapons, trainings that have fundamentally contributed to the further-escalation of the conflict (Pusztai, 2017) – is hard to misinterpret. The General's three years-long siege of Benghazi, takeover of

²⁹ Naturally, Russia is not in need of foreign-originated hydrocarbon sources for its own consumption purposes. Its relevance rather lies in an enhanced relevance it can exercise on the market and more importantly with regards to its rivals. It simply carries the potential to provide an additional bargaining item in negotiations.

essential oilfields providing the financial means for subsequent operations could hardly have been successful lacking such foreign contributions. Importantly, these events have aided him to greater popularity in Cyrenaica as he capitalized on local tribes' decades-old sense of oppression (Lefevre, 2013). Most certainly, a list of norms and embargoes are in place to prevent arms' supply into a civil war-torn area, but attainments of proxy warfare secure non-overt means to contribute. In this specific case, weapons may have reached their destination to fight proponents of GNA via indirect routes while President Putin may have officially called for ceasefire in alignment with the requirements of the international public opinion (Saleh, et al., 2020). Additionally, due to a line of suspicions clues (Reuters, 2020), Moscow was suspected of having printed Libyan dinars to resolve the LNA's liquidity problem – which also indirectly further destabilized the country's economy – probably in exchange for a beneficial share from the oil reserves in abundance on the territory controlled by the General's forces (Ramani, 2020). Finally, Moscow's smooth diplomatic operation conducted simultaneously with later deployment of air force to halt the LNA's pushback (Dixon, 2020) and enhanced level of supply of modern weaponry (RFERL, 2020) was a further example of tactical maneuvering, which also has to be interpreted in the context of regional opposition with Turkey that also has relevance in Syria's Idlib.

Notwithstanding, it seems that the Russian strategy was not based on Haftar's identity, rather on what he represented: the potentially greatest challenger of GNA supported by many groups within society opposing the Tripoli establishment³⁰, who – should things develop in the desired way – would have been able to grant the Kremlin a beneficial position. Consequently speaking, his support was conditional, and it may have lasted only as long as it was in alignment with the demands of Moscow. Naturally, the issue of morality is relevant in this context, even though the Kremlin provably did not break any regulations. The past ten years' valuable experience (Crimea, Syria and of course Libya) that has enriched Russian strategies is part of this story. Putin exploits the weaknesses of the system, but he does not cross the line too directly. This is how

³⁰ Naturally, Russia is not in need of foreign-originated hydrocarbon sources for its own consumption purposes. Its relevance rather lies in an enhanced relevance it can exercise on the market and more importantly with regards to its rivals. It simply carries the potential to provide an additional bargaining item in negotiations.

Russian mercenaries called the Wagner group³¹ are fighting and providing intelligence to local militias (Turak, 2020) in Tripoli allegedly without the President's awareness or endorsement – similarly to the little green men in the Ukrainian crisis (Shevchenko, 2014) – ensuring neutrality in advance, would these soldiers get involved in atrocities with Turkish, etc. troops.

The central motive of the Putin-led Russia's Libya strategy today is to hinder any Western-friendly government's consolidation of power, for that would definitively revoke any prior successes and would pull Russia into an unfavorable negotiating-position in relation to any trade or commercial agreement, not to mention the harm it would cause to the ambitions in the Mediterranean. An aspect of this strategy is to step up as a mediator – that has aided Russia to remain a prominent shareholder in Libya – coordinating with foreign and domestic actors. These efforts have particularly intensified after the offensive against Tripoli – which has commenced in April 2019 – when Russia did not sign the common UN declaration, rather published its own statement (France24, 2019). All in all, the Russian involvement cannot be described as constructive. It rather carries the characteristics of a strategy seeking to shape classic geopolitical influence in a beneficial manner. It also carries characteristics of impropriating long-term economic gains. A soon de-escalation of the conflict under certain conditions could be in its interest, but Moscow became very cautious over the course of past years³², and since even the current status quo serves its purposes perfectly—as it did during the past years as well—it would be hard to imagine a constructive role from its side.

3.2. Turkey

A recent study conducted on tendencies of Turkish conflict resolution efforts has revealed that Ankara tends to regionally rely on tools of hard, rather than soft power and it often

³¹ Approximately 2,000 soldiers are fighting in Libyan today. They have reached their destination indirectly, through Syria, Egypt and Jordan to Benghazi. President Putin has on multiple occasions claimed that the group is a strictly private entrepreneurship with no ties to the Russian government. Furthermore, he stated that even though Russian citizens might be among the members, they are not acting upon the Kremlin's orders.

³² Moscow perceived to have been outplayed by Western states in Libya as their contribution to the UNSC resolution was followed by a NATO intervention.

acts as an insider peace-enforcer, even if a sufficiently coherent strategy based on the cases where it was an active stakeholder cannot be concluded (Dal & Parlar, 2018). Furthermore, it applies a dual approach within its conflict resolution strategy with the combination of bilateral and multilateral elements, which entails diplomatic and military tools on the one hand and an engagement with other external actors on the other. However, the former clearly outweighs the latter (Dal, 2018).

Turkey's role is special in the sense that both its applied rhetoric and exercised behavior endows diplomacy a secondary role behind military force in pursuing its foreign policy goals. President Erdoğan did participate in multiple conferences on the requirements of peace, but ensuing events suggest that he valued palpable military intervention to be more expedient. Throughout the year of 2020, Turkish military presence in Tripoli got considerably strengthened: the few hundred training officers, drones and advisors were accompanied by battleships carrying modern weaponry, vehicles and supply, Turkish soldiers, and Syrian mercenaries (Magdy, 2020). This was a clear and impossible to misread declaration that Ankara supports the internationally acknowledged GNA against Haftar. This cooperation was also strengthened when President Erdoğan signed an agreement on security cooperation and a shared maritime border with Prime Minister al-Sarraj and proceeded with providing vital intelligence to allied militias (Naar, 2020). It is important to add that Ankara had already sent weapons and military supply to back up GNA militias even before it had its own boots on ground (Gall, 2020), however it must have realized the level of danger the dragging assault on Tripoli and the simultaneously increased military and financial capabilities of the LNA represented.

Scrutinizing further motives behind the intervention of this magnitude, it can be ascertained that the decision-making process was not dominated by ideological interests, even if one cannot neglect to interpret it within the context of Sunni world and what a Muslim Brotherhood³³-supporting government of Libya would mean (Ahmed, 2020) apart from the realist framework. Moreover, even though the President's domestic rhetoric occasionally includes a reminiscence on the Ottoman era with a sense of nostalgia

³³ Initially arrived at the country from neighbouring Egypt in 1949 and established the Libyan branch in 1968, the group consisted of a few thousand individuals in 2011 aiming for legitimacy and acceptance.

(Economist, 2020), both timing and the scale of tackled risk refutes the possibility of increased participation stemming from a contingent, historic bond-fed cultivation of relationship between Turkey and Libya. A far more likely scenario would be Erdoğan's accurate interpretation of the status quo – similarly to the one he capitalized on in Northern Syria – and a recognition of a potent strategy through which Ankara would be able to place itself into a more advantageous position in yet another dispute. Namely, the signed maritime agreement would enable an enhanced military presence and influence in the Mediterranean that can provide the higher ground in the quarrel with Cyprus and Greece. It should also not be neglected that the area that Turkey can now consider to be legally part of its own Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) – debated by the previously mentioned two countries – has rich sources of natural gas and crude oil that Ankara wants to exploit (Pitel & Sheppard, 2020), while it is also ready to take part in post-conflict infrastructure reconstruction programs (Coskun & Gumrukcu, 2020).

It is indisputable that Turkey took the advantages of the possibilities stemming from the divided Libya and Tripoli's hard situation to facilitate the come about of such a beneficial agreement. Firstly, the GNA's room for movement at the time was significantly narrower by this putting Turkey into a more advantageous negotiating position when it came to post-conflict commercial and trade agreements. Turkey's economy – that suffered greatly over the past decade (Goodman, 2019) – could profit a lot from the materialization of such agreements especially considering the outstandingly high rates of unemployment (Reuters, 2019). Also, it had the benefit of aligning with the international community's official agenda, which would ensure no punitive actions and wide-scale condemnations would follow its overt involvement. The only exception in this perspective was the maritime agreement that did not only create new turbulent waves among regional powers (Butler & Gumrukcu, 2019) but also escalated the whole Libyan civil war into a complex case of international law as Egypt and Greece have signed their own agreement (MFA, 2020) responding to their perceived threat.

Thirdly, many regional rivals already supported the LNA, so the potential gains of siding with the opposite party were immensely higher. Indeed, Turkey proved to be a more reliable ally of Tripoli than Italy, and without its help the al-Sarraj government would likely have been defeated. Furthermore, Turkey's support provided the sufficient

aid to break Haftar's siege of Tripoli and to start pushing the LNA back³⁴. Notwithstanding, this scale of commitment unavoidably triggers greater risks that is well perceived in Ankara³⁵. In light of all these, the primary Turkish goal is that the Tripoli government does not fail, since that would mean Ankara's simultaneous loss of a main ally and an outpost of its power projection, as well as prestige. Thus, the mission of Turkish troops in Libya is to strengthen and defend the GNA while pushing back and weakening LNA forces and its allies.

3.3. European Union Member States

The below-listed states fit the criteria of this work's selection not only because they are members of the EU, but also because they are either members or partner countries of NATO. Thus, their relevance may be manifold starting from their participation of military operations in Libya through diplomatic practices up until the implementation of nondeclared strategies. Combination of more states within a single bullet point was motivated by either political challenges or geographic rationale.

3.3.1. Italy and France

Examining the EU's approach towards Libya is an exceedingly difficult task predominantly due to Member States' immensely different views on the appropriate strategy for handling mass migration, which oftentimes hindered arising drafts of resolution with promising practical relevance like a 'bureaucratic anchor'. Statements and reactions by representatives of various member states suggest that conflict resolution is a surpassingly important matter for Southern member states – that is understandable given the more direct and greater challenges these countries face –, while for others this equation appears to be more complex. One should not neglect the danger of the already-discussed dominant members of regime when it comes to alliance politics, including

³⁴ As part of Operation Peace Storm.

³⁵ This has manifested in a string of swift and firm decisions including the vote to send troops. Obviously, if – as part of an unfavourable turn of events – the new Tripoli government fails and will be defeated, then the new maritime agreement is going to be fiercely attacked and likely annulled. In such a scenario, aspirations in the Mediterranean would be dependent on Greek, Egyptian and Italian interests and based on current perceptions, they would fail. One indication of this was the condemnation of the Tripoli-Ankara pact by the Cairo-based Arab League not long after its creation.

techniques of securitization that is a truly influential tool (McDonald, 2008). Numerous indicators highlight that unofficial and selfish foreign policy goals played their part in the background too. Within the Libya analogy, a French-Italian opposition has been evolving over the course of the past years that did not only create a political dispute – to which member states may join alongside moral, political or economic interests – but it indirectly contributed to the weakening of the EU’s relative power. One clear manifestation of this is the fact that Turkey may control now parts of the flow of migration from North Africa too that was certainly a scenario to be avoided for Europe. The significance of the EU’s internal opposition overwrites the factors of geographic realities and commercial potential that would predestinate the EU to be the most influential stakeholder in the region. Precisely, the above-described incoherence has undermined this position and aided others to greater influence. There are no other two countries better exemplifying the intra-organizational lack of cohesion within recent context of common foreign and security policy than Italy and France.

Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi’s friendly relationship with Qadhafi proved to be insufficient in the prevention of NATO intervention. Later, a prominent role was taken on that manifested in the *Skhirat agreement* establishing the GNA, which involved significant backing from Italy that decreased substantially once the attack on Tripoli unfolded and Haftar was recognized as a legitimate actor³⁶. In the subsequent maze, Rome experienced the negative effects of the above articulated lack of synergies in Europe and has implemented a new and reasonably potent strategy: instead of conducting negotiations with GNA politicians immensely dependent on the backing of UN, it has directly reached out to leaders of major tribes (Reynolds, 2018) and decided to finance and train the Libyan coastguard in order to attempt decreasing the pressure stemming for migration over the course of past years (Dominioni, 2020). This was a vital turning point suggesting that

³⁶ The intention was to step up as a mediator facilitating unity between opposing parties, but it proved to be a false strategy inasmuch as Haftar felt he had the higher ground and was not willing to settle for anything less than total victory that ultimately made Rome look as a weak and untrustworthy ally of the GNA. The incurred loss of credibility overwrote Italy’s perceived capability of regional influence – and essentially marginalized it on the benefit of other actors – and it haunted later efforts seeking settlement as well.

Italy comprehends the workings and mechanisms running the Libyan society which – although has developed since the colonial times – did not change fundamentally.

In the aftermath of GNA militias' military success significantly aided by Turkish troops, Rome wanted to reestablish trust with Tripoli that might be beneficial for both parties. Specifically, securing the production of crude oil and natural gas in Libya is in the fundamental interest of *Eni*, Italy's greatest energy corporation, which is one of the most important partners of Libya's NOC but suffered significant losses recently (Sertin, 2020). On the other hand, decreasing the international marginalization and furthering the number of tangible allies was in the interest of the al-Sarraj government as it will be important to the new government too. Nevertheless, a military involvement is highly unlikely because of the already persisting domestic tension circulating around the financial aid Italy is providing to Tripoli, as well as the so far experienced tendencies, proving that Rome has no interest in military escalation.

The first and foremost important contribution of France was of course through bombing which it evaluated as a great success amid of strong division among members of the alliance (Grand, 2015). What followed was a behavior with a blurry set of ambitions since many recent Presidents of France – that is a leading European power officially supporting the UN standpoint – got involved in scandals suggesting a variation between articulated and real goals. More and more tangible pieces of information indicate that Paris supported Haftar despite of UN and EU directives (Taylor, 2019). Instances backing this allegation include the arrest of French diplomats at the Tunisia border transporting weapons (Al Jazeera, 2019), questionable intelligence operations (Chassany & Saleh, 2016) and the bombing of Chadian troops (Amiel, 2019) – potentially marching to fight Haftar – by the French Air Force, etc. Presumably, geopolitical reasoning was behind this tactic inasmuch as France attempted to enhance its regional influence in order to gain access to natural resources, including to uranium in the South (el-Gamaty, 2018), as well as crude oil in the East (Wardany, 2019). Arguably, had Qadhafi not spoken out about the funds he donated to the campaigns of Sarkozy (Jarry, 2018), the French contribution to *Operation Unified Protector* would not have been so outstanding. Nevertheless, President Macron's role as pragmatic mediator did not represent a fundamental alteration from the Hollande-government's Libya strategy. The French behavior suggested for a long time that it recognized Haftar to be the reality on the ground, while later it seemed to have

reached a stalemate due to developments, and so it took on a more distant, neutral position measuring its options. Obviously, France could not raise its objection to Turkey's enhanced involvement but it did not fail to miss the chance to openly criticize Ankara in relation to the breach on international law triggered by the Ankara – Tripoli pact (Momtaz, 2020), and allegedly it did so in order to stand with its European partners Greece and Cyprus. Paris even attacked the behavior of Ankara as a NATO ally (Irish & Emmott, 2020) that played its part in a fragmentation amongst alliance members (Peel, et al., 2020).

