

The Responsibility to rebuild and *Jus Post Bellum*: mapping the normative discourse on stabilization in Libya from 2011 to 2020

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree Doctor
of Philosophy in International Relations

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June 2023

DECLARATION

I hereby declare this thesis submitted for the degree DPhil (International Relations) at the University of Pretoria, apart from the help of the recognized, is my own work and has not been formerly submitted to another university for a degree.

Faith K. Maberu

ABSTRACT

Over the past two decades, stabilization has emerged as a dominant mode of international engagement in conflict-affected areas and fragile settings. The universal quest for a sustainable compact of peace in the aftermath of military interventions has reinvigorated debates in policy and academic circles around the uptake of concepts such as the responsibility to rebuild and *jus post bellum*; and how they inform the broader debate around moral imperatives to rebuild post-intervention states. This thesis seeks to analyse the convergences and divergences between the responsibility to rebuild and *jus post bellum* and the extent to which they inform the broader conceptual and normative debates around stabilization and peacebuilding. The case study of Libya, in the aftermath of the 2011 NATO-led intervention, presents an insightful entry point into the ethically charged debate on responsibilities, obligations and duty to rebuild post-intervention societies while shedding light on the contending narratives in the post-conflict normative discourse.

Key terms: responsibility to rebuild, *jus post bellum*, stabilization, Libya, peacebuilding, post-intervention, normative discourse.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I want to give thanks to Yahweh, my heavenly Father and spiritual head who granted me the favour, grace and wisdom to undertake this momentous academic endeavour.

I also want to thank my thesis supervisor, Prof. Maxi Schoeman who has given me stellar guidance and mentorship during the research and writing journey. Her belief in and patience with me has been unwavering and a great source of inspiration to see the task through to the end.

My friends have been a pillar of strength and a source of encouragement.

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, the late Zephaniah and Dorcas Marrando – who made me who I am today and urged to me explore and surpass the extent of my potential. To my big brother, the late Daniel, whose zeal for life and selflessness taught me the value of investing in people and cherishing deep friendships.

To all those who have cheered me on throughout this journey, I say, Asante Sana (Thank you).

LIST OF ACRONYMS/ ABBREVIATIONS

AU	African Union
CBL	Central Bank of Libya
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
DoD	Department of Defense
DoS	Department of State
DDR	disarmament, demobilisation and re-integration
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECHO	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
EEAS	European External Action Service
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
EU	European Union
EUBAM	European Union Border Assistance
EUTF	EU Trust Fund for Africa
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GFA	Global Fragility Act
GNA	Government of National Accord
GNC	General National Congress
HIPPO	High-Level Independent Panel on UN Peace Operations
HoR	House of Representatives
ICISS	International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
LAS	League of Arab States
LNA	Libyan National Army
LPA	Libyan Political Agreement
LPDF	Libyan Political Dialogue Forum

LSF	Libyan Shield Force
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MINUSCA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic
MINUSMA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
MONUSCO	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NOC	National Oil Corporation
NTC	National Transitional Council
PBC	Peacebuilding Commission
PC	Presidency Council
PFG	Petroleum Facilities Guard
PKO	peacekeeping operations
R2P	Responsibility to Protect
SAR	Stabilization Assistance Review
SFL	Stabilization Facility for Libya
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary General
SSC	Supreme Security Committee
SSR	security sector reform
SU	Stabilisation Unit
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSG	United Nations Secretary General
UNSMIL	United Nations Support Mission in Libya
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WSOD	World Summit Outcome Document

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction and description of research

Recent years have seen a reawakening of the debate on responsibilities and obligations of belligerents in the aftermath of intervention. Extensive research conducted on contemporary interventions has showed that conflict-affected states have been prone to fragility and entrapment within a cycle of armed conflict, fragmentation and economic decline (see Collier 2003; Collier *et al.* 2008; and Grimm *et al.*, 2014). The challenge of fragile states, coupled with recognition of the complexity of peacebuilding and the precarious nature of war-peace transitions have underscored the need for comprehensive engagement on the conceptual and normative issues pertinent to the aftermath of conflict. Furthermore, concepts such as peacebuilding and the responsibility to rebuild attest to centrality of the sustainable peace agenda and the importance of post-conflict strategy in pursuit of positive peace. With this in mind, the bulk of debates have not centred around the concept of peacebuilding but rather on the modes of implementing an enduring peace in line with both local exigencies and international support capabilities (Paris 2010:362). Consequently, the issue of a moral imperative to rebuild points to further questions about existing approaches to peacebuilding and the agency to whom this responsibility is accorded. The normative uptake¹ of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) as an emerging norm in response to incidences of mass atrocities was based on the notion of sovereignty as responsibility, and promoted a principled approach to intervention in the case of manifest failure of a state to protect its population from mass atrocities. This interrogation of sovereignty on the basis of a state's responsibilities in the context of a human security paradigm, feeds directly into the legal and normative question of what happens after an intervention (Paris 2016:516). To put it differently, is there a *jus post bellum*? If so, how does it relate to post-conflict frameworks premised on peacebuilding and the responsibility to rebuild?

Furthermore, the evolving context and nature of war and conflict marked by the prevalence of intrastate wars have had a bearing on the nature and capacity of the post-conflict states as a risk factor underlying mass atrocities (Fukuda-Parr & Picciotto 2007:10). This means that the redress of state fragility is hinged on a holistic and comprehensive approach to rebuilding state

¹ This study defines 'uptake' as the process by which a concept is incorporated or adopted into policy agendas and discourses.

capacity; a logic that forms the essence of both peacebuilding and R2P. The widespread use of ‘stabilization’ and ‘stability operations’ reinforce the core argument that stabilization² is a core element of international efforts towards realising sustainable peace. To this effect, the focus of this study is a critical analysis of stabilization as an up-and-coming phenomenon in the international peace and security context and an examination of how it relates to the concepts of *jus post bellum* and the responsibility to rebuild (third component of R2P) and peacebuilding.

As a case study, Libya offers crucial lessons about the repercussions of neglecting post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding in the political build-up to intervention. The 2011 North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)-led intervention, which saw the ouster of Muammar Gaddafi, was hailed as a solid test case for the application of R2P. However, by 2014, the situation in Libya had seen it teetering on the brink of collapse with two competing governments and parliaments and a myriad of militias and armed groups jostling for control over territory and resources. The security vacuum was also exacerbated by extremist groups such as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS, also known as Daesh) operating in Libyan territory, specifically in the coastal city of Sirte. The negligence on the part on international interveners in acknowledging the responsibility to rebuild, as a counterpart to the timely and decisive pillar of R2P, ultimately fostered conditions that led to renewed conflict and instability in Libya. Libya serves as a cautionary tale about failing to plan for the day after intervention in a context marked by deep-seated tribal divisions and the absence of rudimentary institutions at best (Ezrow 2016).

In the immediate aftermath of the 2011 intervention, the international community largely retreated from taking on comprehensive rebuilding tasks. Tellingly, as will be argued and demonstrated in this study, the policy posture of the international community towards Libya was mostly characterised by apathy and disengagement between 2011 and 2014. This apparent hands-off approach shifted in 2015, arguably as the looming threat of ISIS gaining a foothold in Libya and the influx of migrants into Europe emerged as core security concerns of Western states. The focus on security imperatives as impetuses for robust engagement by external actors, especially European states, raises crucial questions about narratives and justifications for intervention and their framing against the backdrop of cosmopolitan human protection agendas.

² I use the American spelling ‘stabilization’ unless quoting from others.

1.2. Literature overview

The literature review focused on four areas: the conceptual discourse on the responsibility to rebuild as the third pillar of R2P, the discourse on post-conflict peacebuilding, the conceptual discourse on *jus post bellum* and the ascendancy of the phenomenon of stabilization as a post-intervention strategy.

1.2.1. The responsibility to rebuild as the third pillar of R2P

In step with the mainstreaming of the peacebuilding agenda in the UN and conceptual shifts in thinking about state sovereignty and intervention, the notion of sovereignty as responsibility emerged against the backdrop of crises in Rwanda, Bosnia, Yugoslavia and Kosovo during the 1990s where sovereignty was ‘misused as a shield behind which mass violence could be inflicted on populations with impunity’ (Cohen & Deng 2016: 74). In response to the conceptual dilemma around humanitarian intervention and the distribution of rights and responsibilities between states and citizens, the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) outlined R2P as an emerging norm that enjoins states and the international community to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing. The 2001 ICISS report depicts R2P as three sets of responsibilities – the responsibility to prevent, the responsibility to react and the responsibility to rebuild.

Conceptually, R2P is nested within the human security paradigm, emphasizing human solidarity and conceptual, normative and operational connections between assistance, intervention and reconstruction (ICISS 2001: para. 2.29). Moreover, the 2001 ICISS affirmed the responsibility to rebuild in the aftermath of an intervention specifying it as ‘a commitment to helping build a durable peace and promoting good governance and sustainable development’ (ICISS 2001: para. 5.1). Linking the responsibility to rebuild with the UN Secretary-General’s vision of post-conflict peacebuilding (Annan 1998:63), the ICISS identified three key priority areas for the rebuilding phase: security, justice and reconciliation, and development (ICISS 2001: 40). As such, not only was the ICISS explicit about the link between intervention and post-intervention phases, but it also implied a causal relationship between rebuilding and military intervention for protection purposes. This automatism between intervention and rebuilding is unsettling since military action is the most coercive option along a continuum of measures which range from political, economic and judicial measures (Schnabel 2011:53).

Despite the clear-cut connections between R2P and peacebuilding as laid out in the 2001 ICISS report, the responsibility to rebuild was omitted from the 2005 UN World Summit Outcome Document which focused only on the responsibilities to prevent and to react (WSOD 2005 para. 138-139). The categorical omission of the responsibility to rebuild in the 2005 Summit document can be attested to the sovereignty-based objections to R2P and its sequential link with the controversial ‘reactive’ pillar which rendered the rebuilding pillar unattractive by association (Schnabel 2011:56). According to Donovan (2018:13), the sequential links between the reaction and rebuilding pillars represented ‘an internal misalignment’ in the manner in which ideas that constituted R2P were organised. To secure broad consensus among states at the 2005 World Summit, the responsibility to rebuild was jettisoned in favour of increased focus on the preventative pillar (Donovan 2018:14).

In a bid to separate peacebuilding and R2P principles at the 2005 UN World Summit, reference to post-conflict peacebuilding in the WSOD is evidenced by provision for the establishment of a Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and a Peacebuilding Fund as a dedicated institutional mechanism ‘to address the special needs of countries emerging from conflict towards recovery, reintegration and reconstruction and to assist them in laying the foundation for sustainable development’ (WSOD 2005 para 97). The proposal for the creation of the PBC had been put forward by the UNSG Report ‘In Larger Freedom’ following recommendations from the 2004 High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change. The creation of the PBC was thus seen as a commendable effort to substantiate the responsibility to rebuild as the third element of R2P, while attending to the broader UN peacebuilding agenda (Evans 2008:149). As the institutional mechanism of the UN post-conflict peacebuilding agenda, the PBC ‘goes some way towards formalising the idea that international society bears a collective responsibility for rebuilding states and societies after war’ (Bellamy 2008:616).

Constructivism and norm dynamics are pivotal to understanding the trajectory of new ideas and norms and their interaction with existing norms within normative frameworks (Florini 1996:3). Constructivist norms research has evolved from showing that norms matter (Checkel 1998: 327) to exploring when and why norms matter, and how/when/why norms change in the dynamic social context of international relations. Consequently, two key issues have gained prominence in the study of norm dynamics – compliance with strictures of social norms (Acharya 2004), and normative contestation within normative communities (Denemark & Marlin-Bennett 2017). For instance, Welsh (2013) has argued that R2P is particularly susceptible to contestation as a result of its status as an indeterminate and complex norm. In

addition to understanding the typology of norms as analysed by Legro (1997:34) and Franck (1992:56), Glanville (2016:185) asserts that instances of compliance and violation of R2P in Libya and Syria respectively show that R2P matters given its real and observable impact on the behaviour of states. Additionally, the case of the responsibility to rebuild illustrates the dynamisms of international norms and how the recalibration of ideational contents of norms are subject to a number of factors including bargaining and negotiations, as well as impact of existing normative structures (Donovan 2018:8).

1.2.2. The evolution of the discourse on post-conflict peacebuilding

Peacebuilding first featured in the UN lexicon in 1992 upon the release of *An Agenda for Peace* by former Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. The emergence of peacebuilding as a key concept in the workings of the UN has to be examined in light of shifting patterns of armed conflict in the post-Cold War environment and the preponderance of intra-state wars. The conflict dynamics in a number of the former Soviet states and African states pointed to the persistent problem of relapse into conflict, demanding an agenda for holistic and sustainable approaches to post-conflict reconstruction. The international orientation around peacebuilding was informed by the failures and successes of previous UN experiences with post-conflict states, leading up to the conceptual and institutional framing of peacebuilding (Jenkins 2013:7). Driven by the challenges of post-conflict reconstruction and the principle of ‘no exit without strategy’, the institutionalization of peacebuilding was given more prominence in the 2000 Brahimi Report which integrated peacebuilding as a central aspect of the UN peace operations doctrine.

Consequently, the UN approach to peacebuilding has come to be institutionalised around a liberal, standardised approach that includes electoral democracy, constitutional and legal reform, and economic pro-market reform (Curtis 2012:10). Moreover, as understood within the UN and across a range of other international organisations and development stakeholders, peacebuilding is closely associated with the concept of statebuilding – hinged on the creation of stable, secure states with strong institutions. An analysis of the rationale and evolution of the two concepts reveals subtle differences: peacebuilding is concerned with preventing the recurrence of violent conflict and supporting peace processes in society whereas statebuilding emphasizes the building and strengthening of state capacity with the establishment of effective political, administrative and governmental institutions (Curtis 2013: 81). From a temporal perspective, peacebuilding gained traction in the 1990s whereas statebuilding came into

prominence on the back of US-led interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq in the wake of 9/11 (Grävingholt *et al* 2009:2). Another layer of divergence between peacebuilding and statebuilding pertains to their instrumentality and purpose: peacebuilding can be taken as a ‘multi-faceted, single-purpose task’ with peace as the end goal while statebuilding can be conceived as a ‘multipurpose, instrumental task,’ that is, the establishment of the state and its structures (Grävingholt *et al.* 2009:3). In spite of differences, peacebuilding and statebuilding share a common point of reference – the challenge of fragile peace and the breakdown in political, social and economic order. As such, both concepts seek to promote socio-economic recovery, security sector reform, strengthening civil society and good governance mechanisms (Grävingholt *et al.* 2009:3).