3.3.2. Germany and the United Kingdom

Matters of security in Europe are certainly of utmost concern for Germany too, which – similarly to many others mentioned above – stepped up as mediator (Anton, 2019) following the UN framework. The most obvious manifestation of this was the Berlin Conference on 19 January 2020, where all regional stakeholders were invited hoping it would facilitate truce and an actual implementation of arms embargoes. Another issue apart from security which is of interest to Berlin is migration that is a constant topic on the Libyan agenda combined with human rights' protection (Jones, 2020). Germany also actively participated in EU initiatives to uphold arms embargo as it had sent a battleship to the coast of Libya. Its role is one of a constructive mediator's which omits reliance on proxies.

The United Kingdom was another leading party behind the removal of Qadhafi and the eight month-long NATO bombings—which costed the UK approximately 320 million pounds—but it has not shown any meaningful form of contribution during the time that passed after³⁷, having spent a total of 25 million pounds on reconstruction (Harrison, 2015). It claimed to be a silent supporter of GNA, peace initiatives and human rights, which was only disturbed by Prime Minister Boris Johnson's scandalous disregarding marks on a humanitarian catastrophe (Fenton-Harvey, 2020). In fact, its only intervention has prepared the environment for insurgencies and has not taken on any initiatives ever since. Having claimed that, its natural interest in the hydrocarbon sector

³⁷ Additionally, the BREXIT-created environment unavoidably required attention elsewhere.

might lead to a win – win scenario for both parties once the risks will be lower (Exarheas, 2020).

3.3.3. Denmark, Norway and Sweden

All three Scandinavian states offered a limited but proportionate aerial contribution to the NATO operation. Even though significantly less fighter jets of these states flew to Libya from the Sigonella air base of Sicily, their involvement was meaningful. For instance, the Royal Danish Air Force has dropped more than 12 percent of all the bombs released as part of the mission, but the Royal Norwegian and Swedish Air Forces' contribution were also paramount in the early phase of the operation (Anrig, 2015). The intervention itself was widely supported in Denmark by almost 80 percent of the population (Jakobsen, 2016), which authorized the Parliament to provide other sorts of contributions including the removal of Libya's chemical weapons. This R2P approach is in alignment with Norway's financial aid (Elisabeth Arnsdorf Haslund & Eugene Sibomana, 2020) to support the relocation of refugees in severe danger (Hodal, 2020). Humanitarian motives were playing a paramount importance (Doeser, 2014) behind Swedish rationale too when the intervention was approved. This truly reflects the scope and nature of Scandinavian involvement that entails a normative approach with perceivably honest interests in the resolution of Libyan civil war.

3.3.4. Spain and Greece

Both Spain and Greece deployed maritime and aerial forces in OUP but Libya's relevance in the case of them overreaches the military context. Namely, economic interests of both dictate the need to have a swift and advantageous resolution in the country. Many indicators show that R2P aspirations are an important part of the Spanish agenda (Mestres, 2011) but one cannot neglect the oil factor inasmuch as the Sahara field – which is the greatest of all within Libya – was being operated by Repsol but its business was severely disrupted on numerous occasions over the course of the past decade. The importance of this field within the company's global portfolio cannot be stressed enough, this explains the repeated calls of high-level officials on the continuation of production (McMurty, 2020). Other interests evolved around constructions and infrastructure development activities whereby various Spanish companies have had hundreds of millions of euros worth investment opportunities and trade agreements (Tanchum, 2020).

With the previous regime gone, obviously these deals are off the table, but these same companies pursued their interest in post-conflict reconstruction (Alharathy, 2020), this is another aspect signaling Spain's relevance. Lastly, Madrid could not ignore to realize the elevated activity of other regional actors, which created a geopolitical interest as well. For this reason, the strengthening of economic cooperation with the GNA was underway (Assad, 2020) while diplomatic ties have also received paramount attention (Alharathy, 2020).

The Greek approach was somewhat twisted naturally due to the Turkish involvement and pact with the GNA. Athens wants to defend its maritime space and seeks to retain its EEZ for which reason it actively supported the initiation of Operation Irini to control and stop the supply of combatants with foreign weaponry – that mostly struck GNA militias – and made some diplomatic steps towards the Eastern government that were impossible to neglect (Rodríguez, 2020). As a counter strike to the Ankara Tripoli agreement, Greece has signed its own deal to secure drilling rights with the Eastern government (Elhennawy, 2020), which also marked the official declaration of frontier lines. This opposition may outlive the Libyan civil war as well, Greece is in a difficult position.

3.3.5. Belgium and the Netherlands

Similarly, the Belgian and Dutch contribution included both maritime and aerial units. However, true interests of Brussels soon constituted a platform of debate as several transactions were made from the theoretically-frozen, Belgium-based accounts of the former dictator to Belgian companies (Marks, 2019) while militias were also financed by Belgian money (Ghanmy, 2018). At the same time, the Dutch government financially supported the stabilization efforts (Ibrahim, 2017) and also restarted gas and crude oil production (Alharathy, 2019). More recently, Belgian and Dutch Embassies were among the first ones to reopen in Tripoli (Alharathy, 2020).

3.4. The People's Republic of China

It would be an exaggeration to claim that the China-Libya relations – that mostly consisted of commercial activities prior to the revolution – would represent an outstanding bond in the region. Precisely, the importance and magnitude of these activities constituted ordinary business. Regarding the upcoming unrest, the initial

approach that China opted for eventually proved to be inaccurate and Beijing did have to pay the due price for it. Namely, as tensions escalated and the first riots broke out, a decision was made to support Qadhafi most notably with arms (Abbas, 2011). It was thought at the time that the outstanding contracts worth approximately twenty billion dollars Beijing had with the regime was the reason behind. After this loss of prestige and credibility, a change to a much less direct and more cautious strategy has taken place. The core of this – as in the case of many other countries in the region too – relies on economic relations since China is already seeking the opportunities stemming from an eventual post-conflict reconstruction, as well as diversification of crude imports (Wardany & Hurst, 2018) and trade partnership (Alharathy, 2018). Also, China was one of the five countries that abstained in the UNSC vote on the no-fly zone over Libya.

Importantly, Libya is not a primary target of Chinese foreign policy and as the future governing force's identity is still unknown, Beijing stands still and applies the rhetoric and behavior of non-intervention that aids its maneuvering to not alienate any parties, which could eventually lead to a capitalization on their success – similarly to past cases (Wehrey & Alkoutami, 2020). According to a report, Chinese definition on the Libyan status quo is the opposition of two anti-liberal actors that have more in common than against each other and so the conflict resolution strategy—that clearly have failed to live up to the expectations—should be less dominated by the West (Burton, 2021). Even if allegedly, it would have preferred the prevalence of the GNA, it did not provide tangible support, rather it actively pushed efforts of multilateral peace process as well as a more stressed involvement of the African Union in alignment with its skepticism towards individual external actors' strategies (Ramani, 2019). Having elaborated on this, since China benefited from a market gap (Kington, 2020) and became the primary supplier of military drones to many countries throughout the Middle East – which then were deployed in Libya – it did provide indirect contribution to the war.

Drawing expectations from recent strategies of China, this recent rather reserved behavior may indeed be replaced by the related economic penetration once fights will be permanently over. Beijing possesses a comparative advantage when it comes to building new trade relations since it does not set a list of conditions partners must comply with prior to conducting business, that without a doubt had its share in the pace of the strategy of expansion of its network throughout the whole Middle East named as Belt and

Road Initiative, which may very well provide yet another reason for a clash of interests among external parties (N. Rózsa, 2020).

3.5. The United States of America and Canada

It is hard to imagine an analysis of this magnitude without involving the US, especially since its Ambassador Christopher Stevens was murdered at the consulate of Benghazi in 2012. Previously, President Obama supported firmly the necessity of Qadhafi's removal and decided to get actively involved despite of significant contrary opinions of many of his closest advisors (Rogin, 2011) – and the US quickly provided the biggest financial contribution to the success of the mission (Ukman, 2011) – but he also labeled the lack of planning for the subsequent period as the biggest failure of his presidency (Tierney, 2016). Probably after learning from the lessons of Iraq and Afghanistan, an internally generated *sui generis* transition was aimed at, in which foreign actors do not enforce their will on processes. Examining from today's perspective though, it is easy to conclude that this approach was false. Having elaborated on this, it must be noted that apart from the fight on terror – which is an important item on the US's global agenda – Washington had no particularly important goal in Libya, and even the murder of its ambassador did not lead to a fundamental change in status quo. Importantly, *Daesh* was not yet a decisive element at the time and no one expected (Englund, 2015) that it would capitalize on the negative turn of events and find convenient grounds in weakened states, such as Libya. Subsequently, no change has taken place under the Trump administration either (Karlin & Wittes, 2019). Examining past years' trends of foreign involvement in Libya, one cannot ignore Zbigniew Brzezinski's thoughts on the development of instability and uncertainty following American withdrawal (Brzezinski, 1999). One decisive variable on the future involvement could be the development of Russia's role. Precisely, if a permanent Russian military base was to be created in Libya, not far from a U.S. establishment in Sicily, that could prove to be a game changer and Libya might move from periphery to a more elevated place on the US foreign policy agenda. Until then, the prevalence of a NATO member state would serve its interests the most. Still, this highlights a set of indirect goals for the US in Libya including the limitation and containment of increasing Russian influence as well as the avoidance of a regional war between its NATO allies.

Canada is part of this group due to its naval and aerial participation in the NATO mission, but it has to be stated that no further relevance carries its relationship with the Libyan civil war apart from released official pieces of communication calling for ceasefire. It does not pursue a proxy operation and its conflict resolution goes as far as the upper mentioned publications in defense of humanitarian interests, order and stability. There is no other perceivable contribution from its side while seemingly it does not have other interests in the development of the war. Stakes and risks are almost non-existent for Canada.

3.6. The Middle East

The below listed states are essential parts of this work not purely because of their influence on regional—and to an extent global—processes, but also because similarly to Libya, they all are AL member states that have been relevant stakeholders of the events of the Arab spring and subsequently the events in Libya. The outcome of the civil war is an important matter for all these states, but some of them share interests concerning the oil market as well, being fellow OPEC members.

3.7.1. Qatar

It is the role of Qatar that made the group of Tripoli's supporters especially colorful since Doha – as opposed to the rest of the AL members investigated in this section, or its fellow Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) members – would have preferred to see the significantly friendlier to Islamist groups GNA to consolidate its power. Qatar was an active supporter of the removal of Qadhafi, and it participated in the NATO bombings (Krauss, 2011) besides providing the necessary support to rebels. Its soft-power toolset included the broadcasting of Libya TV and an elevated focus on happenings by Al Jazeera, as well as diplomatic support inasmuch as it succeeded in pursuing fellow Arab League member states to join the UNSC resolution (Cafiero, 2020). Certain subsequent violent actions of Islamist groups (Walt, 2013) and alleged financing of militias (Mahmoud, 2019) negatively impacted Qatar's reputation that resulted in a less visible, nevertheless still upheld participation that was not affected by the Tobruk government's unilateral cut of diplomatic ties either (Reuters, 2017). Later, a military agreement was signed among Ankara, Doha and the GNA in order to train soldiers (TRT, 2020) that could be seen as a furthering of support having already been a supplier of arms (Dickinson, 2015).

Interestingly, this did not entail direct involvement, rather an advisory and supporting role through Turkey. The analysis on potential benefits in oil revenues is not applicable here not purely due to the unavailability of data but also because of behavioral tendencies of Qatar in Libya and in broader sense in the whole North African region as supporter of democratization and multi-party-system.

Santini argues that the events of the post-2011 conflicts in the MENA region as well as in within the purely Libyan context can in a way be categorized as a regional Cold War for the following reasoning:

“Qatar threw its weight behind the Islamist Libyan Dawn, which then created a UN-backed government in Tripoli, challenged by militarized dissidents led by General Khalifa Haftar, a former general heading the nationalist camp, supported by the UAE and Egypt. This second military front is a predominantly Arab one, Gulf-led, centered around another element of political identity, that is political Islam. This conflict epitomizes on a military level the intra-Sunni and intra-Gulf division between Qatar, on the one hand, and Saudi Arabia and the UAE, on the other” (Santini, 2017).

3.7.2. Egypt

Egypt’s involvement in Libyan history and especially its recent history was outstanding, which can be explained in multiple dimensions. Firstly, the eradication of political Islam and the enhancement of Cyrenaica’s autonomy – that has its historic roots in the Sanusi era – are strategic goals for Cairo. Accordingly, the Eastern neighbor did not hide its support provided to the Tobruk establishment. The LNA’s opposition to the Muslim Brotherhood – that is officially considered to be a terrorist organization by today’s standards of Egypt – predestined Cairo’s decision. Even though we cannot talk about military support – amid of occasionally strengthening calls from Eastern tribes’ leaders and after Cairo’s opening of legal possibilities to send in troops in case GNA forces would move beyond Sirte and close to Jufra air base³⁸ (Perkins, 2020) –, arms and defense supply extended by an intelligence cooperation (Guler, 2019) were in alignment with the above

³⁸ Although readiness of the Egyptian army to such a deployment was arguable according to many. If the army were indeed be mobilized but the determined goals would not be reached, that could have had serious domestic consequences besides the lesson for other regional and international constituents.

elaborated strategic needs. Creating stability at the border and maintaining good relationships with tribes in the Eastern region of Libya also fitted well into this agenda, even if Egyptian politicians officially supported the UN framework.

Moreover, Cairo declared its will to be an active participant in the eventual reconstruction phase that could in many ways aid its own economy too (Zaher, 2019). The relevance of this is most prominent within the context of oil production where Egypt expressed its particular interest (Emam, 2019) that significantly relates to its recently increased perception of stakes (Kennedy, 2020). While the addition of Egyptian military force would have been part of an increased involvement, it would also have entailed an intervention that – similarly to that of Ankara – could not have been upheld too long due financial reasons (Ahmado, 2020). Even more importantly, it could have led to a direct regional clash that was surely not in the interests of either party. Notwithstanding, the following success of the GNA proponents brought the danger of resurgence of Muslim Brotherhood closer to the border of Egypt, which was unmistakably interpreted as a threat in Cairo. Until further escalation, the shared border will continue to provide Egypt and its allies an untraceable option to smuggle weapons and supplies to supported parties (Hüsken, 2017). On the other hand, it is exactly the shared border that qualifies migration an important topic for Egypt too as a result of to its categorization as safe heaven as compared to Libya. Without a doubt, a consolidated and strong governance with a centralized national army in Libya is in the interests of Egypt that seeks to minimize the instability-fed spillover effects³⁹. Abdel Fattah al-Sisi's aim is to provide support to like-minded autocratic leaders thereby strengthening the narrative according to which stability can only be maintained by secular and autocratic strongmen (Barfi, 2018). This however must only be seen while being conscious on the rivalry between Cairo and Ankara.

3.7.3. Jordan

Jordan's first material intervention was of military kind as it supported the anti-Qadhafi troops early on. Later, many pieces of evidence prove that it has continuously broken the imposed arms embargoes on several occasions that not only fueled the flame of conflict

³⁹ The extreme fragmentation and militarisation one could witness over the years represent a real threat from an Egyptian point of view. This directly connects to Cairo's support provided to Haftar as in him they identified an enemy of extremists.

and backed up the escalation of events but have directly contributed to humanitarian catastrophes (Nichols, 2019). Additionally, it has been acting as the Haftar forces' faithful supplier of high-tech equipment that besides others included Chinese-produced drones (Assad, 2020) having previously trained these militias (Halaby, 2015). In a somewhat unexpected turn of events, it started to mediate between Ankara and Cairo following the drawback of Haftar to avoid a direct and overt confrontation between them (Ayesh, 2020). The motives behind its actions are ideologically speaking similar to the aforementioned AL partners. This seems to be an almost exclusively shared aspect within this regime, almost.

3.7.4. Saudi Arabia

Opposition to political Islam was definitely an essential reason why Riyadh became a prominent financial contributor to the operations of Haftar. His siege of Tripoli was backed by tens of millions of dollars by the Saudis (Malsin & Said, 2019), which was intended to avoid liquidity problems that have occurred previously. The General's military experience might have been an additional factor considered since he was capable of mobilizing one smaller group of the population on his own, which was not self-evident in Libya. The matter of oil-production is the least-evadable addition in the case of the world's balancing pool providing the decisive marginal barrels (Brown & Huntington, 2017). The country's historic maximization of related revenues entailed a preference of upholding market share as opposed to high prices, nevertheless, in this specific case it meant that as Libyan production decreased, Saudi production increased in order to maintain price stability while also generating extra profit. Considering this and the outweighed influence in Libya, the endurance of recent years' status quo may be beneficial for Saudi Arabia (Ramani, 2019).

3.7.5. The United Arab Emirates

The UAE also aided rebel groups against Qadhafi and it takes no exception in those goals related to political Islam and the Muslim Brotherhood (Badi, 2020), but its role also seemed to be in close alignment with France that utilized its diplomatic capabilities to facilitate smooth UAE operations (Cafiero, 2020). It acted as a middle-power and relied on local proxies in order to achieve its goals to enhance coastal influence and weaken its rivals while securing anonymity. Additionally, LNA troops received over 6200 tons of

weapon supplies carried by around 150 flights with American made C-17s (Malsin, 2020) from the UAE as part of a constant violation of the arms embargo (Guardian, 2020). Also, Haftar's troops were frequently backed by significant UAE financing (Aydemir, 2020), training (Tagba, 2020), intelligence (El-Gamaty, 2017) as well as drone strikes that have occurred over 850 times (Ardemagni & Fasanotti, 2020). Importantly, some suggested that the Emirates' strategy was functioning so well that its influence has actually surpassed that of Saudi Arabia, which may result in significant benefits in the post-war reconstruction (TRT, 2020). Abu Dhabi's effectiveness cannot be bypassed even if 2020 trends were in favor of GNA proponents. Nevertheless, these events led to the revelation that such an obvious and exclusive support towards the LNA may directly lead to an incurred total loss of influence in Libya for the UAE.

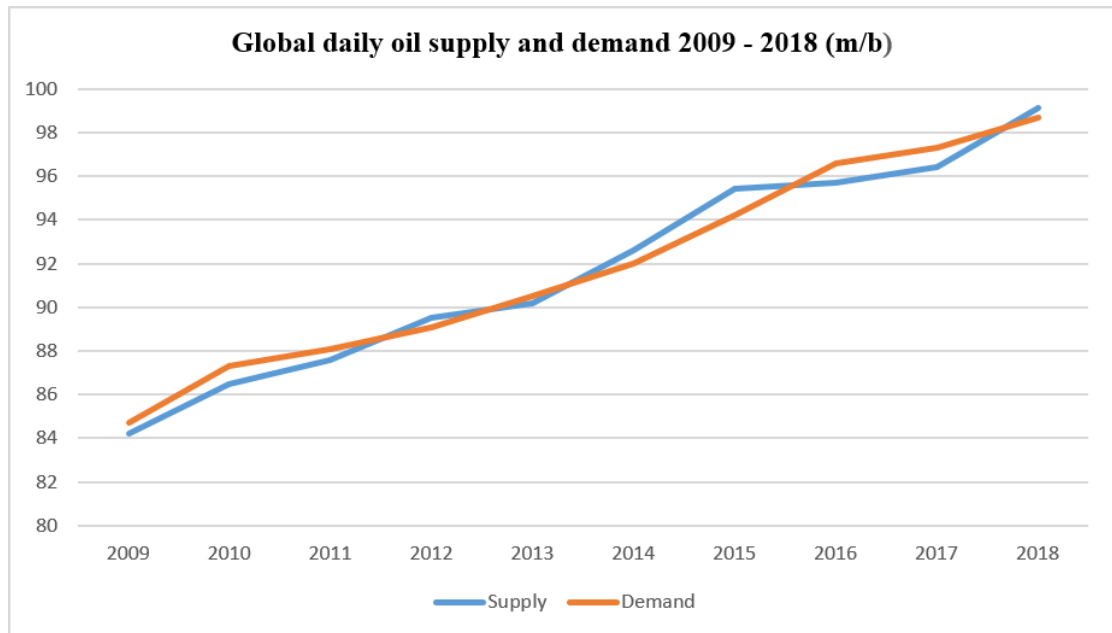
3.7.6. The issue of oil trade tendencies

There were other fields of potential gains the Emirates could benefit from throughout the years apart from ideological ones. Specifically, as a fellow OPEC member state, stability of oil prices might seem to be in the interest of the UAE, but one must also consider the consequences and potential benefits the inconsistent production and refining activities in Libya offered to the UAE. Precisely, the below data⁴⁰ – that examines a decade-long period from 2009 to 2018 when OPEC production's global market share was an average of 34 percent – proves that other member states could take benefit from the many difficulties in Libya, especially if spot market tendencies are also considered (see table 6 for reference), where due to the comparative advantages of Libyan crude⁴¹, its price was almost always above the global and OPEC average. This provides an additional dimension of interpretation.

⁴⁰ Information regarding the increasing global supply and demand trends, the evolution of average yearly commodity spot price as well as average daily production of states was collected from the database of the Observatory of Economic Complexity (OEC). Graphics, visualizations, and tables are the work of the author.

⁴¹ High quality crude containing low levels of Sulphur facilitating production and refining as well as geographic location imperative for European stakeholders.

Table 3



During the investigated period, Libya's production rate has been continuously fluctuating with frequently occurring and significant drops due to the disturbance around facilities and ports caused by militias and insurgents as well as the advancement of the LNA⁴², but also due to the already described-upon measures of the NOC. During the same period, both UAE and Saudi production rates moved in the opposite direction according to the available data. Namely, the events of 2011 caused a sharp fall of approximately 71 percent in Libya's daily production rate meaning its crude supplied on an average only 1.5 percent of world demand as compared to the previous year's 5.3 percent. For the following year of 2012, this negative trend was somewhat reversed as the interim period between the anti-Qadhafi uprisings and the alienation among various domestic groups leading up to the civil war brought about once again a relatively normal production rate of 1.4 million. This level however was never again approached throughout the decade in Libya. The UAE on the other hand was able to moderately increase its production year by year throughout the decade similarly to the Saudi tendency, which initially from 2010

⁴² Those barrels traded by Haftar on the black market to finance his operations do not fall within the scope of data shown in Table 3 (or any other presented below) since that only contains information on the officially and legally sold commodities.

to 2011 increased its average daily production by a million barrels but later also proceeded with a mild increase.

Table 4
Daily production of OPEC countries (2009-2018)

Country	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Algeria	1.286	1.25	1.24	1.209	1.161	1.118	1.113	1.105	1.047	1.042
Angola	1.783	1.786	1.667	1.736	1.734	1.639	1.769	1.718	1.634	1.505
Rep. of the Congo						0.241	0.232	0.216	0.252	0.318
Ecuador	0.477	0.475	0.49	0.499	0.519	0.553	0.543	0.545	0.53	0.519
Equatorial Guinea					0.21	0.2	0.185	0.16	0.133	0.125
Gabon					0.213	0.211	0.214	0.221	0.2	0.186
Indonesia			0.795	0.237	0.226	0.222	0.22			
Iran	3.725	3.706	3.628	2.985	2.666	2.773	2.836	3.515	3.813	3.553
Iraq	2.422	2.401	2.665	2.98	3.092	3.303	3.974	4.392	4.446	4.55
Kuwait	2.263	2.297	2.538	2.792	2.812	2.768	2.764	2.853	2.708	2.746
Libya	1.557	1.559	0.462	1.394	0.921	0.47	0.404	0.39	0.811	0.952
Nigeria	1.812	2.061	2.111	2.06	1.878	1.921	1.838	1.556	1.658	1.719
Qatar	0.77	0.791	0.794	0.75	0.728	0.71	0.663	0.656		
Saudi Arabia	8.051	8.263	9.29	9.76	9.61	9.686	10.142	10.406	9.954	10.311
UAE	2.256	2.304	2.516	2.624	2.792	2.812	2.908	2.979	2.915	2.986
Venezuela	2.394	2.37	2.413	2.392	2.397	2.334	2.319	2.154	1.911	1.354
Total prod. (m/d)	28.80	29.26	30.61	31.42	30.96	30.96	32.12	32.87	32.01	31.87

Throughout the same period, OPEC's global production increased by five percent due to the contributions of mainly Saudi Arabia but also Iraq, Kuwait and the UAE (Table 5). These states fully compensated for the so-called *lost barrels* of Libya and this tendency continued throughout the end of the investigated period. Subsequently, a massive fluctuation in production trends of Libya followed because of the severely disrupted environment and so the production rate has never reached that of 2010. Simultaneously, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Iraq continuously increased their production filling the void of those lost barrels of Libya, as well as Venezuela⁴³.

⁴³ Although due to a different reason but the Latin American country's production rate followed a similar path during the second half of the past decade meaning that by 2018 it has lost about a million barrels a day as compared to previous years' trends.

Table 5
Share of production among OPEC members (2009-2018)

Country	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Algeria	4.5%	4.3%	4.1%	3.8%	3.8%	3.6%	3.5%	3.4%	3.3%	3.3%
Angola	6.2%	6.1%	5.4%	5.5%	5.6%	5.3%	5.5%	5.2%	5.1%	4.7%
Rep. of the Congo	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%	0.7%	0.7%	0.8%	1.0%
Ecuador	1.7%	1.6%	1.6%	1.6%	1.7%	1.8%	1.7%	1.7%	1.7%	1.6%
Equatorial Guinea	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	0.6%	0.6%	0.5%	0.4%	0.4%
Gabon	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	0.6%	0.6%
Indonesia	0.0%	0.0%	2.6%	0.8%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Iran	12.9%	12.7%	11.9%	9.5%	8.6%	9.0%	8.8%	10.7%	11.9%	11.1%
Iraq	8.4%	8.2%	8.7%	9.5%	10.0%	10.7%	12.4%	13.4%	13.9%	14.3%
Kuwait	7.9%	7.8%	8.3%	8.9%	9.1%	8.9%	8.6%	8.7%	8.5%	8.6%
Libya	5.4%	5.3%	1.5%	4.4%	3.0%	1.5%	1.3%	1.2%	2.5%	3.0%
Nigeria	6.3%	7.0%	6.9%	6.6%	6.1%	6.2%	5.7%	4.7%	5.2%	5.4%
Qatar	2.7%	2.7%	2.6%	2.4%	2.4%	2.3%	2.1%	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Saudi Arabia	28.0%	28.2%	30.4%	31.1%	31.0%	31.3%	31.6%	31.7%	31.1%	32.4%
UAE	7.8%	7.9%	8.2%	8.4%	9.0%	9.1%	9.1%	9.1%	9.1%	9.4%
Venezuela	8.3%	8.1%	7.9%	7.6%	7.7%	7.5%	7.2%	6.6%	6.0%	4.2%

Still within the same period, the US production rates reached a record high (Kelly, 2018) and President Trump put excessive pressure on OPEC states to increase their production thereby countering the significant increase of prices (Krauss, 2018). The magnitude in the increase and fluctuation of price of various standard types of crude is reflected in Table 6. This trend was the result of a combination of multiple events around the globe and certainly they effected Libyan crude. It is important to note that the below table only contains barrels accounted for and put on the market by the Libyan National Oil Company (NOC), since it is not possible to obtain data on any illegitimate deals conducted on the black market in order to finance certain militias via selling below the market price due to obvious limitations. Notwithstanding, what this collection of data proves is that certain fellow OPEC members could effectively make profits from the Libyan instability.