The peacebuilding as statebuilding schema has featured dominantly in the post-conflict reconstruction narrative in Africa, particularly as a testing ground for the working of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture. According to Curtis (2013:80), a major reason for the embrace of peacebuilding as statebuilding construct in Africa stems from the tenacity of the principle of self-determination across the continent as a catalyst for continental unity and integration. Similarly, a number of post-conflict ‘success stories’ such as Rwanda and Ethiopia add on to the argument that strong state apparatus goes hand in hand with development. On the contrary, the experiences of a variety of African states point to the limitations and shortcomings of the strategy of peacebuilding through statebuilding. The essence of these tensions has to do with issues of legitimacy, sovereignty, effectiveness and agency, instigating the question of whether what is required are African alternatives to peacebuilding (Curtis 2013:80).

The criticisms levelled against peacebuilding/statebuilding coincide with the range of arguments against liberal peacebuilding including: the undermining of local ownership over the peacebuilding endeavour; lack of strategic co-ordination among various international actors simultaneously involved in peacebuilding missions; unresolved tensions between the military and non-military components of peace missions; and the lack of political will by various development assistance providers (Paris 2010:347). Accordingly, as aptly stated by Paris (2010:362), ‘the challenge today is not to replace or move beyond liberal peacebuilding, but to reform existing approaches within a broadly defined liberal framework’. As it stands, the scholarly debate around liberal peacebuilding is polarised between those who support the enterprise in principle but are concerned with the effectiveness of post-conflict institutions and the impact on sustainable peace (such as Roland Paris, David Kennedy and Beatrice Pouligny); and those who challenge the moral premise of liberal peacebuilding because of its relationship

with global power structures (such as David Chandler, Mark Duffield and Michael Barnett). The limitations of the liberal peacebuilding agenda as seen in cases such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, DRC and Mali among others, point to the need for critical research covering important conceptual and practical questions such as: How should one define peacebuilding success? How might ideas of local ownership be developed without reducing it to simplistic connotations of emancipation? What are the sources of legitimacy in international peacebuilding regime? Under what circumstances should peacebuilding end? and how should the exit strategy be formulated? (Paris 2010:364).

Growing disenchantment and disillusionment about statebuilding and light footprint engagement, compounded by the post-Iraq and Afghanistan ‘intervention fatigue’ points to a critical juncture of the mainstream discourse on intervention (Rotmann 2016:1). From the 2000s onwards, the mounting criticism of liberal interventionism in conflict-affected states, coupled with the problematisation of linear understandings of peace, signalled a critical juncture in the discursive and practical dimensions of peacebuilding. As post-conflict intervention experiments exposed the limits of the liberal peace model, with its emphasis on Weberian state construct, market-based economies and liberal state institutions, the focus of peacebuilding actors shifted away from supply-driven policy-making towards engagement with the internal capacities and capabilities of society. However, as more international peacebuilders attempted to engage with the turn to the local, the more they reproduced the hierarchical binaries inherent in liberalist construct resulting in the failure to realise transformative outcomes (Paris & Sisk 2009).

By the 2010s, the shift towards critical understandings of international peacebuilding had revealed the impasse of peacebuilding interventions. While the turn to the local and the embrace of pragmatist approaches presented a radical critique of the liberal peace agenda, international peacebuilding has failed to come out of the essentialising of socio-cultural difference and the reproduction of liberal relativism. The pragmatic shift marks an interesting juncture in understanding peacebuilding by stressing the governance of effects and the agency and self-empowerment of local actors (Moe & Simojoki 2013:411). These trends involve different sets of actors and politics that so far tend to be treated separately in largely isolated debates. Yet, seeing these distinct developments as part of a wider continuum of pragmatic responses to contemporary peace challenges, provides essential conceptual and empirical insights into the opportunities and challenges of the post-liberal era.

1.2.3. The conceptual discourse on *jus post bellum*

An equally under-theorized concept that is central to the normative issues of post-war justice is *jus post bellum*. *Jus post bellum* is grounded in the Just War Tradition constituting of *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello* which deal with the ethics of war whereas *jus post bellum* is concerned with the ‘legitimacy of the peace’ that follows a war considered just (Bellamy 2008:616). A relatively ‘young’ concept in international commentary, outside of the Just War Tradition, *jus post bellum* has gained prominence across a range of disciplines: in peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction literature, in international humanitarian law, in international security law and in scholarship concerned with transitional justice (Easterday *et al* 2014:2). The range of perspectives on *jus post bellum* include its depiction as ‘a natural corollary of *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*’ (Orend 2000:17), as ‘the set of norms applicable at the end of conflict with a view to establishing sustainable peace’ (Chetail 2009), and as a framework for evaluating post-war action or as an ordering principle for the development and re-evaluation of existing and emerging theories, principles and paradigms such as transitional justice, peacebuilding and R2P (Easterday *et al* 2014:4).

The convergences across R2P, peacebuilding and *jus post bellum* highlight the formidable argument that there is an imperative to rebuild. In a broad sense, they dovetail in their affirmation for sustainable peace, promoting activities that tackle the structural causes of conflict and help ‘lock in’ post-conflict political and economic reforms (Annan 2001: par 20). Gheciu and Welsh (2009:123) assert that there are four crucial aspects in which the ethical imperative to rebuild has been established. The first logic appeals to human solidarity and draws from the human security paradigm. Essentially, it highlights a cosmopolitan imperative based on common humanity and broader obligation to assist the vulnerable (Gheciu & Welsh 2009:126). A second rationale is premised on the projection of cosmopolitan values such as democracy, human rights and the rule of law as transformational endeavours and expression of values-based foreign policy and normative power (Gheciu & Welsh 2009:127). The third imperative is rooted in an interest-based logic which views reconstruction of failing states and promotion of functioning states as crucial for international stability. This ‘defence-of-society’ imperative is widely reflected in the statebuilding focus of contemporary post-conflict strategies and programmes of state and non-state actors involved in post-conflict activities (Gheciu & Welsh 2009:129). The fourth ethical imperative draws from pluralist accounts of international society which prioritise the restoration of self-governance and self-determination (Gheciu & Welsh 2009:132).

The four imperatives for post-conflict reconstruction run up against a number of normative tensions and dilemmas revolving around legitimacy and local ownership issues. Similarly, critics of the liberal peacebuilding model argue that its vision of reconstruction is representative of a particular form of peacebuilding – one that prioritises liberal democracy and free-market economy (Paris 2004: 5). In addition to overstating the normative and ideological agenda of the interveners over local political dynamics, the practices of early liberalisation in some post-conflict societies have led to counterproductive, destabilising outcomes (Mac Ginty 2012:20-30). The privileging of the normative and practical agenda of international actors has resulted in the marginalisation of sites of local legitimacy and the projection of an agenda of control in line with the neoliberal agenda of the West (Newman 2010:305).

Another source of contention in the post-conflict reconstruction debate is the issue of responsibility for rebuilding, particularly the nature of this responsibility, whether this responsibility is distributive or collective, and which agent is best-placed to carry out the responsibility to rebuild. For instance, those in favour of attributing a principal post-conflict reconstruction role to the UN (in the form of the PBC) will have a hard time defending its lack of a co-ordinating capacity and unwieldy membership which has limited the PBC to an advisory role (Gheciu & Welsh 2009:136). On the other hand, proponents of a remedial responsibility attributed to the international community face issues of ambiguity and the potential diffusion of responsibility which provides loopholes for states and international organisations to shirk their rebuilding obligations (Gheciu & Welsh 2009:137).

Based on the foregoing, the various rationales for the imperative to rebuild come with tensions that have a bearing on the effectiveness and appropriateness of post-conflict reconstruction initiatives. These inherent dilemmas in rebuilding and reconstruction present key learning points for both policy makers and practitioners in moving beyond polarising debates to paying more attention to the conceptual and policy elements which are key to advancing sustainable peace.

1.2.4. The ascendancy of stabilization in the discourse on post-intervention strategies

Consequently, the proliferation of failed states and the glaring exposure of the limitations of the top-down, externally-imposed statebuilding strategies has edged western policymakers towards stabilization as an emerging paradigm of post-intervention strategy. In other words, the increased securitization of state fragility and the ‘tempering of the hubris of liberal interventionism of the 1990s’ has resulted in ascendancy of the stabilization agenda premised

on the projection of ‘fragility as the problem,’ ‘stability as the end-state’ and stabilization as the means of realising this desired end-state (Rotmann 2016:2).

Despite the escalating uptake of stabilization as a core element in post-conflict policy programming and strategy, there is no agreed definition of stabilization in conceptual and operational terms. Acknowledging this definitional ambiguity, the 2015 High-Level Independent Panel on UN Peace Operations (HIPPO) called for the UN to clarify its conceptualisation of stabilization noting that in spite of its widespread use across UN agencies, ‘stabilization has a wide range of interpretation (UN 2015:30). In addition, Gorur (2016:18) asserts that there are serious consequences that could emerge as a result of the conceptual and operational ambiguity around stabilization in the context of UN peacekeeping. These consequences may include perceived erosion of the UN principles of peacekeeping, creation of tensions among member states that could negatively impact commitment and working relationships pertinent to troop contribution dynamics, and undermining of mission effectiveness as a result of design and doctrinal discrepancies (Gorur 2016:20). Conversely, there are voices within academic and policy circles who maintain that there is an upside to the ‘constructive ambiguity’ of stabilization in the sense that it gives the UNSC ‘maximum flexibility in the interpretation and application of the concept.’ Similarly, both traditional and pragmatic thinkers ‘see value in keeping the concept vague and undefined’ (de Coning 2016).

The multiplicity of perspectives and approaches to stabilization vastly differ across the academic, policy and practitioner divide. In the academic literature, three strands of thought stand out in their analytical approach to stabilization. Some scholars such as Muggah (2014) view stabilization as a pre-peacebuilding phase in the transition from peacekeeping operations to security and development packages. Another school of thought perceives stabilization as active conflict intervention and part and parcel of activities in on-going conflicts (De Coning 2016, Bellamy and Hunt 2015:1282). Moreover, a third group emphasizes the robust use of force as the definitive element of stabilization missions. Accordingly, the adoption of a stabilization logic is seen as a crucial aspect of the robust turn in peace operations (Hunt 2016:109).

Studies of the stabilization doctrines of various governments and international organizations reveal differences across rationales and institutional design (see Rotmann 2016). The domestic doctrines and guidance on stabilization operations also reveal two distinct visions of stabilization. The broad vision of stabilization defines the problem in terms of fragility, lack of

service delivery, political instability and low-level violence. Stabilization is aimed at ‘structural stability’, sustainable peace and prosperity. On the other hand, the narrow vision of stabilization presents the problems as acute crises, political shocks and upheavals, and volatility. This narrow concept of stabilization is focused on defusing crises and the pursuit of resilience to shocks and emergencies (Rotmann 2016:6). Although there are differences in the domestic doctrines of various countries with regard to stabilization, an examination of points of convergence reveals an understanding of stabilization as targeted at political threats and the coordination of civilian and military activities, including whole-of-government approaches (Gorur 2016:12).

The conceptual void exposed by the ambiguity of the normative and conceptual dimensions of stabilization, as well as the stark absence of operational guidelines on implementation of stabilization underscores the glaring need for deeper normative theorizing and critical interrogation of the normative, conceptual and operational questions which the stabilization discourse raises. Such an interrogation also extends to self-ascribed stabilizers who need to reevaluate the interplay between the practicalities and strategic imperatives of intervention on one hand, and the dynamics of evolving local contexts and relationships in situations where stabilization is at play.

1.3. Formulation of the research problem

An assessment of the legal, normative and conceptual dimensions of the strategic imperative to rebuild societies in the aftermath of conflict cuts across the concepts of the responsibility to rebuild and *jus post bellum* and peacebuilding. However, in spite of the connections between these concepts in several aspects, the discourse in academic and policy circles has tended to treat them as separate subjects. With this in mind, the fundamental assumption of this study is that the artificial disconnection and under-theorizing of post-conflict concepts such as the responsibility to rebuild and *jus post bellum* has exacerbated the lacuna in the post-conflict reconstruction discourse. Therefore, the lack of a comprehensive, normative defence of post-conflict reconstruction framework has elevated stabilization as the dominant logic in the post-conflict reconstruction debate.

Relatedly, the prevalence of an ethically charged debate on responsibilities, obligations and duty to rebuild post-conflict societies can be taken as an indication that there exists an imperative to rebuild, at least at a teleological level. Relevant legal and normative questions around what happens in the aftermath of a military intervention, coupled with the

problematisation of state fragility as a persistent feature of the post-conflict landscape, have re-oriented the conflict management discourse towards a stabilization agenda.

The fundamental research problem of this study is encapsulated by the following research question: How do the related concepts of the responsibility to rebuild and *jus post bellum* collectively constitute a systematic normative theory of post-conflict reconstruction?

This gives rise to three subsidiary research questions:

- i. What are the convergences and divergences between the responsibility to rebuild and *jus post bellum*, and how should they be conceptualised in relation to peacebuilding?
- ii. Why was there a lack of a normative post-intervention framework in the aftermath of the NATO-led intervention in Libya in 2011?
- iii. Is stabilization adequate in providing an alternative to the lacuna in the discourse on post-intervention strategies?

1.4. Purpose of the research (aims and objectives)

- i. To critically examine how the responsibility to rebuild was conceptualized in the context of the intervention in Libya.
- ii. To critically investigate the utility of constituting the responsibility to rebuild and *jus post bellum* as a collective, systematic normative theory of post-intervention and the implications for the practice of intervention and post-intervention.
- iii. To gauge the adequacy of stabilization as a strategic logic informing the broader discourse on post-intervention strategy.

1.5. Research design and methodology

The methodology will consist primarily of literature-based analysis of the responsibility to rebuild and *jus post bellum* as they have been normatively, conceptually and contextually interrogated across a range of disciplines and perspectives. The research is considered exploratory as it seeks to analyse concepts that are still subject to norm development approaches which focus on the evolution and trajectory of norms that are considered ‘soft’ in the context of normative status and norms’ life cycle. The research study also aims to employ a dialectical combination of both deductive and inductive logic of inquiry in view of the interplay between theoretical approach and assessment of empirical findings. The research will

mostly be qualitative in approach with the benefit of allowing for reflexive analysis and interpretation of subject under study.