Table 6
Spot price comparison (2009-2018)

	Type	Origin	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
OPEC	Arab Light	Saudi Arabia	61.38	77.45	107.82	110.22	106.53	97.18	49.85	40.96	52.59	70.59
	Basrah Light	Iraq	60.50	76.79	106.17	107.96	103.60	94.45	47.87	39.53	51.87	68.62
	Bonny Light	Nigeria	63.25	81.07	114.15	113.66	111.36	100.85	52.95	44.02	54.55	72.11
	Es Sider	Libya	61.45	79.13	111.90	111.86	108.51	98.51	51.38	42.69	52.77	68.59
	Djeno	Congo	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	52.82	69.78
	Girassol	Angola	61.81	79.53	111.57	112.21	109.14	99.19	52.96	43.61	54.47	71.72
	Iran Heavy	Iran	60.62	76.74	106.11	109.06	105.73	96.18	48.80	39.57	51.71	67.97
	Kuwait Export	Kuwait	60.68	76.32	105.63	108.93	105.04	95.32	48.13	39.30	51.60	68.90
	Marine	Qatar	62.38	78.18	106.53	109.26	105.32	96.39	50.71	41.43	47.63	64.47
	Merey	Venezuela	55.90	69.70	97.94	100.06	96.66	86.88	41.11	34.02	54.82	72.20
	Murban	Abu Dhabi	63.78	79.94	109.77	111.76	108.21	99.45	53.87	44.83	50.00	66.10
	Oriente	Ecuador	55.84	72.82	101.03	102.76	97.74	87.31	52.83	38.44	52.80	69.50
	Rabi Light	Gabon	-	-	-	-	-	-	44.94	42.62	53.16	70.30
	Saharan Blend	Algeria	62.35	80.35	112.92	111.49	109.38	99.68	52.79	44.28	54.12	71.44
	Zafiro	Eq. Guinea	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	42.43	54.04	71.36
	Arab Heavy	Saudi Arabia	60.25	75.56	106.21	108.32	103.89	93.68	47.01	38.45	50.96	62.83
	Dubai	Dubai	61.83	78.10	108.86	109.07	105.45	96.71	50.94	41.39	53.08	63.92
	Dukhan	Qatar	62.86	79.36	113.65	110.34	107.05	98.44	52.87	43.69	54.12	66.45
	Forcados	Nigeria	63.35	81.06	108.29	114.21	111.95	101.35	54.41	43.70	54.58	68.31
	Iran Light	Iran	61.25	78.18	103.66	109.79	107.19	97.26	51.40	41.66	52.36	64.89
	Zueitina	Libya	61.85	79.72	111.36	112.55	109.15	98.97	52.36	43.55	53.64	65.95
	AVERAGE	OPEC	61.19	77.78	107.98	109.64	106.22	96.54	50.38	41.51	52.75	68.38
Non-OPEC	Brent	UK, Norway	61.68	79.6	114.79	111.62	108.62	99.08	52.41	43.76	54.17	66.79
	Isthmus	Mexico	60.85	77.86	106.63	106.55	105.16	93.65	51.14	42.37	54.6	65.98
	Minas	Indonesia	64.9	82.28	106.18	116.6	107.41	98.68	49.17	-	-	-
	Oman	Oman	62.06	78.34	117.15	109.35	105.51	97.04	51.21	41.96	53.32	64.3
	Suez Mix	Egypt	58.38	75.4	109.19	107.62	105.35	95.13	48.94	40.41	51.56	63.5
	Tapis	Malaysia	65.05	82.74	94.99	116.98	114.39	103.15	55.75	45.69	56.29	68.8
	Urals	Russia	61.22	78.39	92.93	110.49	108	98.08	51.9	42.16	53.27	65.2
	West Tex. Interim.	USA	61.88	79.42	94.88	94.1	97.96	93.26	48.73	43.27	50.82	62.9
	West Tex. Sour	USA	60.35	77.27	90.67	88.6	95.29	87.34	48.99	42.43	49.85	61.48
	AVERAGE	Non-OPEC	61.82	79.03	103.05	106.88	105.30	96.16	50.92	42.76	52.99	64.87

By considering the available official data on average production and spot prices, it can be estimated that Libya's average daily income in 2010 was a bit short of 124 million in USD that fell by more than 58 percent to approximately 51.6 million USD a year later. The already mentioned fluctuation naturally impacted later movements but the years of 2015 and 2016 deserve paramount attention since those were the two years when global prices were down, and Libyan production was particularly low resulting in an average daily 19 million USD of crude incomes. Now obviously global tendencies including the Crimean and East Ukrainian crisis as well as the evolution of supply and demand, etc. independently influenced lower incomes for every petrostate but there are

contradicting cases. For instance, Saudi Arabia's average daily income exceeded a billion dollars in the early phases of the Arab Spring capturing a staggering increase of 65 percent from the 2010 but it naturally followed global trends for those later two years. Still, the excessive amounts of extra incomes during the preceding period cannot be bypassed. Obviously, Saudi Arabia has arguably a leading position within OPEC and regulation of global supply influencing prices, and for this reason, its actions within Libya must be investigated with the consideration of its own stakes. Last but not least, daily income tendencies throughout the years in the case of the UAE followed a very similar path compared to that of Saudi Arabia. The below table was created to exemplify these trends as compared to each other via relying on OEC's data on production and spot prices for the same years.

Table 7

Average daily oil-income and fluctuation rate vs. prior year (2010-2018)

State & fluctuation	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Libya	123.82	51.57	156.41	100.23	46.41	20.96	16.82	43.15	64.04
change in %	29.00%	-58.35%	203.29%	-35.92%	-53.70%	-54.84%	-19.75%	156.58%	48.42%
Saudi Arabia	624.35	986.69	1057.20	998.38	907.38	476.78	400.11	507.26	647.84
change in %	28.71%	58.03%	7.15%	-5.56%	-9.11%	-47.46%	-16.08%	26.78%	27.71%
United Arab Emirates	364.12	550.07	579.46	596.54	551.60	304.79	256.85	300.48	388.24
change in %	28.49%	51.07%	5.34%	2.95%	-7.53%	-44.75%	-15.73%	16.99%	29.21%

3.7. International organizations as foreign actors

There is a limited number of international organizations that to some extents was and is involved in the development of today's status quo. Having already elaborated on these same alliances' capabilities and culture, the following paragraphs are going to focus on the type and level of involvement of them. Efficiency is a hard to measure term partly – but not exclusively – because of different scales to measure as it was elaborated on in the section on conflict resolution. Nevertheless, the below-mentioned points will attempt to draw up the various forms of involvement of these alliances in the Libya case followed by an analysis on their scales of success.

3.7.1. The weight of EU

The first decade of the Lisbon Treaty will not be remembered as a devastating success that is partly true because of a lack of coherence among member states. In the Libya case, the question of how to handle refugees and migrants was negatively impacted by constant internal debates (Barigazzi, 2020). Naturally, the Federica Mogherini-led EU Foreign and Security Policy was dealing a lot with Libya, but the directives emphasized by her – that mostly embraced financial and humanitarian aids – did not have practical relevance from the perspective of resolution of the conflict itself, and High Representative Joseph Borell's inauguration did not fundamentally alter the situation either. In general, the Libyan developments indirectly triggered a list of undesired outcomes including a new safe haven for terrorists and insurgencies, economic, political and social crises (Hilary & Shakespear, 2018) at a close and strategically essential region from an EU perspective. Certainly, Operation Sophia was tangible help in the strengthening of coastguard and directly in the decreasing of the numbers of humanitarian catastrophes, but it has not facilitated the resolution of the conflict itself beyond encumbering illegal weapon and oil supply in the Mediterranean (Kuperman, 2019). Somewhat ironically, subsequent efforts as part of Operation Irini (peace) further strengthened naval patrol to block arms supply that was surely in alignment with official EU agendas but in a counter-productive manner this would simultaneously further encumber the position of the GNA (Financial Times, 2020).

In sum, European states' efforts truly reflected the revelation that the constantly experienced further-escalation of fights within Libya might have led to an even more serious security issue in a strategically highly important area on the short run. However, in the lack of a wholly reliable 'deterrent-mechanism', individual parties could not be taken accountable whenever they breached the common official strategy, by this directly contributing to its inefficiency. Namely, keeping the arms embargo – which is described as the keystone under any ceasefire – always relies on morality that has only been a secondary or even less prioritized aspect. It is worthy to emphasize that there was no real use in deploying groups monitoring the ceasefire when it *de facto* did not exist. Comparably, the restart of naval patrol mission off the coast – with the purpose of eliminating weapons supply –only mirrored an obsolete attitude of mind presuming the prevalence of naval supply routes, as opposed to aerial or continental trough neighboring

states incidentally with the collaboration of a party involved in truce-negotiations (BBC, 2019). Fragmentation among member states only aided other foreign actors with aspirations in Libya. As Lindstrom and Zetterlund have accurately proven, the Libya conflict resolution is an example where EU members established mini alliances sharing similar views (Lindström & Zetterlund, 2012:62).

3.7.2. Practical achievements of UN measures

In the Libya case, resolution 1970 imposed by the UN in 2011 set out a list of sanctions towards the country in an attempt to constrain and coerce the behavior of stakeholders. This is a standard approach of the organization and can easily be compared to the responses given to other recent cases involving threat to international peace and stability. Precisely, arms embargoes were imposed to prevent the sale or supply to Libya by any member. Additionally, all funds, assets or other financial resources of a list of individuals or entities have been frozen, together with the implementation of travel ban on these same people. As part of an indirect contribution, the assets of the NOC were also frozen with the intent to deprive stakeholders from the most important means of financing violence. Moreover, UNSCR 1973 imposed a no-fly zone over Libya while subsequent decisions mostly dealt with the proportionate strengthening of arms embargoes (SIPRI, 2020). Two subsequent resolutions (2146 and 2362) forbade states the transportation of crude oil as well as other petroleum products from, to or through Libya thereby further strengthening the legal measures intended to extinguish foreign support fueling domestic violence. These measures not only provided legitimate guidelines for all states but also encumbered some aspects of escalation. Still, one cannot ignore the inability of the GNA to rely on UNSC, the very body that has aided its establishment and wide-scale international recognition. Instead, tangible support was received from individual states like Turkey, which otherwise was facing UN investigation because of its activities in the Syrian war (Nebehay, 2020).

3.7.3. NATO, the Arab League and the African Union

The importance of military intervention at the early phases of revolution—no matter how unusual a practice it was—cannot be ignored as it proved to be crucial in the defense of civilians from regime forces. This humanitarian mission led by NATO resulted in a swift strike on the regime's military infrastructure (Wedgwood & Dorn, 2015), while the

training and supplying of Libyan insurgent units – combined with an intelligence cooperation – preparing for an offensive on Tripoli commenced (El-Kouedi, 2013). These units took Tripoli and eventually Sirte, where they have killed Qadhafi. However, bombings also occurred in cases where civilian population faced no danger of retaliation by the loyalist militias (Harnden & Swami, 2011) questioning the purely humanitarian nature of the mission. Additionally, loyalists were hit in a questionably disproportionate manner (Chivers & Schmitt, 2011) even when no signs suggested imminent danger to the local population (Fahim & Kirkpatrick, 2011). All these signs suggest that the real intention of NATO was a regime change to which it contributed immensely. The kind of it was not carefully planned though since smaller – and later bigger – insurgent groups could capitalize on the power vacuum created by NATO (Chivvis & Martini, 2014). Ever since the 2011 intervention that has involved a declared no fly zone and the involvement of about 8 thousand soldiers, 21 ships and more than 250 airplanes (Cetin, 2020), no significant direct contribution has taken place⁴⁴, even if there were rumors after the direct Turkish involvement⁴⁵.

The Arab League firmly opposed the broad bombing campaign of NATO due to the high danger it has put civilians into (Cody, 2011). The subsequent formula is a complex one since in the Arab League, states in favor of Haftar possessed significant power and in alignment with the expectations, the League did not provide assistance of any particular form to the Tripoli government. As the Turkey intervention changed the *status quo*, the Arab League came to an uncomfortable position and officially emphasized its support towards the Tripoli government but simultaneously asked for ceasefire under what it labeled as the “Cairo Declaration⁴⁶” that was seen as an unfair attempt – due to its timing since the GNA requested vainly help from the League when Haftar was attacking Tripoli – to win time for the General to re-strengthen his standing (Fetouri, 2020). Obviously, this created an intra-organizational conflict of interests as Turkish⁴⁷ and Qatari activities were fundamentally against aspirations of other member states of the Arab

⁴⁴ NATO mission was completed on 31 October 2011.

⁴⁵ This would also require another UNSC resolution of course but it may be feasible.

⁴⁶ 6 June 2020.

⁴⁷ Non-AL member state.

League. One manifestation⁴⁸ of this was a set of embargoes harming Doha's financial interests and leading to its opening to new international allies (Redondo, 2020). On these grounds, it can be concluded that the general role and reputation of the Arab League within the Libyan context is fairly negative, while it has also created and deepened fragmentation among supposed partners.

The stability and order of Libya is a primary goal for the AU not only because of security concerns but also due to its economic importance to the whole region, predominantly due to its oil sector. It is not an exaggeration to claim that out of the discussed organizational actors, Qadhafi had the best relationship with the African Union that he financed well after he gave up his inspirations⁴⁹ regarding the Arab League. Partially due to this reason, the African Union was considered to be an ally of the dictator in the eye of many (Chothia, 2020). At the dawn of clashes, the AU pursued a constructive mediating role and created a roadmap (Apuuli, 2011) involving true characteristics of conflict-resolution and immediate end of bombings, which was even accepted by Qadhafi but not by his opponents. It also opposed foreign military intervention – but favored the introduction of no-fly zone – and to date calls for the relevant parties' withdrawal. There existed voices urging an AU intervention but in the presence of member states opposing any form of unilateral action against authoritarian regimes (Jackson, 2020), these aspirations have not materialized. What followed was a steady marginalization of AU as more and more powers got involved in some way in the civil war. Nevertheless, it continuously searched for the opportunity to mediate the halt of fights and permanent peace (Mebtoul, 2020).

3.8. Aspirations alongside interests and ideologies

Based on the described relevance of these international actors, a further observation can be set up. The continuously evolving Libyan civil war that serves a theatre where an

⁴⁸ Here it must be noted that Qatar's isolation within the GCC did not start with Libya, but events fitted perfectly in the bigger picture.

⁴⁹ He pursued a leading role in the AL before turning to the AU. In fact, he was one of the most important supporters behind the creation of AU, which he emphasized to be needed to build on the concept of united states of Africa. The relative power and influence he held within AU still at the end of his reign was considerable.

increasing number of state actors and international organizations get involved provides the stage for clashing ideologies. This environment reminds spectators of the great debates between classical and new schools of international relations throughout the 20th century. Essentially, supporters of either side follow their own foreign policy aspirations standing on their own desired to reach target. Realists' analyses and actions pursue strategic goals probably augmenting power that involves overt or covert endeavor to influence the outcome of the conflict in an advantageous way. Both Turkey and Russia fit this characterization, even if their nature as well as rate of involvement varies. Another approach is being exercised by liberal actors that base their objectives around the responsibility behind the preservation of universal human and humanitarian rights. Germany– but initially the UK too – and the European Union at an organizational level also represent this group of stakeholders. Post-conflict commercial and trade interests did not exclusively play their part in the realist camp's calculations, it was being wide-spread considered early on (Gauthier-Villars, 2011). Notably, the Libyan-case seems to be another example that proves the superiority of realist agendas (Sullivan, 2019) over liberal interests in conflict zones.

The post Arab Spring regional order in the Middle East – that created fears about regime survival, as well as some allegedly 'failed states' where ambitious actors seek to enhance their influence – has ultimately resulted in the unification of Arab political space, in which states are not in the position to remain negligent over regional matters due to their offensive or defensive interests (Lynch, 2019). The simultaneous appearance of new challenges including civil wars, mass migration, trans-border armed groups, terrorists and insurgents and the all-embracing proxy wars necessitated this phenomenon. It became significantly harder to control cross-border movements of goods and peoples for any states. Involvement of the Gulf States as well as the Arab League provided important overt additions to the events, but utilization of local proxies by state-actors also spread out. It was this new chaotic environment that necessarily furthered the issue of state-fragmentation to the surrounding countries, hence ultimately diminishing the existing level of regional cooperation. Furthermore, schemes that were meant to enhance regional security as alternative means to regionalism (e.g., the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership or the Greater Middle East) have lost from their influence and credibility (Sever, 2019).

According to Lodgaard, the events of 2011 divided the Arab countries into three categories: the Arab spring countries (Libya, Syria, Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen) the ones that were able to push back its stream (Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE), and the ones that introduced some reforms (Kuwait, Bahrain, Morocco, Jordan) and these different types of experience also shaped regional politics (Lodgaard & Noreng, 2013). Additionally, the events of the Arab spring have led the AL to switch from its until-then non-interventionist approach inasmuch as it played a crucial role in escalating the case of Libya to the UNSC first, but later this was substituted by the actions of the UN, NATO and individual states (Sever, 2019). Importantly, a strong opposition manifested itself among member states about the consideration on the Muslim Brotherhood, which mostly circulates around a Qatari-Saudi divide and that also involved widespread media campaigns as well as strengthening military ties with external actors. Importantly though, all these events together have elevated the level of interconnectedness of the whole region and—unavoidably—of the Arab League too.

4. CONFLICTING GOALS IN WORLD POLITICS: AN ANALYSIS ON THE DYNAMICS OF THE LIBYAN COMBAT

Kenneth Waltz argued the prevalence of anarchic nature in world politics would deem states to continue to pursue their own egoistic goals. It is an argument that seems to be as relevant as ever in light of what has been expounded in the previous chapters. Indeed, the Libya civil war is not only a conflict that throughout the years became increasingly more relevant for non-domestic actors, but it also became a new stage of international confrontation. As the previous chapters also highlighted, external actors' enhanced and new waves of involvement generated new layers within the conflict itself. Throughout the coming pages, the case study analysis based on the already cited literature is going to take place.

4.1. Conflict resolution in Libya by external actors

Conflict resolution has been a thoroughly emphasized topic in Libya for the whole decade, and most certainly for a good reason. Earlier chapters already noted the military intervention, international politics and mediation related means that were relied on as part of such agendas. Also, various pieces of literature have been presented with the purpose of utilizing them for the coming analysis. Apart from effects of mediation on the longevity and endurance of combats, the coming pages will seek to scrutinize the effect of such strategies and their success.

A differentiation can be made between those state-actors that purely attempted to terminate violence and those that rather sought to alter relationships, potentially to gain influence in Libya throughout the years. If one applies Galtung's thinking, this really serves as a borderline between purely normative versus a broader—frequently hidden—set of goals sought to be achieved (Galtung, 1969). Importantly, the already discussed interests of these states in Libya do not necessarily mean they are

doomed to prefer the opposite of normative desires as far as conflict resolution is concerned. Still, their followed strategies necessarily led to consequences stemming from the latter. What is more, their actions have directly affected the resolution strategies' success of the respective IOs they are part of. The reliance of this theory for investigation purposes defines the absence of violence accompanied by pessimism and peace not necessarily through peaceful means as negative peace, while structural integration within an optimistic environment supported by peaceful means refers to positive peace. Following these definitions, it can be easily argued that there have been attempts to achieve positive peace, predominantly via IO initiatives. Precisely, even though NATO's intervention carried the attributes of negative peace efforts, it was legitimized via a UN resolution that was at the time did carry structuralist elements, e.g. the creation of post-Qadhafi governance. The level of idealism or naivety, accurate interpretation of local circumstances, and adequately designed implementation and sustainment strategy are all aspects of debate and criticism, but fundamentally speaking the UN did attempt to contain domestic violence, and state-fragmentation was surely outside of its interests. These efforts did not vanish at a later phase either, but the balance between UN-led versus state-cultivated peace processes gradually leaned more towards the latter as the years passed, which already was exemplified by the prominent roles certain individual states had in the establishment of the GNA itself.

4.1.1. European Union

The European Union's related weaknesses have been highlighted before, but certainly it pursued to bring about positive peace in the presence of its institutional burdens. The significant scale of contributions of certain major member states to the NATO bombings will remain a topic of debate mostly due to questions on proportionality, but humanitarian motives surely had vital share behind their input. An interesting angle can be taken when evaluating the Arab League's initial role insofar as the IO-level attitude was the support of anti-Qadhafi intervention but also an opposition to bombings, which later developed into a palpable division among member states having contrasting preferences over the outcome that essentially strangled even the seemingly normative peace initiatives, like the Cairo Declaration. Arguably, it was the Arab League's conflict resolution efforts that—whatever true form they existed—were overshadowed the most by member state competition out of the five investigated IOs. Last but not least, the

African Union was different by reasons of obvious security, economic and political interests in Libya carrying higher significance for the AU than most other IOs discussed. However, the AU's role is one of shrinking weight and significance inasmuch as the originally zealous constructive approach relied on fully non-violent means that were countered by anti-establishment domestic groups that sensing the coming military support of external parties were reluctant to get involved in AU-initiated conflict-management processes. This normative angle taken on was constantly pushed back as the AU was steadily losing significance in Libya.

4.1.2. State-level trends

Scrutinizing state-level stances, the previous chapters have adequately presented how many of the participating states have attempted to alter domestic developments in a favorable manner. Russia for instance has used Haftar to gain influence and for a few years, France was also involved in pro-Haftar actions. There were states on the other hand that got involved in a similar manner as a result of regional rivalry and in response to their challengers' actions. Turkey is the best example- with its direct intervention at the end of the examined period. Many of the AL member states have also followed covert agendas to contain development they interpreted as potentially dangerous, which again was part of an escalation process that further contributed to domestic fragmentation thereby decreasing chances of positive peace. There was on the other hand Italy that showed no signs of selfish interests and took measures at structural integration at tribal level signaling a good conceptualization of local affairs but more importantly showing up as a proponent of positive peace. An ambitious enterprise was taken on by Germany that sought to achieve compromise via the most comprehensive mediation strategy of all, again seeking positive peace without getting directly involved in Libya. To summarize, after the first phase of the conflict in Libya, there have been efforts on an IO-level to achieve positive peace but due to domestic tension and unsatisfactory agreement, as well as support by external actors, these did not succeed. Subsequently, the appearance of an increasing number of these external state actors created an environment in which competition among non-state domestic groups fueled by external resources could only result in occasional ceasefires, but a structural reformation only existed in the form of temporary governments with questionable and frequently contested support. In Libya, an environment of negative peace developed.

4.1.3. Relying upon the literature

Following the ideas of Bercovitch, it was argued that certain factors need to be present in order to have good chances at succeeding in conflict management (Bercovitch, et al., 1991). The first of these is the endurance of fights that of course was the case in Libya as up until the end of the investigated period, almost a decade has passed since the first riots broke out in Benghazi and with the exception of short truces, challenging local militias, struggle between proponents of the various governments as well as tribal affiliations, extended by a fairly intense fights throughout the couple of last years characterized this era. The second point is the insufficient efforts by the stakeholders, which is a bit of a vague concept due to difficulties to measure sufficiency. Nevertheless, if we are to attempt, what may be noted is that in the first period after the removal of Qadhafi, efforts focused on finding an acceptable alignment failed due to the fundamentally opposing views of stakeholders. There existed a high fluctuation of incumbent officers that were all unable to compromise. The eventual existence of two separate governments also highlighted the different views mostly between West and East, but at lower levels as well. Later, high-level efforts primarily concentrated on gaining bigger control, compromises lost from their relevance. Even the occasional truces were only used to restrengthen positions of militias. As the outside actors' efforts was already presented previously, in total those also did not bring about the sufficient means for peace. A general issue was exactly related to the third point, referring to the fact that standpoints were not approaching sufficiently due to the circumstances, even if some sort of openness was visible at certain stages. However, no potent conflict management strategy was initiated by the end of the research period, which according to this theory was predominantly the result of insufficient efforts by stakeholders and potentially the lack of approaching standpoints.

What Crocker argued about the potentially mediation-hindering obstacles (Crocker, et al., 2004) can be perfectly connected to these last points since he identified the relationship between the lack of confidence and the openness to political settlement. This might have been potentially the most important factor in Libya throughout the years. When we are talking about confidence of local stakeholders, what we really mean is a combination of military, financial, political, logistical and intelligence capacity of these actors that provide them the means to pursue their ambitions. In the lack of these, their

power—the source of their confidence—would also be marginal. But Libya has been a war-torn country over these years that has temporarily lost a great share of its incomes that by itself would have generated a willingness to compromise environment, had it not been to the immense external support discussed previously. Had these domestic actors been in contact with a single outer master, their opportunities would have been decisively dependent, and their confidence would have been similarly low, but it was not the case. The abundance of external actors with proxy relationships in Libya was significantly increasing, which not only empowered these local actors with greater independence, but it also helped them to occasionally outplay their master. This was a clear sign of confidence that hindered the success of any political settlement and peace negotiation while contributing to the continuation of violent actions. Ironically, many of the state-actors have led mediation initiatives resulting in a “forum shopping” environment that further weakened the will to settle. Literally every conference that was organized in the name of conflict resolution and that was concluded unsuccessfully can be explained via this phenomenon, it is enough to mention Haftar’s hasty exit from the Moscow conference, the inability of organizing another in Rome, as well as the lack of tangible improvement of conditions after any of them. Arguably there would have been a point when the GNA could have proved more willing to compromise prior to more stressed Turkish involvement, but that will remain unanswered since the intervention did occur, which fundamentally changed the status quo of the GNA. Having said this, the need of Tripoli was manifested by its agreement to sign the maritime agreement with Ankara, something that it rejected months before.

There have also been various views shared on the indicator of success in relation to conflict resolution. Total ceasefire was unfortunately not present as we could only mention partial and temporary phases of settlement. The alteration in stakeholders’ satisfaction (Kleiboer, 1996) is a more interesting topic though to explore. This is in close relation to the previously mentioned openness factor, but it also roots back to classical interpretations of conflict resolution. In Libya this could mostly be witnessed in inter-tribal relationships, where aspirations lasted until tribal borders and strikes on sovereignty within own territories was a generally shared characteristic. On the other hand, lack of satisfaction from external actors’ side can easily be proven. The advancement of Wagner group until South of Tripoli can be interpreted as a clear sign of intentions from a Russian

point of view, while the French change of strategy amid of Turkish intervention represented an abandonment of an until then followed but limitedly advantageous agenda. Most probably Egypt was among the most satisfied external actors at the time when the LNA was advancing to the West. Nevertheless, this was soon endangered once Haftar was pushed back. It seems that throughout the years, foreign parties' approach to an immediate halt of combat depended on the momentarily status quo on the axis of opportunities and risks.

If we were to measure success based on improvements of human rights, self-determination and democratic participation indicating conditions—as put forward by Stern and Druckman—, we would reach the most pessimistic view on resolution efforts. Firstly, because democratic participation would necessitate the presence of single government and its election, but this remained a distant dream throughout the whole decade. Self-determination did play a part in the happenings on the already mentioned local levels, but within this context, it could hardly be seen as a positive attribute, not to mention success. Thirdly, human rights conditions were comprised amongst the most serious shortcomings of any attempt at improvement of conditions. Last but not least, if we apply the division between short and long-term goals put forward by Woodrow and Chigas, a certain level of success can be credited to all those mediators, who were able to accommodate a truce—however short that may have been—thereby contributing to at least a temporary easing of harsh conditions of civil population e.g., in Tripoli. Having said this, long-term and comprehensive success can clearly not be identified in this respect either.

There exists palpable proof that a quantifiable decrease in violence, which was identified as the root of conflict by Hoffman did not materialize in Libya throughout the years. Similar atrocities have happened, and violence was on a constant high level resulting in exceedingly poor living conditions for domestic population as well as for migrants. The following examples represent only a small segment of events that in this sense suggest that the conflict resolution efforts did not provide meaningful success due to the occurrence of these below happenings.

Cases from as early as 2011 included storming a hospital by militias from Zintan to kill a single man that ended with a three our long battle resulting in the loss of lives of many innocent civilians (Karadsheh, 2011) as well as countless inter-tribal

clashes with advanced weaponry significantly damaging national infrastructure (Holmes, 2011) including the Tripoli international airport (Stephen, 2011). These actions were greatly facilitated by the immense number of weapons at the disposal of population, most notably brigades with opposing views. It was a vendetta-like environment where strike was followed by counterstrike oftentimes at the expense of innocent lives (Al Jazeera, 2011). As part of a long list of such occurrences, countless cases of kidnapping, torture and intimidation (Holmes, 2012) accompanied by intensifying tension have led humanitarian NGOs reluctant to aid the cause of further tortures to suspend their activities (CNN, 2012). Raids on refugee camps (Al Jazeera, 2012) occasionally including assaults on refugees by militias (Kington, 2012), looting of shops, public shootings and assassinations (BBC, 2012), car bombings (Robertson, et al., 2012), filming and posting of the demolition of mosques on the internet (BBC, 2012) disputes over the control of smuggle routes ending with massacres (Reuters, 2012), attack on workers of international oil companies operating in the country and resulting in the termination of the operations of related facilities (Fornaji, 2012), strengthening of terrorist organizations operating in the country manifested by the ability to carry out plots against highly important targets such as the French embassy in Tripoli (Al Jazeera, 2013) were ordinary characteristics of these years, and of course the killing of US Ambassador Christopher Stevens must also be mentioned.