The researcher will make use of both primary (official records, communiqués, statements, speeches, resolutions, policy documents) and secondary (academic research, reports, media analyses) sources of data. The data sources are accessible in the public domain and research will be conducted in a scientific manner building on available and verifiable sources. The research will also draw on in-depth, semi-structured interviews with practitioners, researchers, government officials and policy makers particularly affiliated with or working with the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), the Stabilization Facility for Libya and agencies involved in post-conflict reconstruction and development in Libya.

During data analysis, the data will be organised categorically, reviewed repeatedly and coded continually. Following Lapadat (2012:926), thematic analysis will involve identification of themes from the data-set seeking recurrent patterns or relationships and categorization to allow for contextually-grounded interpretation.

In ensuring credibility and reliability, the data will be collected from multiple sources and using various sources including interviews and document analysis. The researcher will provide rich, thick detailed descriptions to allow for transferability of the research to other contexts or settings. Data collection and analysis strategies will be reported in detail to provide a clear picture of the methods used in the process and allow for an audit trail of the evidence used in the study, as proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985:319). Furthermore, drawing on the work of Begoray and Banister (2012: 788), the researcher will adopt a reflexive approach to document how own values, agenda and positionality has influenced the research process. The researcher details her awareness of the interconnectivity between the inquirer and participants, data and methods for data analysis and interpretation.

1.5.1. The case study research design

The proposed study will make use of the case study design in view of the exploratory aim of the research. As highlighted by scholars such as Denzin and Lincoln (2017:615), case studies are suitable for theory-testing and contributing to normative theory, which are key aspects of this study. Furthermore, the case study selected for the proposed study provides an in-depth exploration of the analytic frames employed in the study while engaging in analytical

generalization. According to Yin (2014:68), analytical generalization involves ‘a carefully posed theoretical proposition that can take the form of a lesson-learned, working hypothesis or other principle that is believed to be applicable to other situations.’ Hence, the fundamental assumption of this study is that the artificial disconnection and under-theorizing of post-conflict concepts such as the responsibility to rebuild and *jus post bellum* has exacerbated the lacuna in post-conflict reconstruction discourse. Therefore, the lack of a comprehensive, normative defence of post-conflict reconstruction framework has elevated stabilization as the dominant logic in the post-conflict reconstruction debate.

1.5.2. Post-intervention Libya as a case study

The Libyan case attests to the realities and consequences of the lack of a post-intervention strategy. Since the 2011 NATO-led intervention sanctioned by the UNSC in Resolution 1973, the country has plunged into chaos with three rival groups (as of 2016) laying claim to government and competing for territorial control with a myriad of militias and armed groups (Jones & Belyukova 2016). Little substantive progress has been realised in the disarmament, demobilisation and re-integration (DDR) progress mostly due to weak enforcement capacity of beleaguered local authorities. In December 2015, the UN-brokered Libyan Political Agreement led to the formation of the Government of National Accord (GNA), however, rival powers in Tripoli and Tobruk refused to recognise the GNA’s authority (ICG 2016). The notion of a responsibility to rebuild becomes even more pertinent in light of the fact that the Libyan intervention was authorised on the basis of fulfilling the criteria of R2P. Libya offers crucial lessons not only for the responsibility to rebuild, but also for a conflict-sensitive and transformational approach to peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction and development

Following Kumar (2011:126), who highlighted the notion of a case study as ‘a bounded system or an entity in itself’, Libya will be analysed as the case study in this research given its applicability to the contradictions of the liberal peace thesis and the outcome of the failure to enact a context-specific strategy in the aftermath of intervention. UNSMIL was established in 2011 to facilitate the rebuilding and recovery phase in post-intervention Libya. UNSMIL embraced a ‘light footprint’ mandate which emphasized support for Libyan authorities in the conduct of SSR and DDR, control of arms trafficking and the coordination of international PCRDR activities (Martin 2012). Notably, the essence of UN involvement in the post-intervention space has been on local ownership of the rebuilding process and the shifting of responsibility to domestic authorities (Keranen 2016:341). The emphasis on Libyan ownership

is also evident in the establishment of a Stabilization Facility for Libya in October 2016 led by the GNA and supported by the UNDP and the international community. The Stabilization Facility for Libya is aimed at ‘providing tangible quick wins’ at the local level by funding infrastructure rehabilitation programmes and supporting locally-driven capacity-building and mediation mechanisms (UN 2016). For the most part, the involvement of the international community in Libya has been characterised by disengagement and waning support for UNSMIL (Hulse 2015). It is quite telling that the Libyan post-intervention muddle only regained prominence in foreign policy agendas of Western powers only when the ISIS threat and migration crisis exacerbated (Keranen 2016:341).

Post-Gaddafi Libya typifies the concept of limited statehood with the various militias setting up a form of governance that draws on localised revolutionary legitimacy, a political economy of survival and engaging various external actors to gain the upper hand in the struggle for political authority against rivals. The fratricidal state of post-intervention Libya, marked by multi-layered political, economic and humanitarian crises, underscores the glaring need for deeper normative theorizing and critical interrogation of the stabilization discourse. Such a normative, conceptual and operational interrogation of the stabilization agenda in Libya extends to the focus on security as the priority of international assistance and the effect of shifting normative and ideological priorities of interveners in the politics of intervention. The civil war in post-Gaddafi Libya has resulted in the breakdown in the rule of law and humanitarian crises, a situation which has been exploited by ISIS/Daesh extremist group. An offensive launched in 2015 by the GNA government forces, aided by US airstrikes, was successful in regaining some territory from ISIS militants especially in the port city of Sirte (Nordland 2016). This focus on security as the priority of international assistance is an indictment on the rationale and logic of a discernible stabilization agenda in Libya. Overall, the Libyan case reveals the fundamental dilemmas that cut to the heart of post-conflict rebuilding.

Libya also serves as a normative case study that goes beyond using empirical data for descriptive and explanatory purposes by engaging value-rational analysis and reflective equilibrium. Reflective equilibrium entails ‘working back and forth among our considered judgements about particular instances or cases, the principles or rules that we believe govern them, and the theoretical considerations that we believe bear on accepting these considered judgements, principles or rules, revising any of these elements wherever necessary in order to achieve an acceptable coherence among them’ (Daniel 2016). For instance, the question of

whether intervention in Libya is justified promotes value rationality by criticizing, clarifying, and modifying existing views about normative ideals by reflecting on the implications they have for other normative positions. This promotes a normative reflection on questions such as What stability? Whose stability? Is stabilization for the benefit of the Libyan people? Who are the justified purveyors of the stabilization agenda?

The study is demarcated in conceptual, temporal and geographical terms. With regard to conceptual delimitation, the study will focus on the normative and moral dimensions of peace and war and the enduring complex dilemmas regarding the duties, imperatives and obligations to rebuild post-intervention societies. As such the analysis will revolve around related concepts including human security, constructivist approach to norm development and evolution, the just war tradition, liberal interventionism and peacebuilding. The study will focus on the transitional period in post-intervention Libya, commencing the moment the NATO mission was terminated in October 2011 until November 2020, which marked a critical point in the political landscape of Libya as UN-led peace initiatives regained momentum against the backdrop of a fragile ceasefire and negotiations under the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum. In terms of a geographical delimitation, the study will focus on the African continent, drawing on the case of Libya, a country located at the northern-most coast of Africa. The security implications of instability in Libya will invariably stretch the geographic delimitation in a geopolitical sense to include the greater Arab and Mediterranean neighbourhood where regional dynamics have also been impacted by the Libyan crisis.

1.5.3. Process tracing method

Pertinent to the case study and the concepts under study, the researcher will also make use of the process tracing method as a ‘systematic examination of diagnostic evidence selected and analysed’ in light of the research questions posed in the study (Collier 2011: 823). The value of process tracing is that it can be used for theory-testing or theory-building purposes through theorization about causal mechanisms linking causes and outcomes based on studying within-case mechanistic evidence (Beach 2017:2). Put differently, process tracing method ‘identifies, validates and tests causal mechanisms within case studies in a specific, theoretically informed way’ (Reilly 2012). A causal mechanism can be defined as ‘recurrent processes linking specified initial conditions and a specific outcome’ (Mayntz 2004: 239) or ‘a complex system which produces an outcome by the interaction of a number of parts’ (Glennan 1996:62). In process tracing, the researcher seeks to analyse causal processes that connect independent

variables and the outcome of the dependent variables by looking for a series of theoretically predicted intermediate steps (Checkel 2008:363).

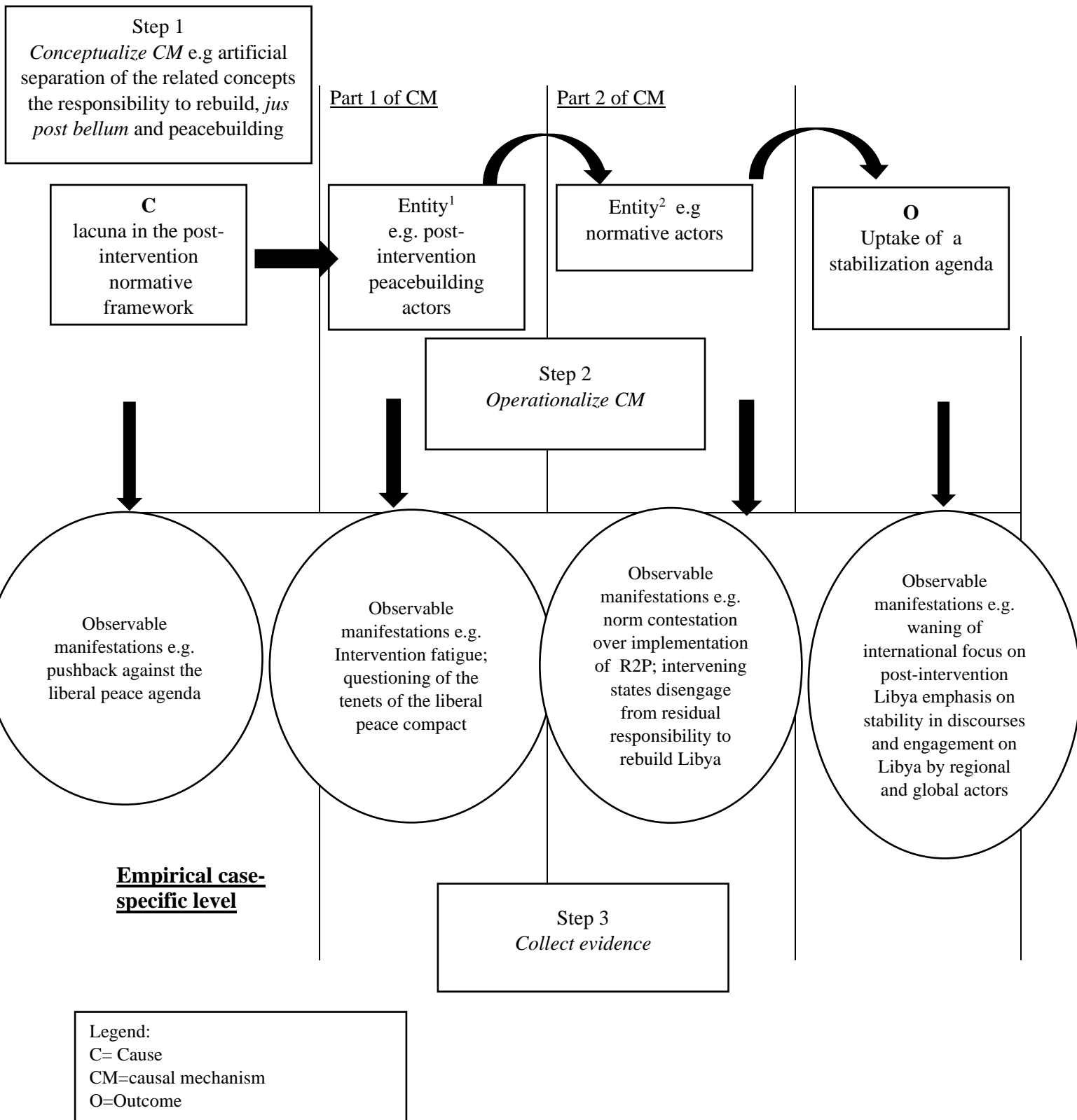
The study will make use of single-case, theory-testing process tracing, by conceptualizing a theory of causality based on existing literature and logical reasoning, and test whether there is evidence that the hypothesized causal mechanism is evidentially present in the selected case (Beach & Pedersen 2016: 305). This involves making causal inferences obtained from within-case evidence from within the selected case, depicting them as causal process observations. Evidence is collected from diverse, relevant sources, taking into account contextual and background sources that feed into the interpretation of selected variables in the case study (Bennet & Checkel 2015:10).

Theory-testing process tracing is also theory-centric which begins with development of a theory of causality, conceptualized as a causal mechanism between cause (C) and outcome, (O), then operationalizing the theoretical expectations into observable manifestations of the causal mechanism. In this way, process tracing unfolds as a step-by-step empirical verification of each part of the theorized mechanism(s), resulting in a systems understanding which addresses the *how* question by unpacking the causal mechanism as a ‘series of interlocking parts that transmit causal forces from cause to outcome’ (Beach and Pedersen 2016: 80). A systems understanding of the theorized mechanism also results in ‘deeper explanatory knowledge’ (Salmon 1998) and the mechanism is systematic given that it is expected to be generalised beyond the limitations of the single studied case (Beach and Pedersen 2013: 35).

Within the case study of post-intervention Libya, descriptive inference will aim to show that the political instability in Libya after the 2011 intervention has deteriorated to the point where the stabilization agenda has permeated policy discourse and modes of engagement of international actors. While the crises in post-intervention Libya could also be attributed to complex local-level dynamics such as tribal divisions and the limited role of the international community in post-conflict rebuilding, the implications of a ‘destabilised’ Libya on regional and international stability ultimately led to a prioritisation of stabilization. As such, the hypothesized uptake of stabilization is causally linked to the lacuna in the post-intervention normative and conceptual framework.

Figure 1: Steps in Theory-testing process tracing

Theoretical level



(Source: adapted from Beach & Pedersen 2013: 15)

1.6. Structure of the study

Following Chapter 1, which contextualises the research, defines the problem statement, sets out research questions, clarifies the research methodology utilised, and sets out the limitations and delimitations of this research, Chapter 2 will develop the theoretical framework of this study. The research will make use of the Constructivist approach to unpack the development and evolution of norms as well as their influence on state behaviour. Accordingly, Chapter 2 will also explore the convergences between the responsibility to rebuild and *jus post bellum* and their interface with broader discourse on peacebuilding. This chapter will also constitute the first step of the process tracing method used in the study, that is, the development of a theory of causality linking the identified cause and outcome in the selected case of Libya.