Later, as Haftar appeared on the ground and claimed he was going to swipe out terrorist groups from the country, the number of atrocities still did not decrease. Reports have been presented proving that war crimes, crimes against humanity and a wide range of violent acts have been committed in Libya around the time against locals and migrants alike by domestic militias and brigades on the one hand, foreign fighters and mercenaries on the other (UNHRC, 2021). Distraction of national infrastructure and a high number of civilian casualties combined with extremely poor conditions in health-care—especially due to the siege of Tripoli—did not disappear according to the UN study based on various documents as well as more than 150 interviews. Considering all these, the notion of Hoffman indeed carries relevance on the limited rate of success behind conflict resolution in Libya.

Another applicable angle is the one put forward by Chaban related to subjective and objective success, where the first represents perceptions on reaching a

given goal, while the latter and more controversial refers to reaching peace agreements. Since such agreements were only temporary and—as it was discussed—they were immensely dependent on other factors, it can be concluded that the objective success of Libyan conflict resolution was fairly low. Relying on an empirical way for measuring international mediation's success then leads us to a perception-based scale that once again shows worrying results. NATO was successful in aiding the removal of Qadhafi and eliminating some of his supporters, but as the upper paragraph also proves, it did not resolve the strain. The UN did have a major role in the transformation of the country's political structure, but it was also not able to provide a government accepted by the necessary majority. The EU's biggest role was in opposing humanitarian catastrophes in the Mediterranean, while the AL's limitations and the AU's powerless efforts in the international arena have also been mentioned earlier. Thus, success cannot be concluded neither on an objective, nor on a subjective perception.

It appears so that the domestically-rooted and without a doubt escalating conflict in Libya which came to the fore with the Arab spring-generated flows—but that had heritages stemming back to a lot earlier years—have resulted in an unprecedented level of domestic violence in the country that was first and foremost aided by an exceedingly fragmented and highly armed population and was unable to be resolved by the standards of any theories by any IO, state or non-state actor. Common sense dictates the examination of constituents when flaws in the performance of a body are inspected. In this context, it means member states of IOs are in need of deeper investigation to reveal where their true interests lie. Chapter 3 was thoroughly presenting these actors' role and relevance in Libya, and it could be seen that it was the opposite of normative policies that prevailed. Many of the investigated states' cases proved that soft and hard power strategies were drawn to prioritize a self-interested set of regional priorities. In a perfect harmony with Dal's views on a “holistic multilateral approach”, for these states, mediation, peacekeeping, and development cooperation efforts were clearly meant to represent them as peace brokers, while their real interests-motivated actions exactly countered the chance of conflict resolution. Even though there existed “honest brokers” in these IOs as a result of normative motivations as well as security related ones (e.g., regional actors endangered by the consequences of spillover effects of negative externalities), they were virtually oppressed.

The fact that they were able to do so suggests limitations of regime theory within this particular context. If we are to take IOs as regimes that include a set of members that form an alliance alongside commonly shared views and interests and that set rational standards for behavior requiring unilateral compliance of members while ensuring the opposite scenario with punishment, it seems clear that in Libya, these IOs as regimes failed and their preventive mechanisms meant to avoid incoherence proved insufficient. It appears clear that retaliation strategies were either not in place or were not seen as sufficient threat by these states, which provided room for exploitations eventually hindering the otherwise officially common goals. Most certainly, the lack of compliance among these regime members was not a universally shared characteristic but those member states mentioned could trigger failure through their actions. What the Libya case proved was that the discussed regimes were inefficient with their conflict resolution aspirations because of in compliance attested by some members. Furthermore, it proves that assuming declared goals of these states as the real ones by any party was fatal mistake. And while estimating the dynamics behind intra-organizational trends of compliance would expand this work too wide in scope, the upper analysis proves the negative effect that the selected actors' behavioral tendencies had on the IOs conflict resolution agendas.

4.2. The Libyan proxy war: what stems from the literature

The Libyan case provides the practical advantages for the researcher to evaluate accuracy of the established theories of proxy warfare, as well as to highlight areas where it does not align with them. Due to the many mysteries regarding the application of proxies, the deep scrutiny of any real cases provides additional value to the field. Because of the numerous advantages discussed in the literature review, it seems to be a fair estimation that proxy wars will be one of the main kinds in the future of warfare, but current tendencies tend to suggest that they are already among the primary sorts today. They provide room to refute Oye's argumentation on the retaliation mechanisms of international regimes. These have failed to serve as deterrent factors in response to actual exploitations in the Libya case. On the other hand, political weight of certain regime members inevitably seems to have influenced intra-alliance processes. They could slow

down bureaucracy or divert attention in a favorable manner occasionally jeopardizing the regime's proposed agenda i.e. to attempt conflict resolution.

The explanation on the development of proxy environments by Hinnebusch seems to be shockingly accurate inasmuch as the domestic unrest with mass protests that most likely would not have led to a change of government was followed by an external intervention that took place in Libya backing up anti-establishment militias, which eventually led to a situation where various parties started to receive additional sources to pursue their resist. This immensely contributed to the escalation of what started out to be a domestic revolution and has created a paradox situation where foreign actors possessed greater influence on developments than domestic ones. Influence of domestic stakeholders was tied to the number of foreign supporters; hence at the time it was more limited than at later stages where the abundance of foreign supply created an environment the proxies could easily exploit. In some instances, though, proxies became exceedingly vulnerable and dependent on their masters (most notably Haftar). An applicable formula in this case study was that the less patrons these proxies had, the more dependent they were on them and more defenseless they proved. Henceforth, their de facto room for movement was dependent on their masters' preferred and uncoordinated unilateral support that significantly outlived the revolution. "What began as a degree of foreign political backing to embolden local actors to impose their own agendas relapsed into full-fledged military support by mid-2014" (Badi, 2020). If the status quo sustained and the master opted to uphold the connection with its proxy, it would continue to receive support (Murray, 2015). However, if due to the failure of the proxy to live up to the expectations, or if the master faced unexpected challenges, this connection could easily be terminated. This was triggered by a reevaluation of risks by the patron or occasionally a change of strategy whereby the desired goal might have been achieved through alternative means. In any way, the consequences for the pawn under these circumstances could have been catastrophic as it would have meant a loss of indispensable support, and a need to open negotiations while surely occupying the lower ground. For this reason, Libyan local proxies' approach in most of such cases was a zero-sum game⁵⁰, while for their masters, it was mostly not. But again, proxies' influence over their masters in terms of the whole

⁵⁰ In case they have single or low number of patrons.

investigated period was greater than the other way around mostly due to the post 2016 events. “Because of the diverse nature of Libya’s militias, their goals and patronage by other national and foreign powers, it will be extremely difficult either to accommodate or remove them into any post-conflict Libyan political system and economy” (Burton, 2020). The below table is meant to present some of the proven connections between patrons and pawns.

Table 8
Proven External Support provided to a selection of local armed groups⁵¹

Armed Groups	Support received from
106th LNA Brigade	Russia, France, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Egypt
6th LNA Brigade	UAE
al-Mahjub Brigade	Qatar, USA
Benghazi Defense Brigades	Qatar, Turkey
Emad Trabelsi's Brigades	France, UAE
Revolutionary Battalion	Saudi Arabia, France, UAE
Salafi Security Deterrence Force	Saudi Arabia, France, UAE
Subul al-Salam	Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Sudan

Another formula that seems perfectly applicable in our case study is the one put forward by Fox since his argumentation on the primary role of political interests in governing all limited time-framed military and other form of alignment among masters and patrons as well as the relationship between them which indeed seemed to have been dominated by a running clock clearly highlights an inconsistent connection influenced above everything else by the changing political wind. Relationship between patrons and pawns in Libya followed a fluctuating and constantly changing pattern, which was understandable given the fact that both parties sought to receive tangible benefits but could only do so if the other party continued to prove its value, otherwise the relationship would be terminated. Following the same rationale, the most frequent scenario that prevailed in Libya and oftentimes led to an alteration within such a relationship was the

⁵¹ Table created by the author based on the work of Harchaoui and Lazib in *Proxy War Dynamics in Libya* (Harchaoui & Lazib, 2019)

strengthening of a proxy—which in any case was the result of multiple support it received besides other strengths it possessed on the ground—after which the nature of the given relationship also altered provided by the increased potential of the proxy actor to succeed via maneuvering among the numerous suppliers while also carrying out the essential military, etc. success. The most obvious instance of this pattern was the immediate change in the battlefield effectiveness of the Haftar-led LNA after receiving French military support (Bensimon, et al., 2016), Emirati and Egyptian weapons (Lewis, 2017) combined with a comprehensive Russian backing (Greenberg, 2019) combined have provided the significant push to the General's operations that shortly after resulted in the taking of Benghazi, fundamental parts of national infrastructure and later to the march towards Tripoli. The other end of this same example started at the end of the investigated period when the siege of Tripoli did not provide success and some of the external support ceased to flow to the LNA. Regardless of the occasional ability of proxies to outplay their masters, foreign support was needed to break gridlocks.

Having elaborated on that, it was also mentioned earlier that Fox provided the two models with which the nature of relationship could be characterized. Considering the case study of this work, these models appear to be tools of extreme characterization since they are in sharp contrast to each other and do not provide a middle, transitional ground. As the upper discussed also proves, the nature of relationship between parties in Libya was not in a constant state, rather a continuously changing dependence frequently in both directions. Henceforth, the exploitative model referring to a proxy's total reliance on its master thereby granting the latter full influence seems inappropriate, just as much as the transactional model—drawing up an environment with an exceedingly great level of independence of proxies not relying on masters to succeed—can also not be considered an adequate picture of Libya reflecting on the whole period. There were short periods where both have had relevance but in general this was not the case. An accurate formula through merging these would be an *intermediate model* that characterizes the relationship between proxy and master through acknowledging the prominent role of local proxies, but which also recognizes the need from masters to provide the decisive support in an environment full of such proxy relationships.

The work of Konyukhovskiy and Grigoriadis on conflict resolution in proxy environments suggested that the simultaneous decrease of levels of confrontation could

only serve short-term success that would eventually result in another confrontation thereby maintaining the conflict itself. In Libya, practically every truce preceding peace-conferences or lower-level alignments could be cited as an example. On the other hand, the model of proxy conflict also provides the term of positive involvement referring to at least partial matching of interests among parties. This of course could be seen imperative for the establishment of any proxy relationship but as that evolves, it is necessary to maintain the equilibrium in order to avoid negative involvement when distance between master and pawn increases to such an extent that the party with lower interest exits. Such cases have surely been present in Libya. For instance, reports show that at least 21 brigades have joined the LNA's quest to take Derna and while these were predominantly aided by Egypt and the UAE, many of them have not continued the road to Tripoli and so they were not receiving external backing later (Pack, 2019). Furthermore, Haftar's estimation also can be a good example since in 2017 he was elevated having received an official invitation by French President Emanuel Macron followed by a visit to Italy that also signaled that Western governments were open to disregard the General's crimes committed at home and could identify him as a vital factor (Lacher, 2020), while subsequent sign of incapability to unite sufficient size of groups have clearly dispersed this perception and with that, his backing and importance suffered immensely.

This of course should not come as a surprise. In fact, Roberta Goren has revealed as early as 1984 that a state interfering in another's domestic affairs through proxies surely has a set of desired goals not necessarily in alignment with those of the proxy (Goren, 1984). However, the case of Haftar shows as well that even if proxies are aware of these realities, their situation dictates a significantly smaller room for movement, and they have to take their opportunities.

What Groh ascertains about the multiple reasons behind the foreign state-initiated indirect intervention's motivations to have bigger influence on the outcome of intrastate conflict indeed seems rational, and a few points must be mentioned in relation to the Libya context. First and foremost, the connection between direct intervention and escalation appears to be accurate, even if in this context we are primarily talking about a collection of states' actions as part of an IO-led intervention. Regardless of the ambitions motivated by R2P as well as those that were not, violent actions amongst an increasing number of militias clearly exemplified this. Foreign direct military intervention in Libya clearly

contributed to the further escalation. Nevertheless, it must also be mentioned that indirect interventions have had a similar effect. Their intensity may have been lower than in the case of Unified Protector, but due to their endurance, externally backed covert military interventions have also provided an addition to at least maintaining the fights, if not to conflict-escalation. The comprehensive scrutiny of this point might have required a non-IO-organized direct intervention from multiple states but that did not occur. Having said that, direct Turkish involvement at minimum altered perceptions on influence in Libya, which in the opinion of the writer of these lines had some subsequent effects on de-escalation.

His second point about the causality between the level of domestic support and sustainability of external intervention is probably the most universally accepted and shared argument within proxy warfare literature, but at this point it needs to be noted that there may be a different sensitivity in this context for states operating with a Western type of democracy and for others, which can manifest in non-military involvement as well. For instance, the succeeding Italian governments occasionally had to cope with domestic pressure stemming from perceivably great funds invested in Libya, even though this conflict's resolution was a primary security interest of Italy. Similarly, the UK proportionately speaking provided one of the greatest contributions to the NATO intervention (Goulter, 2015), but its scale of intervention has been on a constant decline afterwards due to a reprioritization that already effected the level of aid it provided to Libya (Littlejohn, 2021). In contrast, for many other external states that have intervened either as part of Unified Protector or via other instances, such challenges have not been experienced (i.e., the Gulf states or Russia). Also, even in presence of the already mentioned financial difficulties in Turkey, a direct intervention was feasible and necessary by the measurement of Ankara. Hence, sustainability of any sort of intervention in Libya was influenced by a different extent for different states. Additionally, various means of aid, political support towards the Tripoli-based government and Operation Sofia were among the few internationally supported forms of intervention, while negative statements by leading politicians condemning various scandals of covert forms of engagement by state-actors certainly reflected the lack of international support towards those forms of intervention.

Finally, Turkish military intervention qualified as what Groh labelled as an “in it to win it” intervention inasmuch as it has provided significant support to the GNA-backing militias after most likely having measured that without such, these groups would have been defeated. This categorization seems adequate also because it supports that such an intervention can materialize in the absence of a rival external actor’s similar involvement. The second scenario is what seems to have covered the Russian stance in a broader geostrategic sense since the “holding action attitude” refers to an intervention executed as a result of sufficiently high stakes combined with a low chance of total success in Libya. In other words, Ankara is a regional rival to Moscow not only in Libya but in Syria as well and even though a direct involvement by Turkey definitely changed the status quo and Russia was not going to perform a similar action—especially on the opposing side of a UN-recognized government—it could still benefit from it by pursuing a secondary goal: absorbing Turkish resources at a fairly low cost. This is also in perfect alignment with the notion of “feeding the chaos” as by deploying foreign and Russian mercenaries, a rival’s ability to increase its influence can be contained while also keeping the risks low. The lack of reliance on Haftar’s triumph in challenging a rival only further manifests the applicability of this theory.