Chapter 3 will trace the situation in Libya beginning with the NATO-led intervention, the termination of the mission and prevailing conditions in post-intervention Libya. By expounding on post-intervention Libya and the interacting dynamics on the ground, critical analysis of the cycle of conflict and deteriorating security situation including civil war, humanitarian crises, breakdown in the rule of law and political deadlock between rival factions will be provided. Such an understanding of the political, socio-economic and security challenges is also crucial to framing the responses of regional and international actors to an increasingly unstable Libya. As part of the application of the process tracing method, Chapter 3 will detail the unpacking of the causal process by setting out the contextual conditions in which the causal story can be traced.

Following the theorization of the causal mechanism and an explication of the context, specific to the causal process under study, the next step is the empirical case-specific level of process tracing in which within-case, observable manifestations of the theorized mechanism are analysed. These observable manifestations can be thought of as ‘empirical fingerprints’ or ‘traces’ (Beach 2017: 6) of the activities of actors that are part of the causal chain in the selected case. In this regard, Chapter 4 details the rationales, modes and means through which the international and regional actors have engaged in post-intervention Libya. Paying specific attention to the UNSMIL and the Stabilization Facility to Libya, the chapter will juxtapose the strategic objectives of these institutional mechanisms with the phenomenon of stabilization as an increasingly appealing approach by international actors in response to the threat of

instability and fragility. The chapter will map out the rise of stabilization as an essentially contested concept in security and development circles as well as analysing its particular usage with respect to the policy discourse on Libya by practitioners and policy makers.

Chapter 5 offers a diagnosis about the uptake of stabilization as a phenomenon and its implications for the contested discourse on post-intervention strategy. Essentially, this chapter makes up the third step in applying the process-tracing method in the study, that is, the evaluation of the empirical material and whether it confirms the hypothesized causal mechanism.

Chapter 6 comprises the evaluation and summary of key findings following on the research questions posed in Chapter 1. The chapter will also offer recommendations for future research on the primary and secondary themes of the study.

CHAPTER 2: AN ELUSIVE NORMATIVE THEORY ON POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION? DISCOURSES ON PEACEBUILDING, JUS POST BELLUM AND THE RESPONSIBILITY TO REBUILD

2.1. Introduction

This chapter aims to contextualise the research puzzle, specifically, the lack of a comprehensive, normative defence of a post-conflict intervention framework, within the vast literature on relevant concepts such as *jus post bellum*, peacebuilding and the responsibility to rebuild. The chapter proceeds in four sections: the first section maps out the evolution of the conceptual discourse on peacebuilding and the implications for politics and practices in a ‘post-liberal’ context. The second section analyses *jus post bellum*, commencing with historical perspectives of its roots in the just war tradition, presenting an overview of the major debates on key aspects of its evolution, scope, contents and efficacy, and its interplay with related normative concepts such as the responsibility to rebuild. The third section outlines normative International Relations (IR) theory as a framework for applying moral and political philosophical reasoning to critical issues in international relations. The applicability of normative IR theory in the enquiry of the central concepts of this study is based on its methodological strategies in evaluating the role of normative ideas in practice, interrogating the nature of ethical conduct and assessing normative responses to practical issues in an evolving international arena. By underscoring issues such as the efficacy of norms, sites of value and the global arena as an ethical realm, normative IR theory allows for critical analysis of the normative values, moral agencies and moral responsibilities inherent in the concepts within the remit of this study. In this regard, the section concludes with an examination of recent attempts to bridge the gap between constructivist IR approaches and normative IR theory.

2.2. The responsibility to rebuild as the third pillar of R2P

In the wake of the conscience-shocking atrocities in Rwanda, Kosovo and Bosnia during the 1990s, the international community became gripped in polarising debates on humanitarian interventions, animated by the resolve of ‘never again’ to overcome inaction in the face of mass atrocities. The challenge to surmount the moral and political dilemmas around humanitarian interventions was met in the seminal 2001 report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS), *Responsibility to Protect*, which promulgated the emergent international norm of Responsibility to Protect (R2P). The 2001 ICISS report depicts R2P as three sets of responsibilities – the responsibility to prevent, the responsibility to react

and the responsibility to rebuild. R2P conceptualised sovereignty as responsibility whereby a state had the responsibility to protect its population from mass atrocities and was accountable to international community of states for this responsibility. States could no longer use sovereignty as a shield for human rights abuses and the commission of ethnic cleansing, war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide against their own populations (WSOD 2005). The R2P framework also outlined that in the case that there was manifest failure on the part of the state to protect the human rights of its own population, the international community had the residual responsibility to intervene. By shifting the terms of debate away from ‘right to intervene’ to ‘responsibility to protect’, the ICISS report grounded the notion of sovereignty as responsibility on a human security approach which placed an accountability demand on sovereignty, thereby strengthening and reinforcing its primacy as ‘the minimum content of good international citizenship’ (ICISS 2001).

As the third pillar of R2P in its original conception, the ICISS report (para. 5.1) summed the responsibility to rebuild as follows:

The responsibility to protect implies the responsibility not just to prevent and react, but to follow through and rebuild. This means that if military intervention action is taken – because of a breakdown or abdication of a state’s own capacity and authority in discharging its “responsibility to protect” – there should be a genuine commitment to helping to build a durable peace, and promoting good governance and sustainable development. Conditions of public safety and order have to be reconstituted by international agents acting in partnership with local authorities, with the goal of progressively transferring to them authority and responsibility to rebuild.

When juxtaposed with R2P as endorsed by states at the 2005 World Summit, this responsibility to rebuild is captured in modest language in paragraph 138 of the WSOD: ‘... the international community should as appropriate, encourage and help states to exercise this responsibility.’ This ambiguity extends to paragraph 139 which outlines the intention by states ‘to commit themselves as necessary and appropriate to helping states build capacity to protect their population from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity and to assisting those which are under stress before crises and conflicts break out’ (WSOD 2005). Schnabel (2012:56) asserts that what we view as R2P2005 is not simply a watering-down of the responsibility to rebuild but its categorical exclusion. The exclusion of such a crucial responsibility in the WSOD was the result of states’ apprehension of the high costs that could

come with a rebuilding commitment, coupled with concerns that such a commitment could open the door for applications outside strict R2P contexts such as humanitarian disasters. Another reason for member states' reluctance was the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission which was perceived as the UN's mechanism for post-conflict reconstruction (WSOD 2005: paras. 97-8). Whether implicit or not, in paragraphs 138 and 139, the responsibility to rebuild is framed in specifically moral terms rather than as firm legal duties. The implication is that rebuilding and restoring are presented as subjective commitments (Stahn 2014:106).

Although peacebuilding and R2P have been treated as separate concepts in UN policy circles, the two concepts intersect in a variety of ways. According to Paris (2016:517), the connection between R2P (as laid out in the ICISS report) and peacebuilding as, is rooted in the 'strategic logic' of humanitarian intervention denoting 'the assumed or expected relationship between the use of armed force and its desired outcome.' He further notes that this strategic logic reveals other layers of the relationship between R2P and peacebuilding. One distinct aspect is the 'end-state problem' – the dilemma faced by interveners at war's end of deciding how to end the missions without perpetuating the conditions that initially prompted military action (Paris 2016: 518). For example, just occupiers have to circumvent the potential problem of 'mission creep', a situation in which occupying forces find that their responsibilities evolve with time, leading up to a cycle of extending occupation timelines. This cycle could negatively impact prospects for self-determination by local authorities as a result of over-dependency on the intervening forces (Evans 2009:158). In such a scenario, the alternatives for interveners may range from the maintenance of a peace mission for an indefinite time period; to the withdrawal of interveners once the threat to the local population has been eliminated. The situation can be complicated further if the threat was the government of the target state which implies that the rationale for intervention is ultimately linked to regime change. Such a case necessitates a more expansive mission that simply putting an end to the occurrence of mass atrocities - a long-term international commitment to peacebuilding (Paris 2016:518).

R2P also resonates with a cosmopolitan approach to human protection in three aspects. The first aspect is the focus on individualism and the primacy of human rights premised on the concept of sovereignty as responsibility. The second is the principle of collective responsibility at the heart of R2P which imparts a universal, collective duty to the international community to intervene through the use of force *ultima ratio* in cases where a state is manifestly failing to protect its population from mass atrocities (Wyatt 2019:103). However, it is important to note

that the implementation of R2P stops short of establishing a legally binding obligation on states to intervene in cases where there are gross violations of human rights and mass atrocity crimes. This is encapsulated by paragraph 139 of the World Summit Outcome Document (UN 2005) which outlines that any collective action will be conducted on a case-by-case basis. Moreover, the contestation around the normative status of R2P and its implementation points to the soft law nature of R2P. The softness of R2P has two-fold implications for international law: ‘it deepens the discourse on the interplay between rights and obligations’ including positive obligations after armed conflict and mass atrocities, and it promotes an innovative perspective to the relationship between moral imperatives and legal norms and standards (Stahn 2014:107).

Additionally, the resonance between R2P and cosmopolitan human protection can be seen in the specificity of R2P and the thresholds for its application which limit its scope to genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. In spite of this provision for limited thresholds, R2P is a complex norm which makes it vulnerable to applicatory contestation around issues such as greater emphasis on some of its pillars more than others; or the activation of the international community’s remedial role in some cases (Welsh 2019:57). The application of R2P in the 2011 NATO-led intervention in Libya demonstrated a solid test case of its conceptual and legal tenets (APR2P 2011). However, the association of sanctioned coercive response under UNSC Resolution 1973 with foreign-imposed regime change resulted in a post-Libya blowback of R2P, arguably influencing the perfunctory engagement and paralysis in UNSC action on the situation in Syria. Hence, while the strength of R2P is its conceptual and normative contribution to conditional sovereignty, atrocity prevention and human security (Wyatt 2019:113), the political and normative contestation around its implementation and the potential for its misuse to advance interests of powerful states casts a shadow on R2P’s efficacy and feed into enduring debates around the tension between global human rights and state sovereignty (Hehir 2019:16).

In spite of the oft-cited critique of R2P as an affront on sovereignty and as a tool of the powerful (Hehir 2013:134), R2P ‘transcends and dethrones the lexicon of humanitarian intervention’ (Wyatt 2019:190) by advancing a cosmopolitan-oriented approach to human protection, promoting a people-centred approach underpinning the human security paradigm and offering a comprehensive toolkit of preventive, reactive and reconstructive measures in human protection at the global constitutional level. Therefore, as a multifaceted diplomatic and political agenda that resonates with human emancipation, atrocity prevention and human security; R2P stands as both ‘a doctrinal innovation and conceptual development’ within

international law (Wyatt 2019:102). Moreover, in theory and practice, R2P has built on the momentum towards embracing a more cosmopolitan approach to human protection (Wyatt 2019:189).

2.3. The evolution of the discourse on post-conflict peacebuilding

As defined by the UN 1992 *An Agenda for Peace* report, peacebuilding refers to ‘activities undertaken on the far side of conflict to reassemble the foundations of peace and provide the tools for building on those foundations something that is more than just the absence of war.’ Thus, peacebuilding includes activities such as reintegration of former combatants into civilian society, security sector reform including strengthening the rule of law, enhancing respect for human rights, capacity building for democratic institutions; and supporting conflict resolution and reconciliation initiatives.

2.3.1. The liberal peace model: from hubris to crisis

Following growing traction of international political discourses on sovereignty and responsibility from the early 2000s, the approach to peacebuilding evolved towards a multi-modal and multi-level praxis that was largely transformative by aiming to address the structural drivers of conflict (Sabaratnam 2011:11). By focusing on the agency of individuals and issues of transitional justice and human rights in post-conflict society, the peacebuilding-as-statebuilding concept advanced the security-development nexus while enabling a ‘consensual’ or partnership approach to peacebuilding. This peacebuilding consensus, the bedrock of the liberal peacebuilding model, denoted a ‘highly standardised’ model of how to foster sustainable peace with an emphasis on institutions, governance by the state and the processes of marketization and democratization (Mac Ginty 2006:32).

Premised on the tenets of liberal internationalism *à la* Locke, Smith, Kant and Mill, the liberal peacebuilding enterprise is hegemonic, drawing on Eurocentrism and its pillars of modernity, coloniality and capitalism (Mignolo 2000). The Eurocentric world system that has dominated relations of power and conceptions of knowledge since the 15th century has relied on the reproduction of racial, gendered and geopolitical hierarchies which have delegitimised the historic, economic, political and cultural experiences of the non-Western world through the workings of colonialism and capitalism (Quijano 2007:167). Hence, Eurocentrism has been advanced through the hierarchization of power, being and knowledge in a matrix of coloniality, coupled with the projection of Europe as the ‘universal point zero’ of knowledge, or the only source of reliable, objective knowledge (Castro-Gomez as cited in Grosfoguel 2007:215).

In tandem with the matrix of coloniality that has upheld the global design of the Eurocentric system, Eurocentrism is manifested through historical, epistemic and cultural avatars (Sabaratnam 2013:260). For instance, the privileging of Western epistemology and Western knowledge as the only one of capable of realising universal consciousness while dismissing non-Western knowledges as particularistic and backward (Grosfoguel 2005). A second example is the assumption of ‘endogeneity’ and hyperagency in the history of Europe’s rise (Bhambra 2010) and the marginalization of the non-Western world as ‘primitive and less modern’ (Quijano 2000:542). Mirroring these avatars of Eurocentrism, liberal peace is encumbered by three avatars of the Eurocentric paradigm namely: the analytical exclusion of target subjects in research; an ontology of otherness pegged on the liberal-local divide and the continued prioritization of the liberal social contract and European social democratic values (Sabaratnam 2013:263).

At the core of the liberal peace project are governmentality frameworks, informed by the framing of liberal peace as a project of protection and security. Building on Michael Foucault’s (2007:108) notion of ‘liberal governmentality’, liberal interventions are legitimised through hierarchical projections of subjectivity which target populations through security apparatuses. In other words, what are labelled liberal peace projects are actually ‘expressions of sovereign power enacted through disciplinary and governmentalizing practices’ (Jabri 2010:54). Emphasizing peace-as-governance at the centre of the liberal peace project, Jabri (2010:48) adds:

Far from being an emancipatory project, therefore, the liberal peace project might be seen as reinforcing a hierarchical conception of subjectivities premised on the primacy of the European liberal self as against others whose modes of articulation remain other.’ Hence, the liberal project can be seen as one of ‘dispossession’ in which targets of liberal interventions are reduced to ‘technocratic problems to be solved, rationalised, calculated and ultimately disciplined.

The production of liberal subjectivity is reiterated by Chandler (2017:77), who points to the notion of ‘sovereignty as capacity’ as the operational basis of the interventionist consensus and the resultant focus on the ‘sovereignty gap’ as a key component of liberal peacebuilding (Ghani *et al.* 2005:4) ‘Sovereignty was merely a capacity that could be enhanced or presumably weakened’ (Chandler 2017:80). By conflating liberal interventions with the notion of ‘sovereignty-building’, not only was the sovereign autonomy of subject states undermined, but

they were also effectively embedded in international institutions with external frameworks of regulation and monitoring (Chandler 2017:83). Therefore, the constituent elements of the liberal peacebuilding consensus, specifically the hierarchization of variable sovereignty, the prioritization of international legal sovereignty and the modernist framing of the ‘human’ in relation to the state and the international realm, were key to reinforcing the hegemonic standing of the liberal peace model (Jabri 2010:45). The evolution of ‘new’ forms of imperialism (Duffield 2001:34) and the production of liberal subjectivity under the guise of ‘shared sovereignty’ (Krasner 2004:108) are indicators of the avatars of Eurocentrism within the liberal peace agenda (Sabaratnam 2013:266).

Put differently, peacebuilding as ‘sovereignty-building’ (Chandler 2017:81) internationalized the domestic matter of peace, enabling a consensual approach to peace building and the embedding of both target states and external actors in international institutional networks involved in the ‘co-production of sovereignty’ (Ghani *et al.* 2005: 13). This discursive evolution of peacebuilding towards statebuilding and governance not only jettisoned references to ‘peace’ and reconciliation,’ but also exposed the limits of the peacebuilding-as-statebuilding approach namely, the reproduction and institutionalization of international hierarchies. According to Chandler, (2017: 9) the twenty-year crisis of the liberal peace model was sown in the ‘double blurring of the boundaries of international society’ that is, the boundaries between war and peace and between sovereignty and intervention. The matter of peace shifted from being a purely international issue to the domestic politics, and simultaneously, peace was also internationalised as the boundaries between sovereignty and intervention distorted. In this regard, the emergence of peacebuilding on the international agenda as a post-Cold War liberal project was very much a product of the time, a befitting compliment to the momentous ‘end of history’ period and testament to the inordinate emphasis on the ‘legitimizing power of democratic institutions’ (Lake 2016:6).

A second marker of the Eurocentric paradigm is the continual ‘ontology of Otherness’ or the recurrent distinction between ‘western/international’ and the non-western/local’ (Sabaratnam 2013:266). As a critique of liberal peacebuilding that in the late 2000s extending into early 2010s, pragmatism problematized the externally-imposed, top-down approaches of the peacebuilding-as-statebuilding framework, calling instead for a focus on the societal sphere and local agency to ensure transformative outcomes. Characterised as the ‘fourth generation of peacebuilding’ (Richmond 2010a:26) or the ‘turn to the local’ (MacGinty and Richmond 2013:764), the discourse on peacebuilding shifted in response to the crisis of peacebuilding

and liberal interventionism in the wake of policy failures in a number of cases such as Bosnia, Kosovo, Iraq, Afghanistan, East Timor and the DRC. As the gap between the expectations of liberal peacebuilding and its on-the-ground impact widened, peace and conflict scholars, policy officials and practitioners acknowledged mounting critiques of the liberal peace model, including its universal western claims, the reproduction and institutionalization of international hierarchies and the failure to engage with local contexts in building sustainable peace compacts (Moe & Stepputat 2018:295). Complementary to the political critiques of liberal peacebuilding, which drew on its interest-based and ideological implementation, the pragmatist critique zeroed in on its universalist, rationalist assumptions and called for endogenous, context-sensitive and anti-foundational approaches to peacebuilding (Chandler 2017: 25)

2.3.2. Post-liberal critiques and the pragmatic turn in peacebuilding

The centrepiece of the pragmatist critique is the ‘local and the ‘everyday’ who have been locked out by the reductionist and universal foundations of liberal peacebuilding. For instance, Richmond (2010b:666) asserts that rather than engaging with local contexts, communities and agency, the liberal peace has instead affirmed territorial sovereignty, hierarchical epistemologies and the sovereign limits of modernisation.’ The pragmatic turn is a response to the ‘crisis of the liberal peace’ in reference to its counterproductive outcomes and practical shortcomings across several sites of liberal intervention and resultant fatigue among liberal interveners (MacGinty 2011:6). The mixed results of the top-down, securitized, state-centric approach to peacebuilding in Cambodia, Timor-Leste, Burundi, South Sudan, Central African Republic, Afghanistan and Iraq, among others, have punctured the hubris of the liberal peace model and exposed its working to project the global North’s structural and governmental power, interests and identity into localised state institutions (MacGinty and Richmond 2013:774). By unmasking how the liberal peace blocks local agency, the focus on local institutions foregrounds critical questions about the epistemologies and methodologies employed in the analyses of peace, power, accountability and interaction with local orders (Moe and Stepputat 2018:296).

Therefore, the local turn is about strengthening locally grounded agendas ‘working with and through’ local institutions and elites in pursuit of a more emancipatory and empathetic kind of peace via the everyday (Mac Ginty & Richmond 2013:770). The emphasis on increased agency and visibility of the local in peacebuilding is at odds with the imposition of liberal forms on the non-liberal Other which is the ontological distinction between the ‘liberal and the local’ at

the core of universalist and modernist tenets of Eurocentrism (Sabaratnam 2013:266). However, as Sabaratnam (2013:267) asserts, the pragmatist critique of liberalism is still steeped in the assumption of cultural division and discursive framing of the irreconcilable difference of the non-liberal Other. Chandler (2017:38) concurs, arguing that the gist of pragmatist and political critiques of liberal peacebuilding is ‘a critique of liberal universalist aspirations rather than a critique of the new international hierarchies and divisions based on the establishment of the divide between ‘liberal’ peacebuilders and ‘non-liberal’ Others’. The essentialised difference between the ‘liberal interveners’ and the ‘fundamentally different intervened’ is reproduced in the concept of ‘an epistemological distance between the liberal and local politics’ (Paris 2002:638). By positioning the liberal/local distinction in the policymaking and policy implementation spheres, the pragmatist consensus that has problematized liberal peacebuilding reproduces the ‘ontology of distinction’ and essentialised differences and hierarchies between Western interveners and their localised Other (Finkenbusch 2016:257).

In the search for the local and the everyday, which lies beyond the hegemonic frameworks of knowledge and power, post-liberal critiques of liberal peacebuilding have been faced with the ‘methodological challenge of confronting Western ontological assumptions and epistemologies without resorting to new meta-narratives of peace’ (Tadjbakhsh 2011:123). Furthermore, the post-liberal problematique of the foundations of liberal peacebuilding, premised on an ‘uncritical approach to power’ and external prompting of the non-liberal Other, means that post-liberal peacebuilding has to continuously question and deconstruct the reductionist liberal-universal foundations of peace (Finkenbusch 2016:260). For practice and theory of post-liberalism, such a deconstructive process has led to the development of an ontological reality that prioritises ‘non-Western life over Western models’ and policy realities over theoretical ideals (Richmond 2011: 48).

By the 2010s, these critiques of peacebuilding namely, the turn to the local and post-liberal approaches, exposed the impasse of peacebuilding-as-statebuilding, seen in the reproduction of binaries of liberal universalism (institutionalist, top-down, externally imposed frameworks) and cultural relativism (essentialised socio-cultural differences between the liberal interveners and non-liberal Other) (Chandler 2017:165). The shift from linear thinking to a systems approach to peacebuilding, focused on the societal interactions at the local-local and local-international level, marked radical change in disciplinary understandings of the concept. Furthermore, the focus on society and the dynamics of the societal level simultaneously marked a transition from state-based, disciplinary power to the governance of effects operating through

endogenous, organic processes in various societal contexts (Chandler 2017:193). As such, the governance of effects can be seen as a challenge to reductionist terms of cause-and-effect perspectives.

At the policy level, the pragmatic turn in peacebuilding informed the discussion on peacebuilding and highlighted the political and decision-making processes of international peacebuilding and its interaction with local legitimacy and agency. A clear example of the uptake of pragmatist alternative to the liberal peace is the emergence of sustaining peace as the overarching policy agenda of the UN in response to the evolving peacebuilding landscape. The sustaining peace approach was premised on UNSC Resolution 2282 and UN General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution 70/262, adapted in 2016 following a comprehensive review of the Peacebuilding Architecture. In 2015, the UN conducted three major peace and security reviews which yielded the report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO); the report of the Advisory Group of Experts (AGE) on the Peacebuilding Architecture; and the Global Study report on the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325. The three review processes converged on a number of themes and recommendations aimed at enhancing the UN peace and security architecture in light of the changing nature of conflict and peace and security contexts. Common messages from the three reports include: (i) the imperative for UN coherence and system integration, including greater coordination between the pillars of human rights, development, and peace and security; (ii) the primacy of prevention as the building block for durable peace; (iii) emphasis on context awareness in UN action, informed by flexibility and context-specific engagements in planning, implementation and attention to gendered dimension of conflicts; and (iv) prioritisation of inclusivity and local ownership of the processes of sustaining peace involving the broad-based participation of local actors as active peacebuilding agents including women, youth, civil society and minority groups (Stamnes & Osland 2016:22).

According to the report of the AGE on the review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture (UN 2015b par.6), sustaining peace should be conceptualised as a holistic, endogenous, multi-dimensional approach that necessitates shared responsibility across the UN's work in the peacebuilding continuum from prevention to peacekeeping through to peacebuilding and post-conflict recovery and reconstruction. Furthermore, sustaining peace should be viewed as a 'goal and a process to build a common vision of a society' as outlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Guterres 2018a: par.1,6). For member states, sustaining peace is a deliberate meta-policy aimed at strengthening the multi-sectoral institutions, norms, attitudes

and mechanisms that are crucial for a positive peace (Mahmoud and Makoond 2018:9). Hence, the concept of sustaining peace is applicable not only to conflict-affected societies or countries transitioning from war to peace, but is also relevant for all societies beyond the binaries of war and peace. As a paradigm shift in the conceptualization and praxis of peace, building sustaining peace is not the ‘burden of outsiders’ but rather the shared responsibility of states and all citizens, with policy implications at the local and international levels (Mahmoud and Makoond 2018:10). By linking the local and international dimensions of peace as an enabler of sustainable development, sustaining peace leverages a ‘whole of UN’ approach towards the goals of the sustaining peace agenda while doubling efforts to support national and local capacities for sustaining peace (Guterres 2018: par.8). In this regard, the twin resolutions underscored the centrality of multi-stakeholder partnership including the UN, member states, regional and international organisations, international financial institutions and civil society organisations (Guterres 2018: par. 6).

Complementary to the 2016 UNGA and UNSC twin resolutions on sustaining peace, the UN Secretary General’s report in January 2018 followed up on the progress of implementation of the resolutions with respect to enhancing operational and policy coherence of international efforts in support of national and local capacities. The report highlighted the mainstreaming of the sustaining peace approach across the peace and security, development and political departments of the UN, in addition to the call for a ‘quantum leap’ in contributions to a restructured Peacebuilding Fund as the main UN instrument for financing peacebuilding activities (Guterres 2018: par.47). In a subsequent interim report released in May 2019, UNSG Guterres noted that the sustaining peace agenda gained considerable traction across the UN system evident in a number of ways. First, the usage of the concept in more than 80 outcome documents between 2017 and 2018. Second, the enhanced advisory role of the Peacebuilding Commission in promoting policy coherence to UN’s multi-stakeholder partnerships operating in a number of states including Colombia, Gambia, Sierra Leone and the CAR , among others (Guterres 2019: par 3). Operational coherence can also be seen in the merger of the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Department of Political Affairs into the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (Guterres 2019: par.9). Third, UNSG Guterres also highlighted the Action for Peacekeeping initiative and the subsequent Declaration of Shared Commitments endorsed by 151 member states. On the matter of financing for peacebuilding, the recommendation to allocate 15% of the total variance in overall finances for peacekeeping operations to the Peacebuilding Fund amounted to \$16.5 million between 2017/18 and 2018/19

(Guterres 2019: par 30). Furthermore, the UNSG drew attention to the unpredictability of funding for peacebuilding and growing concerns about the dwindling funds directed to the overall peacebuilding budget (Guterres 2019: par 29). Overall, the sustaining peace agenda prioritises an amorphous, bottom-up approach that cuts across a range of sectors and actors, and building on sustainability and local legitimacy rather than externally imposed templates and policies.

Despite a discernible deepening of a research agenda centred around post-liberal perspectives across theory and praxis, Hudson (2021:38) contends that the gamut of critical peacebuilding approaches have largely failed to come up with viable alternatives to the liberal peace model. One of the main reasons for this inability to decenter the universalist, hierarchist and rationalist prescriptions inherent in liberal peacebuilding is the continued entanglement of postcolonial approaches with Eurocentric frames of thinking. This charge against postcolonialism has often been reiterated by decolonial scholars (see Grosfoguel 2007; Mignolo 2011; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2014; Quijano 2007; Sabaratnam 2013) who assert that the critical peacebuilding project is itself influenced in part by epistemological and methodological binaries rooted in the logic of coloniality. Although postliberal approaches to peacebuilding have advanced concepts such as hybridity, local ownership and peace formation, among others, these perspectives have been criticized for failing to move beyond vague commitments to emancipation and prioritisation of local agency. This has been most visible in practice where the challenges of nurturing contextually-specific forms of legitimacy have exposed the limits of local ownership while also displaying the instrumentalization of hybrid political orders on behalf of hegemonic liberal interests (Paffenholz 2016:2015).

According to Hudson (2021:38), the postliberal critique of liberal peacebuilding has failed to engage more closely with multi-pronged feminist methodology, informed by postcolonial and poststructuralist feminist theory. Specifically, these critical feminist theories, which use methods such as reflexivity, intersectionality and recognition of the political nature of any research agenda, offer a viable way out of the standoff between decolonial and postcolonial scholars. By highlighting the case study of the construction of sexual violence in the DRC, (Hudson 2021:47) makes a strong case for the analytical potential of critical feminist discourse and intersectional analysis in advancing a decolonial methodology in peacebuilding research.