Another reasonable point would be the concept of goals and risks, the costs and benefits ratio to be measured prior to any form of intervention by external powers in Libya. By the end of the examined period, a sufficiently high perception of these have led to an elevated involvement for Turkey that evaluated the potential risks fairly low compared to the potential gains before intervening. The other example has to be Egypt which declared it would promptly react to any hostile-deemed troops’ marching close enough to its border potentially to consolidate its power and thereby enhancing the risks. A direct confrontation between these two was hardly ever in alignment with either parties’ scale of acceptable risks. On the other hand, when risks of any nature tendentiously prevailed over stakes, it suggested a non-security composed set of stakes that occasionally resulted in a change of approach. France’s role may prove to be a fitting example as the Libya strategy of Paris during the past years relied mostly on the maximization of influence over the country’s energy sector, but when circumstances altered, it realized that these ambitions may be best served through the GNA. What all this tries to imply is that in such an environment, stakes and risks may constantly change that is also suggested

by the level of involvement of foreign parties. Proxies are preferred options due to the many benefits they may carry, but when stakes and risks get especially high, that increases the likelihood of conventional involvement that is reflected in the selected case study of this work too.

This also supports Groh's observation regarding states' motives to be engaged. The individual member states' perceived actions clearly showed intention to control the outcome. Proxies served as tools in the quest for reaching the desired outcome in the case of every applicant. This eventually led to a spiral effect, where even honest mediation efforts failed partially because domestic actors were not willing to negotiate since they perceived there was a good chance to claim absolute victory. Importantly from the perspective of this work, this well-traceable tendency in Libya directly contributed to the lack of settlement. Periodic truces were only utilized by the parties to regain and strengthen their positions through showing fake signs of willingness to settle as part of roundtable sessions and internationally mediated conferences. None of these events were concluded with palpable pieces of development, even those that involved multiple leading politicians of states.

4.3. What triggers the magnitude of influence?

As it was argued by critics of *regime theory*, international organizations are always going to be dominated by the most influential states. The Libya case once again prove that efficiency of cooperation is fatally harmed when standards of behavior are not harmonized among members and there are no measures in place against all sorts of exploitations. In this context, this would mean that the selected five international organizations' conflict resolution strategies were predominantly affected by the most influential states. Having already argued that those agendas are failing, the rational explanation behind could be that these most influential states are hindering resolution efforts. Influence is a subjective term that has many interpretations, and it has been the topic of research for many fields. A general ascertainment is that the scale of involvement does not necessarily have a positive impact on the magnitude of influence. On the other hand, higher risks and stakes are likely to trigger higher involvement. As Máté Szalai proved, influence of states within given cases can depend on various factors potentially leading up to surprising scenarios (Szalai, 2017). Economic, military or other relative and

absolute power are definitely important measures for any state, but their exclusive presence in itself is not guarantee of success. The classic example usually quoted here is Qatar that lacks some characteristics of a powerful state in the conventional terms but still manages to compensate via other soft means to facilitate oftentimes successfully its enforcement of will (Brannagan & Giulianotti, 2014). This particular example has also manifested in Libya as the relevant chapter showed.

While the level of involvement in itself might not be able to determine the scale of success, it is a useful indicator of states' interests. It has long been argued in security studies and international relations that higher stakes require swift and prompt response. In this context, the following two tables (9 and 10) set out to present the earlier mentioned perceived and real interests as well as the type of involvement and support that took place in Libya. The central notion of this is to highlight those factors that hindered IOs conflict resolution strategies. Table 9 was designed to accommodate the diverse selection of proven and tangible means of backing served to any Libyan parties by foreign states. Here, differentiation is made amongst various categories including any sort of financial contribution to domestic actors, training of militias, their supply with weapons or any equipment, proven record of intelligence sharing, any form of military intervention (e.g. aerial, mercenaries or regular troops on the ground), as well as diplomatic efforts mostly referring to prominent efforts made on the field of mediation.

Table 9
Means of states' support to proxies in Libya

States	Financial	Training	Equipment / Weapons	Intelligence	Military Intervention	Diplomacy
Russia	+	+	+	+	+	+
Turkey	—	+	+	+	+	+
Italy	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
France	—	—	+	+	+	+
Germany	—	—	—	—	—	+
UK	—	—	—	—	—	+
Denmark	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Norway	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sweden	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Spain	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Greece	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Netherlands	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Belgium	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
China	—	—	+	—	—	—
USA	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Canada	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Egypt	—	—	+	+	—	+
UAE	+	+	+	+	+	+
Jordan	—	+	+	—	—	+
Saudi Arabia	+	—	—	—	—	—
Qatar	+	+	+	—	—	+

If we are to apply the theory of balance of threat in connection to these regimes' unsuccessful conflict resolution efforts, the lack of threat perceived from other states indeed seemed to have applied. France, for example, was able to pursue its ambitions that were in sharp contrast to EU or UN goals as long as the LNA and Haftar's group of supporters seemed to have been the most potent choice in Libya, but by the time their march stalled and slowly was starting to be pushed back, French actions did not follow a clear pattern also partially because of the enhanced Turkish influence over the GNA. Following the rationale behind BoT, it was an increased sense of threat—of losing from relative regional influence as well as access to vital natural resources—that forced Paris to comply more with IO agendas as compared to its earlier practices. Another example that reflects a tendency change in security related threat was that of Egypt that for sure was deeply interested in the events of Libya due to geographic realities, but its level of involvement has not reflected the real stakes for quite a while. For sure, various terrorist and insurgent groups like Ansar al-Sharia or Daesh meant a challenge for both Libya and Egypt, but the palpable change in stakes for Egypt commenced with the Turkish appearance, which has led to a so far unforeseen solid diplomatic unity in the AL with the Cairo Declaration, as well as to a more emphasized military “red-line” from Egypt's

side. In this sense, the accuracy of Walt's conclusion on alliance-forming of strong and weak states alongside a shared sense of outside threat of relative or absolute power is justified via the Libya example as several cases have shown that there was a direct connection between rise of threats and strengthening of alliances among already existing, but in a way insufficiently harmonized IOs.

What the previous chapter discussed is essentially related to this lack of harmony amongst actors and this is in connection with a theory called the balance of interests. Precisely, negative effects stemming from intra-regime rivalries in member states' interests was a decisive factor throughout the years and the above-mentioned compliance with regime agendas on conflict resolution were much better followed at times of better-balanced interests. For example, albeit the GNA was the internationally recognized government and Turkey—for reasons of geopolitical influence and access to hydrocarbon resources—opted for an enhanced level of involvement supporting it, that has directly led to a greater level of cooperation between EU members as France started to officially label Ankara's actions as illegit that harmed Greek sovereignty. At the same time these actions also represented a divide of interests between these same states in a NATO or UN context. The coming section are going to summarize the various categories of interests of these actors that have been identified over the years.

The evolution of the past decade's Russian involvement in Libya – with the extension of historic ties – enabled the revelation of a fairly wide-scale of interests predominantly concentrating on the geopolitical and commercial aspects while neglecting any signs suggesting ideological interests. The related toolset of Moscow contained a proportionately covert, but wide spectrum of means that have been well-synchronized especially in the post-2015 period. The timeline of Haftar's military advancement provides an accurate indicator on the relative magnitude and effectiveness of these as compared to other foreign involvement. Naturally, this tendency gains the utmost relevance within a UN conflict resolution context. Certainly, as one of the permanent SC members, Russia's influence can be characterized outstanding and if that is the case, it's misalignment with other regime members on the Libya strategy is a direct cause behind the struggle.

The role of European countries is of course a different matter considering the intra-organizational lack of political coherence that reached beyond the Libyan case but that had significant implications on it too. Out of those states with perceivably visible interests, the oil and gas sectors were of importance to all that had a related major corporation. Investments and ideological motives were not meaningful characteristics, but several states have shown regional geopolitical aspirations. The single unilaterally shared aspect was of course related to migration given its role in contemporary European agenda. Having elaborated on this, the only proven applier of proxy was France. This individually taken on covert strategy was necessitated by the more ambitious geopolitical goals as compared to the regime allies and involved an immensely diverse and oftentimes tangible support provided in favor of the local agents.

Nevertheless, the most interesting regime in terms of involvement seems to have been the Arab League that had a similarly disproportionate internal division, but which also contained a divide amongst means of support. Precisely, due to member states' obvious interests in favorable developments within the oil market, the constantly changing status of Libyan fields and facilities was one of the concerns. Geopolitical and migration related interest were only applicable in a limited number of cases, but the ideological questions⁵² were monitored closely by all members. This latter actually fueled internal division due to Qatar's opposing views. Nevertheless, the small state used effectively its non-military arsenal at disposal. On the other hand, there was a perceivable segregation of tasks at the other branch of the regime. Specifically, apart from the UAE's extensive involvement that included all investigated means, it also pertained to Saudi financial, Jordanian weapon supply and Egyptian training while almost all parties utilized their diplomatic tools.

⁵² Around the issue of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Table 10
Interests of foreign actors in Libya

States	Hydrocarbon Sector	Infrastructure & Investments	Military base & Power Projection	Geopolitics	Ideology	Migration
Russia	+	+	+	+	—	—
Turkey	+	+	+	+	+	—
Italy	+	—	—	—	—	+
France	+	—	—	+	—	+
Germany	—	—	—	—	—	+
UK	+	—	—	—	—	+
Denmark	—	—	—	—	—	+
Norway	—	—	—	—	—	+
Sweden	—	—	—	—	—	+
Spain	+	+	—	+	—	+
Greece	+	—	—	+	—	+
Netherlands	+	—	—	—	—	+
Belgium	—	—	—	—	—	+
China	+	+	—	—	—	—
USA	—	—	—	—	—	—
Canada	—	—	—	—	—	—
Egypt	+	+	—	+	+	+
UAE	+	+	—	+	+	—
Jordan	—	—	—	—	+	—
Saudi Arabia	+	—	—	—	+	—
Qatar	—	—	—	—	+	—

The purpose of the above table is to visually represent tendencies of foreign states' interests within Libya. This is a state and field of interest-based comparison that sets out to highlight what aspects played the biggest role behind any form of intervention. Normative motivations do not represent part of this section as those are part of every state's official agenda and the here listed categories are believed to be more accurate in terms of measurement of real interests. The first column refers to any potential deals an actor sought with the Libyan party in relation to crude oil or natural gas trade. These of course have had historic experience, but any steps made by the investigated states' side is also within scope. The next category is about construction and reconstruction of state infrastructure as well as investments by those same states. The third category is meant to highlight those actors that have had military bases in Libya potentially due to power projection purposes. Following this comes geopolitics that includes all the earlier mentioned regional disputes or challenges among the external parties. Then, ideology is listed as it was an important matter for a certain group of actors. Finally, migration is the last category that cannot be neglected in light of the past decade's happenings.

4.4. The new UN peace roadmap and its major contributors

As part of the events having occurred after the end of the examined period, General Haftar was meaningfully challenged by the intensified Turkish presence, and even in spite of the further enhancement of external support he was receiving—in the form of UAE provided anti-drone missile system, as well as jet fuel (The New Arab, 2020)—at the time to counter the imminent threat, he was slowly being pushed back and had to eventually give up the siege of Tripoli in June 2020. Haftar then attempted to broker a ceasefire and Egypt was willing to mediate that but having sensed the importance of the moment, these efforts were denied by the GNA, which continued its offense that was hit hard by LNA forces holding Sirte. As the epicentrum of opposition was strengthening around the Misrata and Sirte line, Egypt has taken on a more emphatic stance and threatened to directly intervene upon any occurrence of taking the city of Sirte with Turkish support. At the peak of an exceedingly tense situation involving an increasing number of regional actors, ceasefire was agreed by both the GNA and LNA, but there were numerous stakeholders, including Haftar himself, who rejected it. Simultaneously, anti-corruption protests have commenced in several cities controlled by the GNA and as part of one of these events in Tripoli, many protesters have been injured and abducted by soldiers of the UN-supported government. As protests were further spreading to the East, Benghazi and Tobruk also witnessed such events ultimately leading up to the resignation of the House of Representatives that was followed by similar actions of the Tripoli-based government.

This was a unique moment in modern Libyan history as nation-wide dissatisfaction with leading figures of both West and East appeared to be a characteristic shared among various tribes and groups regardless of their stance. The Haftar-led group's ambitions were significantly crashed by the events of mid-2020 while it became clear to Western stakeholders that the power necessary to take Eastern and Central Libyan territories and to effectively build up influence there was not at their disposal. Furthermore, a significant difference as compared to the earlier phases of the conflict existed in terms of the awareness around competing external actors and their negative effects.

A UN-mediated permanent ceasefire that was agreed upon by both major parties was reached on 23 October 2020 in Geneva and perceivably speaking, this was

truly more effective as compared to previous attempts as it predominantly involved non-military means of engagement including the continuation of earlier terminated diplomatic ties (e.g. between Egypt and the GNA) as well as directly expressed gestures from numerous external parties including Turkey, France, the US, the UK, Italy, Germany and Russia. This was greatly aided by the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum (LPDF), which started at the end of 2020 and that involved a wide range of domestic stakeholders—altogether 74 delegates from the rival groups extended by a few UN-picked independent members—with the eventual goal of creating the required nation-wide legitimacy for a single unified government and restoring sovereignty.

The next milestone in the peace process was the successful establishment of the new interim unity government—including a business man from Misrata, Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah while Mohamed al-Menfi from the East became the President of the Presidential Council—which was conducted in an unprecedentedly transparent manner thereby minimizing the weight of critical voices that otherwise would have easily spread out given the close result among contenders (International Crisis Group, 2021). This provided the fundament of the later political dialogue, and it granted the interim government a positive scale of national recognition while the subsequent sequence of meetings conducted by members of the government with leading external figures carried a symbolic recognition at such a sensitive moment. Also, the UN has implemented a ceasefire monitoring mechanism that was intended to force every stakeholder to live up to the expectations and there was an increasing cooperation from the side of the EU too. Additionally, the expectations of hardly gained recognition was somewhat eased thanks to the country-wide interests and reputation of Dbeibah as well as by the fact that Menfi originated from the same tribe as probably the greatest national hero: Omar al-Mukhtar, the *lion of the desert*.