2.3.3. Peacebuilding and the rise of resilience approaches

In tandem with the gradual uptake of sustaining peace, resilience has gained traction in a global peace and security landscape increasingly characterised by uncertainty, ambiguity and complexity. In a sense, the turn to resilience at the meta-policy level of peacebuilding mirrors the pragmatic turn at the meta-theoretical level, with implications for both practice and theory of peacebuilding. The emergence of resilience thinking was forged on the shifts in understandings of risk and its interaction with concepts like peacebuilding in complex systems. In complex systems, risks are embedded in societal processes whose outcomes are difficult to predict in a simplistic cause-and-effect model (Renn *et al.* 2011:234). Pertinent to critiques of the liberal peace model, the shortcomings of liberal interventionism, particularly its pre-configured, top-down approach, increasingly shifted the focus of peacebuilding interveners away from supply-driven policy-making towards engagement with the internal capacities and capabilities of society. In part, this transformative thinking was also informed by the logic of temporally and spatially debounded risks which called for the framing of international security as risk management (Clapton and Hameiri 2012:66). Furthermore, the view of international threats as shared vulnerabilities in a globalised context translated into a move away from solutionist perspectives to more long-term risk management alternatives.

Pertinent to peacebuilding, the concept of resilience called for emphasis on prevention rather than intervention, empowerment instead of protection, and engagement with the vulnerable rather than victims (Chandler 2012:218). Hence, alongside the pragmatic turn in peacebuilding and the governance of effects, resilience can be understood as: ‘the internal capacity of societies to cope with crises, with the emphasis on the development of self-organisation and internal capacities and capabilities rather than the external provision of aid, resources or policy solutions’ (Chandler 2015a:7). By centring the agency, knowledge and practices at the societal level rather than privileging the agency of external interveners, a resilience paradigm acknowledges self-organised complexity as fundamental for sustainable peace. For international peacebuilding in practice, a complexity-informed approach to resilience means that the aim of external interventions should be to ‘stimulate and facilitate the capacity of societies to absorb and adapt to stress to the degree necessary to sustain peace’ (de Coning 2016:173). Consequently, the discourses of complexity, non-linearity, self-organisation and holism (de Coning 2016:174) have led to the broader embrace of resilience as the preferred risk management paradigm across a number of international organisations including the UN, OECD and the World Bank. The UN’s sustaining peace agenda aims at enhancing the resilience

of local capacities for sustainable peace while the EU has outlined state and societal resilience as a strategic priority in its European Neighbourhood policy, alongside principled pragmatism as a central principle of its foreign policy (EUGS 2016:25).

Hence, from a policy perspective, a resilience approach to security practices not only assigns practical meaning to the concept of local ownership and self-organisation, but also seeks to emphasize the agency of the local, framing the resilient subject as active and capable of realising self-transformation (Chandler 2012:217). In a resilience framework, intervention is seen as an avenue to facilitate the securing of agency and as an act of empowerment rather than an act of external power' (Chandler 2012:218). Such an agent-centred approach to international peacebuilding allows for resilience to act as an effective, transformative force to prioritize society-based understandings of agency, knowledge and praxis in pursuit of adaptive, endogenous, bottom-up solutions to societal problems. Practitioners have also widely embraced the concept of resilience over concepts such as failed states or fragile states which were seen as largely paternalistic and extensions of the hierarchical binaries between the local/international actors and liberal/non-liberal contexts (Chandler 2017:168). This implies a policy agenda defined by multi-dimensional, multi-phased and multi-level approaches, in addition to coordination with a broad range of local and international actors on the ground. For instance, underpinning its full-spectrum defence and deterrence posture, the North Alliance Treaty Organisation (NATO) has incorporated resilience in the implementation of its core tasks namely, collective defence, crisis management and cooperative security. The 'Commitment to Enhance Resilience', adopted at the 2016 Warsaw Summit, was a milestone for NATO's efforts to strengthen collective defence capabilities through implementation of seven baseline requirements for civil preparedness and the enhancement of national resilience capacities (NATO 2016). The Warsaw 'Commitment to Enhance Resilience' has implications for a whole-of-society approach to building resilience, including the strengthening of civil-military cooperation within and beyond NATO territory and working with non-state actors such as the private sector, cities and the public (Prior 2018:2).

Despite the appeal of resilience under conditions of uncertainty and complexity, the conceptual ambiguity of the concept itself may result in dilution and overstretch leading to loss of meaning. Furthermore, the tendency of depoliticisation in resilience-based approaches could result in a shift of responsibility from external interveners onto the governed through novel forms of governance and the continuation of neoliberal governmentality (Joseph 2016:371). Ambiguity can also foster value contestation among development, humanitarian, foreign policy and

security actors, further hindering effective operationalisation of the concept (Juncos 2018:566). Such contestation can lead to tension and lack of policy coherence among various actors with divergent political agendas, compounded with the masking of broader issues of accountability and power relations (Juncos 2017:6).

Drawing on philosophical pragmatism, resilience and complexity-thinking open the peacebuilding discourse up for greater engagement with the local context in both policy and practice. Not only does this conceptual shift expand the scope of pragmatic peace, but it also brings to the fore pivotal questions about power, accountability and their effects in local contexts. The evolution of the discursive and practical dimensions of peacebuilding certainly reflects the critical juncture between the liberal and post-liberal; between intervention and post-intervention and the consequent reframing of peacebuilding practice and thinking beyond constraining debates. However, alternative approaches should also be analysed from the perspective of continuity and change given recurrent frameworks from historic forms of intervention. For instance, the pragmatic turn shares similarities with the analytical reconfiguration of the critical school of peace and conflict studies in the mid-1990s, laying the normative and ideological foundation for the contemporary post-liberal meta-critique of liberal peace which dominated the peacebuilding discourse during the past decade (Sabaratnam 2011:18). Moe and Müller (2017:17) also question the rise of complexity, hybridity and resilience thinking, alongside the pragmatic turn in peacebuilding, as an indication of a ‘liberal retreat’ or the establishment of a post-liberal era fundamentally distinct from liberalism. Instead, the alternative approaches and reconfigurations in practices and discourses of international peacebuilding reveal ‘variations over a long-established theme of liberalism coming to terms with its own limitations’ (Moe & Müller 2017:18).

In sum, in the nearly three decades since *An Agenda for Peace*, the concept of peacebuilding has ‘broadened, deepened and been applied to different points in the conflict cycle’ (Curtis 2012:5). Consequently, the range of critical scholarship on peacebuilding has focused on essential normative, conceptual and policy questions such as, whose peace? which peace? and in whose interest? These questions help open up the discourse around the dominant paradigms of peacebuilding and the quest for a transformative agenda around notions such as conflict sensitivity, conflict transformation and local ownership.

2.3.4. Interdisciplinary perspectives of peacebuilding

The conceptions of peace gained from a range of disciplines offer critical insights when gauged alongside the discursive and conceptual evolution of peacebuilding. The scholarly critiques of the liberal peace have not been confined to the mainstream theoretical perspectives in International Relations but have also found resonance in a range of interdisciplinary approaches and ethnographic, sociological and action-related methodologies. Anthropology views peacebuilding as an ethic of attention that necessitates deep engagement with the textures of people and places while drawing cross-cultural lessons for conflict resolution and conflict transformation through inclusive and reflexive dialogue (Souillac & Fry 2016:14; Anne Brown 2013:141). Sociology has also had a major impact on evolving conceptions of peace, peacebuilding and conflict resolution with specific reference to the sociological roots of Johan Galtung (1969) who advanced thinking in the differences between positive and negative peace; and John Paul Lederach (2003) who emphasized the concept of conflict transformation focused on addressing the structural drivers of conflict at all levels of a society through building of relationships and cultivating infrastructures for peacebuilding. Additionally, sociological perspectives have focused on the sociology of peace processes concerned with issues such as the tensions between truth and reconciliation, and between peace and justice, the dynamics of remembrance and commemoration and policy imperatives for social integration of former combatants and programmes for citizen education and bridging of social cleavages and interpersonal accommodation (Brewer 2013:162). Similarly, Charles Mills' (1959:143) concept of the sociological imagination sheds lights on how the interactions between the dimensions of the social structure, personal biographical experiences, social structural conditions, historical forces and political processes affect the public and private spheres that feed into both social transformation and conflict transformation (Brewer 2013: 168). Overall, a sociological inquiry into wars, conflict and peace opens up alternative ways of conceptualizing the societal forces that underpin the relationships, mechanisms and processes of peacebuilding (Trimikliniotis 2016: 104).

In economics, the concept of peace economics defined as the 'economic study and design of political, economic and cultural institutions, their interrelations, and their policies to prevent, mitigate, or resolve any type of latent or actual violence or other destructive conflict within and between societies' presents a normative view of the role of economics and the rebuilding of the capital society as crucial contributor of positive peace (Brauer & Carusso 2013:154). For Murtagh (2016: 120), social economics is a site of political and economic action to challenge

and restructure the neoliberal economic framework at the heart of the liberal peace model. By constructing alternative assemblages of neoliberal peace in social enterprises, social finance, skills and networks to support the local, social economics is seen as part of the pragmatic peacebuilding process that acknowledge the local and the every as sites of power, resistance and agency.

From a post-colonial perspective, peacebuilding is influenced by the enduring impact of the colonial past and the hierarchical structures of the neoliberal global economy. By highlighting the interventionist capacity of peacebuilding practices, different from other forms of interventions, a post-colonial reading of peacebuilding asserts the discursive and institutional dimensions of governing capacities shaped within a developmental and securitizing framework. In this context of interactions between the colonial rationality and post-colonial rationality, there emerges a ‘tension between the peacebuilding remit and the remit of the post-colonial state and contestations within it’ (Jabri 2016: 158). The impact of the colonial rationality also extends to the interactions between the locals and the internationals in which the agency of the former is informed by the political imaginaries of the modernizing logic of coloniality. Hence, a post-colonial peace is one that emphasizes independence from colonial and post-colonial dispossession, and critically engages the historical and political permeation of the colonial rationality into the articulation of narratives and practices of peacebuilding. For post-coloniality, peace remains ‘a project in process and on trial’ (Kristeva as quoted in Jabri 2016:165).

From a multi-disciplinary purview, the critical literature on peacebuilding presents a continuum of approaches to peacebuilding divergent from tenets of liberal internationalism. The range of distinct disciplinary approaches provide a basis for alternative conceptual and epistemic insights into how peace is understood, contested in various contexts and how it informs related concepts and practices such as peacebuilding, development and conflict resolution (Richmond *et al.*, 2016:3). A variegated analysis of peacebuilding is especially important in light of the critical juncture at which peacebuilding finds itself – encapsulated by emerging research agendas such as resilience thinking, the pragmatic turn or hybridity – and how the conceptual and practical discourse is shaping praxis and in what has been arguably identified as a post-liberal era (Moe & Stepputat 2018: 293).

The focus of this study on Libya, which is geographically situated in Africa, also warrants a deeper reflection of the various meanings, framings and practices of peacebuilding on the

continent with implications for both policy and praxis. Accordingly, analysis of the contested politics and practices of peacebuilding in Africa must take into account both African and external approaches, as well as the history, agency and geostrategic positioning of Africa in the world. On one hand, Africa has long been the object and subject of international interventions in which actors, ideas and practices have shaped and been shaped by trends in an evolving peace and security landscape. On the other hand, contrary to Eurocentric thinking which has tended to treat Africa as a deviant case where international relations (IR) theory is applied, a growing body of African peacebuilding scholarship has contributed towards pivotal conceptual, theoretical and empirical debates relevant to global discourses on peacebuilding. In this regard, African scholars have critically engaged a range of key themes and debates, *inter alia*: the critique of the top-down, state-centric and externally-imposed frameworks of liberal peacebuilding (see for instance, Olonisakin & Muteru 2014); the unfeasibility of the economic liberalization in addressing socio-economic drivers of conflict (see Curtis & Dzinesa 2013; Salih 2017); the imperative of context-specific approaches to SSR in light of African realities (see Aning & Aubyn 2018); the civilizing logic behind peacebuilding activities in Africa (see Tieku 2021); and contradictions of the peacebuilding-as-statebuilding approach especially in post-conflict setting characterised by fragmentation and factionalism (see Zambakari 2016). By engaging in a critical reflection of African thinking and experiences in peacebuilding alongside relevant themes such as security and justice, interventions and statebuilding, pertinent questions of whose peace? what kind of peace? are equally important in parsing the evolution of peace and the relationship with politics and power relations in evolving contexts.

In the main, salient trends, debates and discourses across theory and practice are pointing towards a rethinking of peacebuilding encapsulated by a reality in which the liberal, postliberal, hybrid and adaptive perspectives and approaches co-exist. Ultimately, the key question is whether these critical positions offer compelling narratives to shift the core of peacebuilding, or whether they will remain constrained by enduring tensions and dilemmas surrounding notions of ownership, agency and resilience.

2.4. The conceptual discourse on *jus post bellum*

Contemporary debates about justice at the end of war indicate growing interest in not only the post-war responsibilities of belligerents, but also in nuanced understandings of just peace³ in terms of the human security paradigm (Teitel 2013:336). Furthermore, the realities of modern warfare have illustrated the blurring of boundaries between war and peace resulting in grey areas that evade the temporal conflict/post-conflict distinction (Kennedy 2006:113). As Patterson (2012:3) avers, ‘wars rarely end well’, meaning that questions about justice, peace, security and order are just as crucial in the ‘fog of peace’ as they are in the fog of war. For Teitel (2013:335), the demand for *post bellum* justice can be attributed to the contemporary context in which wars are being waged under legal scrutiny of international humanitarian laws and human rights laws, as well broader goals of democracy projection. Additionally, the pursuit of just peace has also motivated an interventionist calculus that incorporates both backward-looking and forward-looking aims. Pertinent to the just war tradition, concerned with the justice of a war and how this war is being waged, *jus post bellum* departs from classical post-war perspectives that were fundamentally concerned with the restoration of the *status quo ante* or the pre-war condition, towards a broader framework that is concerned with the responsibilities and duties of ex-combatants and the implications for the transformative agenda in peace, justice and post-conflict reconstruction (Stahn 2014:115).

2.4.1. History and foundations of *jus post bellum*

The *jus* in *jus post bellum* is indicative of its roots in Roman and Greek antiquity and its relationship to classical just war theory. Classical just war theory draws on the works of religious thinkers, political philosophers and just war theorists such as Cicero, Thomas Aquinas, Saint Augustine, Francisco de Vitoria, Francisco Suarez, Alberico Gentili, Hugo Grotius and Immanuel Kant, among others. More recent theorists on just war thinking have included, inter-alia, Michael Walzer (1977), James Turner Johnson (1999), Brian Orend (2000, 2008), Alex Bellamy (2008), Mark Evans (2009), Larry May (2012), and Eric Patterson (2012). As relatively young concept in the vast body of international law concerned with themes such as the conduct of war, laws of occupation, constitutionalism and transitional justice, *jus post*

³ There are contending views on what is meant by ‘just peace’: some view it as a process aimed at acceptance, others see it as a middle ground between compromise and concessions in a kind of win-win compact, and others see it as one dimension of justice made up of aspects of just order and institutions (see Stahn 2016).

bellum has been the subject of a range of inter-disciplinary debates across political science, international relations, international law, theology and philosophy.