As part of these events, General Haftar's influence and recognition declined palpably. The candidate he supported throughout the election process of the interim government has been defeated already at the first round and despite his initial rejection of other candidates, he had to show visible support to the Presidency Council. General elections were set for 24 December 2021, but challenges and unanswered questions were still out there, and they fell into the contexts of legislative, executive, judicial, financial, political, and administrative matters. Many questioned the feasibility of having been able

to resolve all these issues over the course of only 9 months alongside the UN supported roadmap and suggested that the work should be continued for at least two more years to sufficiently consolidate processes—which at the time more than ever seemed to be working—and to recover more from the past decade’s nation-damaging effects (International Crisis Group, 2021). The most important upcoming milestone of course was going to be the election itself to which many controversial figures have submitted their applications including the son of Qadhafi (excluded since), who is at the same time wanted by the International Criminal Court, as well as of course General Haftar. Still, it can be ascertained that the purpose of the UN initiative was to reach this stage through the intra-Libyan discourse, and examining from that perspective, its positive development must be acknowledged. Former special envoys delegated by the UN were not in every case irreproachable—in fact, suspicion of corruptness and partiality only fueled the fire—, but the appointment of Ján Kubiš on 18 January 2021 was one without scandals and so far, positively impactful.

One may recognize a change in the intensity of the UN’s conflict settlement efforts. It was already suggested as part of the previous chapters that it was fairly low throughout the preceding years while ever since late 2020, this is surely not the case. Precisely, between Skhirat and the many conferences in 2018, no meaningful breakthrough occurred⁵³, and those subsequent events have also been powerless as it was argued during previous chapters. The reasoning behind this sudden change last year can also be justified when considering those correlating factors mentioned above: higher and more direct tension via the more overt contribution of external parties, general dissatisfaction of population resulting in the resignation of governments and creating a historic momentum, a decline of belief to be able to obtain total control by either party, as well as the recognition of long-term effects of external aid by domestic parties. Having elaborated on this, there were certain member states that took on a more prominent role in this enhanced UN-intervention. The one that for sure must be mentioned here is France that was forced to alter from its course of actions due to the enhanced Turkish participation and it had to find an alternative way to be able to meaningfully influence developments, which was essential because of the already discussed reasons. The notion

⁵³ This of course is not to fully disregard the efforts of three years put into organizing peace conferences, or the three-point plan of UN Envoy to Libya Ghassan Salame that fundamentally aided the peace dialogue.

of the balance of influence surely has been in the focus of President Macron, who pursued a transitional government that showed willingness to revise the maritime agreement signed before between the GNA and Ankara. Albeit in the midst of countless other issues this goal has yet failed to materialize, Paris upheld a prominent contribution throughout the past year. In the direct aftermath of the establishment of the interim government, France witnessed the evolution of processes arguably with a sort of passive skepticism, which was then suddenly replaced by a list of symbolic actions. Precisely, to avoid regional marginalization, it has restrengthened an active mediatory role. After seven years, it has reopened its embassy in the country while President Macron was emphasizing the responsibility France was due to show towards the peoples of Libya (Daou, 2021). As a result of the previously discussed related scandals, France is not the most credible external actor within the Libyan context, but it still has regional interests and as a result, it was a primary contributor to the recent UN initiatives' implementation, most notably via hosting the latest major conference in Paris that predominantly focused on the deterrence of any parties that would consider sabotaging the upcoming elections, as well as the removal of any remaining external mercenaries.

Another European state, which needs to be brought up here is Italy that has also utilized the power of a few symbolic gestures. Prime Minister Mario Draghi's first official visit abroad was to Tripoli where foundations of a closer cooperation have been laid as discussed topics included an easier process to obtain visa, the restart of commercial flights between the countries, the liquidation of mine fields around Tripoli—that have been left behind mostly by the Wagner group—the issue of migration, Italian companies able to contribute to the reconstruction of the country, further aids aimed at improving the state of healthcare as well as the future of the country's energy sector (Follain, et al., 2021). This past year showed a significantly greater level of alignment between the IO and member state level coherence in Libya.

As it was discussed throughout the preceding chapters, many reasons behind the current political, military, and geographic challenges are of historic heritage, but many of them arose in the past decade. Considering the experience of these past ten years, the recent failure to hold the elections came as no surprise.

4.5. Persisting regional and geostrategic interests

Based on the discussed points, it can be concluded that the most important supporter of the operations of Haftar over the years has been the United Arab Emirates. The UAE was until recently utilizing multiple airfields for its drone operations for years before it handed them over to Wagner group and started to use bases near the Egyptian border while it hired Sudanese merchants to provide land support (Mackinnon, 2021). Goals of the UAE in Libya throughout the years could be grouped in three categories that in order of importance are the followings. To start with, there existed an ideological goal as part of which it showed an active standup everywhere against political Islam and the Muslim Brotherhood. What this meant in the Libyan context was that it pursued to avoid the spread of these to the neighboring Sunni states out of fear that such an occurrence would inevitably initiate an irreversible domino effect that would ultimately reach the Arab peninsula as well. Examining this context, it can be stated that Turkey, at least since the 2013 military coup in Egypt is a regional rival of the UAE, and Libya is just another, albeit important phase of this rivalry.

This strongly correlates with the second ambition that falls within the category of geostrategic interests and that can be connected to the balance of interests with Turkey. The third group of goals are the development of economic and commercial ties that did show up as an important ambition of the UAE, however it was significantly overshadowed by the first two groups that carried an exceedingly greater influence in the country's foreign policy over the years. After the examined period, the room for movement of the UAE was a lot more limited and it was forced to cooperate more with other external actors, such as the Wagner group. Nevertheless, this also meant the emergence of some new issues for the UAE that would be interested in the total termination of Turkish influence while Russia did not show signs aimed at that. Once the transitional government was set up, certainly the UAE also pledged its support towards it. For sure, the support towards and faith in General Haftar has broken as a result of the events of 2020, which importantly from the perspective of the UAE left no single and seemingly potent party to pursue the until then pursued course of actions in Libya.

The views of the UAE on political Islam are shared by Egypt, but Cairo does not have interest in deploying troops and initiating a costly war. Even though it supported

Haftar over the years, it did so in a rather indirect manner as compared to others. As the General's status meaningfully declined due to the inability to take Tripoli—which was not urged by Egypt anyway—even that level of support seized to flow. Still, Cairo was interested in maintaining a buffer zone mostly out of caution as it considers political Islam amongst the most important threats. Furthermore, it still has interests in Cyrenaica which received emphasis during the bilateral negotiations with the new government that were conducted in a constructive manner. Cairo has been palpably opening up over the course of this past year.

The development of influence in Libya was in a decisive manner impacted by military interventions, but the openness of stakeholders to decrease a set of harmful actions while supporting the political dialogue in a sufficient extent has provided a new hope for permanent settlement. Regarding the potential to have elections held last December, it did appear to be a promising sign that these external stakeholders seemed to have reached their minimum goals that based on the arguments of this dissertation can likely be the key. This is however not to disregard the significance of domestic processes since an unfavorable turn of events there might lead to failure of the efforts. The recently experienced coherent UN role in mediation will need to continue without internal exploitations to achieve success.

From a European point of view, the outcome of the current process will be decisive in relation to the future of migration tendencies. One key question in this context will be whether the active cooperation of Paris and Rome will continue. If the currently ongoing Libyan political transition and settlement will be successfully concluded, close multilateral cooperation will need to be maintained to capitalize on commercial opportunities and improve security among other aspects.

The experience of the past ten years demands caution with regards to any overly ambitious estimations. The Libyan settlement is still an equation with many unknown factors and even more potential outcomes, and the current fragile transition can easily follow the example of the previous one. Notwithstanding, there are progressive elements in the main stakeholders recently witnessed actions that offer a chance to finally close the long-lasting civil war. The success of these will be dependent upon four questions. First of all, will the external stakeholders find the emerged status quo sufficient

on the long term, or will they once again initiate actions with the hopes of obtaining greater influence for themselves? It appears that current measures intended to limit exploitations are stronger than their predecessors, but is this going to be sufficient? Secondly, is it going to be feasible to maintain a good level of compromise amongst the majority of various ethnic, religious and other groups of peoples and representatives of regions and other local entities beyond the elections? The composition of the interim government and the LPDF indicate an improvement in this context too but maintaining an agreement by a required majority will be imperative. Additionally, is there going to be a successful attempt at unifying the two rival armies as well as the various smaller armed groups, or are they going to stay quasi rivals of each other thereby maintaining the future possibility—or even probability—of clashes? As we could witness from the beginning, the level of arms spread out in the population directly contributed to the swift escalation, and this level is not expected to decrease in the short-term meaning that an honest agreement among militias and armed groups is essential. And finally, what will be the fate of Haftar? This may not seem to be the most important question, but it can be an impactful matter considering the supporters the General still has domestically speaking. Yes, he has lost the majority of his sponsors, but he still has the potential to create a distraction threatening the fragile peace. He cannot obtain the sufficient support to consolidate his authority, but he still has the capabilities to block the peace process and political settlement; he must not be underestimated. Once these questions will be answered, we will have a clearer picture as far as the Libyan settlement is concerned. The coming months are going to be decisive.

CONCLUSION

This work investigated the Arab Spring-initiated period of power vacuum resulting in a sequence of domestic struggles and civil wars with an increasing tendency of external involvement in Libya. It presented the various sorts of internal opposition while highlighting historic connections behind the issue of statehood and the matter of identity in relation to the highly influential tribalism-dominated society. This fundamentally speaking domestic combat naturally carried characteristics of African wars whereby no comprehensive set of goals or ideologically motivated ambitions played dominant roles for the many stakeholders including tribes and groups of people from the provinces of the country. The lack of such shared principles among groups have created a geographically speaking increasingly limited interests by these fractions leading to political as well as military stalemates. Libya became a clear example of extreme state-fragmentation. Unfortunately, though—from a perspective of national interests—another factor oftentimes carried in such conflicts was the emergence and spreading of numerous international actors as well as Islamist, insurgent and terrorist groups. Many of these were able to capitalize on the persisting weaknesses and so relationships between masters and proxies started to spread out.

A set of listed international organizations (IO)—including the United Nations, the European Union, NATO, the African Union as well as the Arab League—were involved in one or multiple ways from early on, and to a certain extent all of them had the resolution of the Libyan conflict on their official agenda. As it was discussed, military intervention, embargoes and sanctions, mediation efforts and peace conferences were conducted by these IOs to remove obstacles and facilitate settlement. However, apart from minor achievements in the forms of short truces, these all proved to be insufficient. It was elaborated on how these IOs' member states' incoherent set of actions in conflict resolution mechanisms have led to the failure of these aforementioned agendas

throughout the period of almost a decade between the rise of Arab Spring and the Turkish emergence as the Tripoli-based GNA's most important supporter. This incoherence was above everything else stemming from competing states below the IO level via pursuing their own selfish agendas to obtain greater influence over the developments in Libya and to potentially benefit better from a post-conflict status quo. While doing so though, peacebuilding efforts of the same IOs they were members of were significantly harmed while these actions directly contributed to the endurance of the conflict itself. Proxies were supported by external states via financial, diplomatic or military means, while occasionally intelligence or trainings were also provided to them alongside weapons, equipment or other types of supply.

These courses of actions have resulted in a universal inability to consolidate power by either party. In the abundance of this magnitude of foreign support, domestic actors appeared to be less open to negotiate or compromise that resulted in the persistence of domestic actors without sufficient nation-wide recognition or acceptance, whose sphere of authority lied on sub-regions. Whereas in some cases local proxies were exceedingly dependent on certain external actor's support, proxy-initiated exploitation of masters also occurred multiple times throughout the years. The various examples have clearly proven that official conflict resolution agendas and deniable proxy relationships can and do coexist, and in Libya they have provided a comparative advantage for those actors that aimed to intervene but wanted to avoid overt means. A long list of potential benefits of relying on proxies has been presented and it surely prove to have been valuable for applicants.

Another aspect the dissertation brought up was related to the issue of failed statehood vs. state vacuum of Libya and it was argued that such a level of foreign involvement disabled foolproof conclusions on this matter, albeit the many instances of inability to settle even regionally limited disputes among various tribes and groups could easily have misled the viewers. Based on these aspects, the hypothesis of the work was proven, *IO conflict resolution strategies in Libya were indeed insufficient because of the persisting intra-organizational incoherence* whereby certain individual member states—that measured the stakes and risks in a non-normative manner—pursued selfish goals to benefit politically, commercially, or to achieve an enhanced regional military influence.

The notion of regime theory was used to analyze the level of cooperation among alliance members, and it was ascertained that due to the lack of sufficient deterrent measures in place to avoid exploitations via incoherent behavior, these regimes failed in Libya. Member states had their individual set of goals that could not have been projected overtly as a result of their non-normative nature. Still, their de facto presence hindered an effective and coherent execution of normative reasons motivated agendas. It was also argued that the balance of threats was oftentimes beneficial for these actors of selfish agendas that obtained a great room for movement in this sense enabling them to change their pattern of actions from time to time depending on their perceived risks and the persisting stakes. A perception of increased threats of losing relative or absolute power has occasionally led these states to better compliance with regime directives, but for some of these actors, such turn of events in stakes and risks did not materialize during the investigated period. As it happens regularly, security was the most vital component behind such changes.

Following this logic, it was affirmed through the Libya case that any regime's true strength lies in a commonly shared balance of threats among its member states while also acknowledging the existence of potential differences in terms of relative and absolute influence among members. Nevertheless, more influential states—being relatively speaking less dependent on other members—are more prone to generate incoherence as it was proven in Libya too. This difference was to a great extent related to the balance of interests inasmuch as intra-regime rivalries oftentimes negatively impacted IO level interests of conflict resolution while serving other goals leading to an escalation.

Apart from these theories, various models have been applied to better understand relationships and dynamics operating between masters and proxies. As it was argued, exploitations of such relationships have been present in both directions in Libya, and operating dynamics was a swiftly altering attribute, which occasionally was the primary reason behind a breakthrough or fall on the ground. All these have proven that funding and supporting militias in Libya have made conflict resolution efforts extremely hard. These were the primary reason behind domestic stakeholders' unwillingness to participate meaningfully in peace negotiations, and they have added a new flame to the already existing tensions within Libyan society that throughout the years culminated in extreme fragmentation. The reality is that these militias are part of today's Libyan society

and any attempt at political settlement will first have to address the issues stemming from the arguments mentioned in this work first.

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