In spite of its deep roots in the just war tradition and international law, *jus post bellum* has been relatively under-theorized, evident in its limited analysis up until the post- World War II era and more recently with the wars of liberation and humanitarian interventions (Walzer 2004:164). In the aftermath of the 2011 NATO-led intervention in Libya, former US President Barack Obama (2016) later admitted that the intervention had not worked leaving Libya ‘in a mess.’ In the same vein, Gheciu and Welsh (2009:122) assert that ‘the limited commentary on the international community’s responsibility to rebuild’ and the lack of a theory of post-conflict reconstruction can be attributed to deeper normative tensions and dilemmas associated with the ethical imperatives to rebuild. For Carroll (1970:29), the neglect of war termination studies, particularly in the wake of the Cold War and the Vietnam War, was as a result of value orientation and subjectivity among policy makers and scholars which led a lack of analysis on relevant peace and conflict themes.

Unlike the other two components of just war theory, *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*, that have been codified into international law, *jus post bellum* remains essentially contested across academic and policy spheres. *Jus ad bellum*, concerned with the justice of going to war, entails criteria such as proportionality of ends, right authority, right intention, reasonable prospects of success and last resort. These criteria complement non-negotiable *jus in bello* criteria, concerned with the justice in war, such as non-combatant distinction or the principle of discrimination, and proportionality of means (the means employed should be proportionate to the desired objectives) (Maiese 2003). However, in spite of grounding in just war theory, *jus post bellum* has been the subject of debates and enquiry regarding its normative foundations, scope, efficacy and application. According to Easterday *et al.* (2014:6), there are three categories of perspectives on *jus post bellum*: first, *jus post bellum* can be understood as an ‘interpretive framework’ that informs context-specific interpretation of norms applicable in post-conflict reconstruction. Second, *jus post bellum* can be viewed as ‘an ordering principle to regulate and coordinate the interplay of different bodies of laws’; and third, *jus post bellum* can be construed as ‘a system of norms and principles applicable to transitions from conflict to peace.’ Labonte (2009:207) outlines three dimensions of the debates on *jus post bellum*: (i) analysis of the added value and practical effectiveness of *jus post bellum*; (ii) identification and exposition of a ‘coherent set of *jus post bellum* criteria’, and (iii) clarification of the relationship

between *jus post bellum* and *jus in bello* and the implications for the trajectory and implementation of just war theory.

2.4.2. The evolution of just war thinking: from antiquity to the contemporary post-Cold War era

According to Peperkamp (2017:39), the evolution of the just war tradition can be mapped across four major historical periods: classical just war thinking, the transition to the law of nations, the peak of positivism and the resurgence of just war theorizing in aftermath of the Cold War. Across the sweep of history, the just war tradition has demonstrated considerable degrees of flexibility and self-reflectivity in step with evolving contextual and intellectual development, thus allowing for continued relevance of its applicability and contribution to themes and practical issues on the ethics of warfare (Brunstetter & O'Driscoll 2018:3).

Classical just war thinking refers to the works of philosophers in ancient Greek and Rome who provided formative accounts of the justice of war. For Aristotle, war was a means to the greater end of 'realising the good life' for the citizens of a political community. Another classical thinker who influenced the just war tradition was Roman statesman-philosopher Cicero (106 BCE- 43 BCE). For Cicero, like Aristotle, the ultimate aim of war was to establish peace. In *De Re Publica* (Rep III: 35a), Cicero argued that there were two just causes for engaging in war: 'vengeance and fighting off enemies.' He adds that 'no war is held to be lawful unless it is officially announced, declared and a formal claim for satisfaction has been made' (Rep III:35a as cited in Stewart 2018: 13).

Judeo-Christian figures also contributed to classical just war thinking manifest in the writings of thinkers such as Saint Augustine (354-430CE), Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274) and Francisco de Vitoria (1492-1546). In the *City of God*, Augustine argues that recourse to war was permissible on condition of the objective of peace. Although Augustine does not offer a systematic account of just war along the *jus ad bellum/jus in bello* distinction, he emphasizes the importance of justice, contingent on the fulfilment of the kingdom of God (Arend & Beck 1993:14). Building on the work of Augustine, Thomas Aquinas' *Summa theologiae* asserted that for war to be morally permissible, it had to be waged with the legitimate and right authority, just cause and right intention (Reichberg 2018:55). By framing the justice of war in terms of in terms of protection, subsequent scholastics such as Francisco Vitoria, Francisco Suarez and Bartolomé de las Casas who went on to advance the just war doctrine in various contributions. Writing against the background of Spain's conquest of the Americas, Vitoria argued that the

only just cause for war to right a prior wrong, rejecting other reasons such as territorial irredentism, religious differences and personal glory (Vitoria 1991: 302-304). Additionally, Vitoria laid the groundwork for the proportionality criterion of *jus in bello* as it has come to be understood in latter times, noting that ‘moderation and humility ‘should guide the means of waging war and that ‘care must be taken to ensure that the evil effects of war do not outweigh the possible benefits sought by waging it’ (Vitoria 1991:315).

The next significant period in the evolution of the just war tradition was the secular period (c.1150- 1700) which marked a departure from the Christian precepts in moral considerations of war. A key figure during this phase was Hugo Grotius (1583-1645), regarded as one of the founding fathers of international law, given his monumental contributions to the law of nations (*jus gentium*), legal codification of elements of the just war tradition and national sovereignty (Lang 2018:136). In *De Jure Belli ac Pacis*, Grotius outlines the requirements for just war specifically, lawful authority in the hands of the sovereign who can wage war for self-defence, punishment and recovering stolen property. Grotius develops an extensive argument in favour of punishment for violations of natural law (Grotius 1625 as cited in Lang 2018:137). Grotius writings also instituted the formal distinction between *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*, and set in motion the movement towards a more positivist orientation in international law (Grotius as cited in Lang 2018:140). Overall, Grotius’ writings set out the distinction between law of nature and the law of nations pertinent to the conduct of war and formed a key reference point for more secularized understandings of just war theory, separate from theology and moral philosophy.

The end of the Thirty Years War and the resultant Peace of Westphalia in 1648 ushered the establishment of the modern state system and the codification of the doctrine of sovereignty. In tandem with this fundamental shift in the international system, the positivist paradigm increasingly informed understandings of war and peace and the ensuing prioritization of treaties, customs and general principles of law to guide the development of norms and legal regimes (Arend & Beck 1993:16). Subsequent to the heyday of positivism and the establishment of international organizations such as the League of Nations and its successor, the UN, just war theory regained relevance and peace was seen once more as the ‘default’ state of affairs (Shaw 2008: 1235). Drawing on the restrictions on the use of force codified in the Kellogg Briand Pact, the UN Charter (Article 51) narrowed the permissible, legally justifiable scope for war to self-defence or collective defence within the constraints of the Charter.

The end of the Cold War brought to the fore a number of debates regarding just war, informed by the increasingly globalized context and rapidly evolving conflict and security landscape, with implications for just war theory. The prevalence of ‘new wars’ (Kaldor 2007), informed by fault-lines in identity politics and involving a mix of both state and non-state actors, has posed a major challenge to the classical just war tradition, raising critical questions about its relevance and applicability (Peperkamp 2017:76). One such major debate that is pertinent to the ambit of this study is the proposed extension of just war theory to include *jus post bellum* as an independent branch of a tripartite just war theory.

2.4.3. Overview of select debates and perspectives on *jus post bellum*

Jus post bellum has been treated to extensive interrogation across a multiplicity of perspectives ranging from legal to political and philosophical considerations. The start of the contemporary debate on *jus post bellum* cuts across four issues: first, there is the maximalist vs. minimalist debate, which extends to debate on the normative foundations and substantive contents of *jus post bellum*. The second aspect of the debate is concerned with the conceptualization of *jus post bellum* in relation to the established branches of the just war tradition and whether *jus post bellum* should be developed independently or be subsumed within *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*. Third, there are also contending views on how to assess the efficacy of *jus post bellum* in pursuit of a durable and just peace, including questions of how to find the right balance between considerations of order and justice (Ceulemans 2014: 909). The final issue for debate is the question of duties and responsibilities in the implementation of *jus post bellum*. Should these responsibilities be borne by the ex-belligerents or is the international community broadly responsible for *jus post bellum*? (Peperkamp 2017:52).

For proponents of a minimalist conception of *jus post bellum*, obligations and duties at war’s end should be governed by ‘a series of restraints’, contrary to maximalists who argue for a broadened view and addition of certain responsibilities in order for the ‘war as a whole to be considered just’ (Bellamy 2008:602). A key proponent of the minimalist position is Michael Walzer (2012:40) who leans on a legalist paradigm of the just war tradition and the objective of restoration to the status quo ante bellum. However, noting the changing nature of contemporary warfare and recourse to humanitarian interventions, Walzer endorses a restorative, rather than a transformational, view of *jus post bellum* arguing that the obligations of ‘post-bellum activities should be informed by practical and moral constraints of the intervening states, limited to provisions (such as providing law and order, food, shelter) and

the preservation of life (Walzer 2012:45). Building on Walzer's viewpoint, Bass argues that the duty of peace takes precedence over the duty of justice and that in most cases, 'the primary *jus post bellum* responsibility of a victorious state is to get out as soon as is possible' (Bass 2004:412). In his opinion, political and economic reconstructions should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis with 'the burden of proof' resting on the intervening state (Bass 2004:391).

Eric Patterson (2012a:12) advances a model of *jus post bellum* based on an order-justice-conciliation continuum to assess post-war obligations. 'Order begins with the stopping of the killing' and is made up of military, governance and international security aspects (Patterson 2012a:46). Order creates the space for justice, which then paves the way for conciliation. For James Turner Johnson, the term *jus* in *jus post bellum* is problematic because it implies that 'reflection of responsibilities after an armed conflict can be reduced to specific rules' (Johnson 2012:32). Taking the historical just war tradition as his starting point, he argues instead that post-conflict responsibilities should be decided on a case-specific basis employing moral and political considerations such as the common good of the region in which the conflict has taken place and other societies related to the actors involved in the conflict (Johnson 2012:32).

Another just war theorist who alluded to the minimalist school of thought is Jean Bethke Elshtain who approaches just war as an 'ethic of responsibility,' grounded in classical just war tradition. According to Elshtain (2012:126), post-war responsibilities must be guided by four criteria and of an ethics of exit. The first criterion is that the greater the degree of responsibility that a country bears over a military operation, the greater its responsibility for post-war activities. Second, a country that played a major military operation must also assume responsibility for reconstruction of infrastructure and environmental damage incurred as a result of the operation. Third, the intervening state should leave the country that was the site of conflict in a 'minimally decent state.' Fourth, the occupying state must deter the occupied state from regressing back to unjust activities that triggered the war in the first place (Elshtain 2012: 127-128).

In the maximalist camp, Brian Orend (2006:160-81), leans on a Kantian perspective to posit five principles of *jus post bellum* namely: (i) public declaration of the peace settlement; (ii) rights vindication rather than revenge; (iii) the principle of discrimination and distinction between leaders, combatants and civilians of the defeated nation; (iv) compensation and (v) rehabilitation. Orend has also proposed that a 'new Geneva Convention' be codified to 'take *jus post bellum* out of abstract theory and into the concrete reality of global politics (Orend

2012:175). The assertion is that a new Geneva Convention would fill the legal gap in the transition from conflict to peace; guide both losers and victors at war's end, and help in preventing future wars by laying out clear legal principles of war termination (Orend 2012: 186-7).

Another proponent of maximalism in formulating *jus post bellum* is Larry May who elucidates six principles of *jus post bellum* which he labels '5R&P', namely, retribution, reconciliation, rebuilding, restitution and proportionality (May 2014:16). The retributive principle has to do with bringing wrongdoers to account through mechanisms such as courts or tribunals. The principle of reconciliation entails obligations to 'treat those against whom war has been waged as deserving equal basic respect' and an obligation to 'initiate and conduct war in such a way that one does not unduly antagonize the people with whom one will eventually have to reach a peaceful accord' (May 2012:21). The third normative principle, rebuilding, requires belligerents to rebuild as 'a means to achieve a just peace' (May 2014:17). The fourth principle, restitution, addresses the return of lost or stolen goods; whereas the fifth principle, reparations, concerns 'repair or rectification of goods to the pre-war form there were in' (May 2012:20). The sixth principle of *jus post bellum*, proportionality, merges the proportionality principles of *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello* while functioning as a 'meta-principle' applicable to all the other afore-mentioned five principles. For example, pertinent to retribution, Vitoria argued that wrongs committed in war should be punished 'proportionate to fault (Vitoria 3.56). Applying proportionality to reparations, Grotius suggested the principle of *meionexia* (demanding less) as a way of avoiding disproportionate settlements and at the end of war and as a way of ensuring peace in some instances (May 2014:18). In a sense, the 5R&P principles of *jus post bellum* can be regarded as what Fuller (1964) has termed 'desiderata' implying that they have to be partially satisfied as the bare minimum for the realisation of just peace.

Taking on an extended conception of *jus post bellum*, Mark Evans proposed 'a covering statement' for post-war justice which required ex-combatants to: (i) set proportionate peace terms to ensure lasting peace as well as retribution; (ii) bear full responsibility for their 'fair share' of post-war obligations; (iii) implement national and international initiatives for conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction; and (iv) participate fully in the 'ethical and socio-cultural processes of forgiveness and reconciliation' (Evans 2009: 155). These principles serve to advance a 'rectificatory' understanding of *jus post bellum* that incorporates both backward-looking and forward-looking dimensions, including the possibility of transitional justice as part of *jus post bellum* objectives (Evans 2014:35). In sum, Evans (2014:42) is wary of the

maximalist vs. minimalist debate over *jus post bellum*, urging instead for a dialogue between moral and political perspectives in developing a conceptual toolkit of *jus post bellum* as:

a compound of values, the product of trade-offs between justice and other considerations which are very relevant in selecting how institutions, behaviours and relationships should be conceptualised and considered.

In addition to the conflicting views about the components of *jus post bellum*, another subject of debate is the issue of dependency or independency in relation to *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*. Walzer (2012:44) is a strong defender of the *jus post bellum* independency thesis, arguing that in the same way *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello* are independent of each other, ‘a just war can lead to an unjust outcome and an unjust war can lead to just outcome.’ May (2012:19) concurs with Walzer regarding the independence of *jus post bellum*, maintaining that ‘all warring parties – the victorious and vanquished, the just and unjust’ – have the same obligations after war ends, specifically, ‘to re-establish a rule of law that will protect human rights and create a just and lasting peace.’ The defenders of the dependency position often begin on an observation of the blurring of lines between war and peace in the contemporary context effectively repudiating a temporal delineation of the temporal phases of war denoting a beginning, middle and end. Thus, a functional conceptualization of *jus post bellum* should be applied in an overlapping and flexible fashion, guided by the facts on the ground rather than specific periods in war, to determine when *jus post bellum* starts or ceases to apply (Kleffner 2014:295). Rengger (2005:154) asserts that *jus post bellum* is ‘centrally implicit’ within extant just war theory and that discourses on the methods and issues concerning post-conflict situations are ‘part of the task of extending justice and judgement to the realm of war.’ Additionally, Williams and Caldwell (2006:310) assert that *jus post bellum* goals must be congruent with *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello* principles. Other voices such as Bellamy (2008:623) have called instead for ‘the justice of the peace to be assessed independently of the war.’ Moreover, Bellamy argues that the import of criteria outside of the just war tradition adds to the indeterminacy and ambiguity of the concept, further compounded by the maximalism vs. minimalism debate. He presents six points to guide future debate and deliberations about the contents and scope of *jus post bellum* namely: (i) the justice of the peace should be evaluated independently of the justice of the war; (ii) the responsibility to implement *jus post bellum* is collective (iii) different responsibilities emerge from different types of war; (iv) rights vindication is a vital constraint but is already a component of *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*;

(v) there are important differences between entitlement and obligation; and (vi) elements of *jus post bellum* must be developed through consensus (Bellamy 2008:622:5).

2.4.4. The debate on the duty bearers of *jus post bellum*

Another major debate among just war theorists is centred on the issue of responsibility: the question of which actors should bear responsibility for *jus post bellum*, and the extent and nature of this responsibility. There are two main positions on the moral issue of assigning *jus post bellum* duties. The first position maintains that post bellum duties should be assigned to the states that engaged in the war. Also known as the ‘Belligerents Rebuild Thesis’, Walzer (2012:40) and Orend (2008:49) are examples of the proponents of this position, which holds that *jus ad bellum* decisions are made up of positive duties that need to be fulfilled by the just victor. Similarly, Colin Powell (as quoted in Woodward 2004:270) has termed this version of *jus post bellum* duties ‘the Pottery Barn Rule’, advancing the idea that the one who breaks it must fix it. The polar opposite of the Belligerents Rebuild thesis is the Universal Rebuild thesis which maintains that the international community has a collective responsibility for post-conflict responsibility. The collective responsibility viewpoint is epitomised in the responsibility to rebuild tenet of R2P, envisioned as part of post-intervention obligations (ICISS 2001 par 5.1).

Pattison (2013:5) challenges the Belligerents Rebuild thesis on the basis that the belligerents may not be the most suitable agents to rebuild due to a number of factors such as the lack of legitimacy or capabilities. A second problem with the Belligerents Rebuild thesis is that it may fail to causally trace belligerents in the distribution of respective duties, especially if there were multiple types of belligerents involved (Pattison 2013:6). Moreover, Gheciu and Welsh (2009:121) have deplored the impoverished theorisation of the international community’s responsibility to rebuild, aggravated by the overall lack of systematic normative theory of post-conflict reconstruction. They go on to map out the various ethical imperatives that have underpinned the rationale for rebuilding, concluding that these imperatives are confronted by problematic normative tensions and dilemmas that further reveal potential clashes among the principles (Gheciu & Welsh 2009:134-140). Such an evaluation of the logics for rebuilding brings up a number of salient questions: how should the responsibility to rebuild be distributed among members of international society? In the event that one argues for a remedial responsibility, are there mechanisms for accountability in the exercise this responsibility? Who

or what should be taken as the relevant unit of analysis in normative theorizing about reconstruction- the individual, the ethnic group, the state or the region? (Gheciu & Welsh 2009:142).

In response to the challenge for deeper normative theorization about the ends and means of post-conflict reconstruction, as well as the conceptualization of the agents of *jus post bellum* duties, Peperkamp (2017:86) references David Miller's (2007) framework of a collective remedial responsibility in outlining practical guidelines for the distribution of *jus post bellum* responsibilities. Miller (2007:84) differentiates outcome responsibility, which draws on 'agents producing outcomes', from remedial responsibility wherein agents have a duty or obligation to remedy a negative situation'. In distributing remedial responsibility, Miller (2007:100) proposes six conditions, namely, moral responsibility, outcome responsibility, causal responsibility, benefit, capability and community. He also defends the notion of collective responsibility in which collective groups may have collective responsibility and/or remedial responsibility (Miller 2007:116). Moral responsibility, outcome responsibility and causal responsibility can be grouped as backward-looking conditions, which come up against a number of difficulties. For example, those who have moral responsibility may not possess the right to rebuild due to shortfalls in legitimacy or justifiability (Pattison 2013:18). Furthermore, as asserted by Gheciu and Welsh (2009:134), 'backward looking ideas of causal responsibility relate imperfectly to the forward-looking task of addressing a problem since the actor who caused another actor to be in danger is not always best placed to rectify the situation.' The fourth condition, benefit, merges backward and forward-looking elements of remedial responsibility and can also incorporate additional components as beneficiaries of the situation who may not be morally, casually or outcome responsible for war (Peperkamp 2017:101). A shortcoming of the benefit condition is that mixed motives of rebuilders, including self-interest, may result in inconsistency and a lowering of standards of post-conflict reconstruction (Gheciu & Welsh 2009:140). The capacity condition assigns responsibility to the most capable actor, based on a blended assessment of the effectiveness and the costs incurred in undertaking the remedial responsibility in a particular situation (Miller 2007:104). The final condition, community, refers to the existence of special ties within certain political communities which translates into remedial responsibilities. For instance, the shared identity of European states and the Balkans was used as a rationale for Europe's special duty of reconstruction in the region (Miller 2008:104; Gheciu & Welsh 2009:126).

Augmenting Miller's six conditions for assigning responsibility, Peperkamp (2017:106) argues that the concept of 'role responsibility' (Hart & Gardner 2008: 211) should also be considered as a key addition in the allocation of rebuilding responsibilities. One, actors can be assigned role responsibility in the instance that they fail to fulfil *jus ad bellum* or *jus in bello* duties. Two actors can assume role responsibility on the basis of 'a role that they self-adopted through a public *ad bellum* promise.' For instance, unlike the interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan around which lofty promises of democracy-projection and human rights promotion were proffered, the NATO-led intervention in Libya avoided such promises. In the NATO (2011b) statement following the adoption of UNSC Resolution 1973, the coalition members of Operation Unified Protector asserted the limitations of their mandate to fully implement UNSC resolutions 1970 and 1973 and to protect civilians, effectively abrogating their role responsibility for post-intervention engagement. In sum, Peperkamp (2017:108-114) submits a system for assigning post war duties that hierarchizes the afore-mentioned seven conditions, incorporating both backward- and forward-looking elements and various considerations that can be used to assign the duty to specific actors on a case-specific basis.

2.4.5. Relationship between *jus post bellum* and related concepts: R2P, peacebuilding and transitional justice

R2P and *jus post bellum* converge on a number of points: they both extend philosophical antecedents of the just war tradition; their objectives are aimed at sustainable peace and they both offer emerging perspectives on post-conflict situations in a complex and rapidly evolving global landscape. Both concepts have also been subject to similar critiques – embedding existing biases and inequalities in the international legal order; promoting intervention and utilising contentious means; and entrenching undesirable normative agendas such as imposing liberal peace or regime change (Stahn 2014:104).

In spite of extensive similarities, R2P and *jus post bellum* diverge in several aspects. The first element of divergence between R2P and *jus post bellum* is concerned with the normative differences between the two concepts with respect to peacebuilding. Within the parameters of R2P, peacebuilding is encapsulated in 'institutional terms', particularly in pillar two (international assistance and capacity building for the state) where R2P is aimed at forging institutional interaction and partnerships between states and the UN (Stahn 2014: 108). On the other hand, *jus post bellum* has different normative layers. For instance, it may be understood as a legal regime, that is, a body of rules and principles that facilitate choices and judgement.

Jus post bellum can also be perceived as a guiding concept for the interpretation of rights and obligations, or as a normative space for discourse (Stahn 2008:110; Bell 2011:369).

A second disparity between R2P and *jus post bellum* concerns the scope of application. The application of R2P is linked to the notion of sovereignty as responsibility based on the failure of a state to fulfil its protection responsibilities. The linkage of international assistance and capacity building to domestic failure, in the form of unwillingness and inability, has been the subject of critiques from a number of states who highlight the potential exposure of R2P to manipulation in line with interests of more powerful states (Focarelli 2008: 202). *Jus post bellum* is enacted differently - its application is triggered primarily by factual consideration at the end of armed conflict (Stahn 2014:110). Finally, the rationales for R2P and *jus post bellum* vary. R2P calls for collective engagement and promotes action (ICISS 2001 par. 7.40). *Jus post bellum* brings in additional considerations such as the consequences of intervention and the implications for the relationship between the interveners and the occupied state. In some cases, *jus post bellum* may prescribe the withdrawal of international actors from the target state as the best option for the entities involved, contrary to R2P incentive for continued engagement when deemed necessary (Stahn 2014:112).

According to Stahn (2014:111), inasmuch as there are convergences between R2P and *jus post bellum*, the differences in their rationales and application may mean that it is more practical to adopt a ‘polycentric’ approach towards the interplay between R2P and *jus post bellum*, based on pillar-specific evaluation. Consequently, an analysis of the protection responsibilities or (pillar one) reveal that this pillar of R2P and *jus post bellum* reinforce the pacific dimension of the protection responsibilities of states (May 2012:232). With reference to the second pillar (international assistance and capacity-building), R2P and *jus post bellum* differ when it comes to issues of consent, division of responsibility and accountability. For instance, consent is peripheral with respect to R2P whereas *jus post bellum* reframes consent in novel contexts, incorporating non-traditional perspectives on gauging consent as a complex issue in post-conflict environments (Saul 2011:187). With respect to the third pillar, R2P and *jus post bellum* present different readings on ‘timely and decisive’ responses. R2P is hinged on thresholds for action and a toolbox of responses. *Jus post bellum* is more concerned with modalities and substance; it may also present a prohibitive aspect such as reinforcing additional proportionality criteria complementary to *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*. An example of this is the imposition of completion strategy for occupation (Benvenisti 2012: 56). Furthermore, *jus post bellum* may serve as a benchmark to re-assess occupation, offering new guidelines for

reconstruction and legislative reform in tandem with principles such as self-determination, consultative rule and local empowerment (Hansen & Wiharta 2008: 135).

For the intents and purposes of this study, it is also imperative to briefly sketch the interplay between *jus post bellum* and peacebuilding. Three broad goals of *jus post bellum* are noteworthy: (i) physical security for the general public beyond pre-war status, (ii) just ordering of society via positive assistance, restoration and rehabilitation, and (iii) vindication and securing of rights. From these goals, it can be arguably inferred that peacebuilding ‘represents the operational manifestation of just post bellum, and can thus form a sound basis for analysing the practical effectiveness of *jus post bellum*’ (Labonte 2009:215). For instance, the fundamental goal of *jus post bellum* of restoring security beyond the status quo ante bellum corresponds with the peacebuilding modalities of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of militants, security sector reform (SSR) and drawdown of foreign forces. Additionally, the goal of just ordering of society dovetails peacebuilding activities such as the restoration of the rule of law, constitutional reform, capacity building of civil and public service competencies and human rights education.

The re-emergence of *jus post bellum* in moral and legal discourses on the ethics of war has coincided with the uptake of another young concept relevant to the transition phase of conflict – transitional justice. According to Fisher (2018:3), it is imperative to distinguish the two concepts in view of the hybridization of conflict across local and international spheres, with implications for the objectives and goals pertinent to both justice and peace. Teitel (2003:16) defines transitional justice as ‘the conception of justice associated with periods of political change, characterised by legal responses to confront the wrongdoings of repressive predecessor regimes.’ In underscoring the disparities between the two concepts, a central point is that transitional justice is more concerned with societal transformation and the pursuit of justice in societies transitioning from conflict to peace, or from authoritarianism to democratic rule. Regarding differences in the scope and foci of the two concepts, transitional justice can be viewed as ‘a body of law and practice involving a wide variety of tools to respond to widespread or systematic human rights abuses in the context of a political transition to a new regime.’ On the other hand, *jus post bellum* refers to a body of norms applicable in the transition from war to peace (Iverson 2014:85). On the point of origins, transitional justice has its roots in human rights activism and comparative political science whereas *jus post bellum* draws on classical just war theory. An additional difference between the two concepts is a level-of-analysis one wherein *jus post bellum* can be perceived as being more state-centric or more

focused on state-level actors whereas transitional justice is more focused on the societal level and on a concern for victims and social healing (Fisher 2018:2). In essence, transitional justice and *jus post bellum* stand to both benefit from a mutual engagement on their correlated ambitions, given that their application in some cases often happen simultaneously. Furthermore, embracing a broader view of transitional justice ‘not as a special field of law’ but ‘a holistic practice of judicial and non-judicial and non-judicial approaches...’ could assist theorists in navigating the definitional ambiguity of *jus post bellum* (Iverson 2014:101).

In spite of its uptake in legal analysis, *jus post bellum* has not been without its discontents in legal scholarship. De Brabandere (2014:126) challenges the need for a novel, distinct legal framework to manage post-conflict responsibilities. He also rejects the notion of a ‘legal void’ highlighted by *jus post bellum* theorists in the transition from war to peace, countering that there already exists adequate legal frameworks in international law pertinent to post-conflict responsibilities. In De Brabandere’s (2014: 129) view, the issues of authority, title, legal responsibility and independence of post-conflict reconstruction are addressed in frameworks such as the UN Charter, the Hague Regulations and the Fourth Geneva Convention. Propositions to include new rules to fill the alleged legal void in post-conflict reconstruction are also seen as problematic given that the legal gap is not only artificial, but is also unnecessary and of limited value beyond clustering existing rules under the umbrella term of *jus post bellum* (De Brabandere 2014:137).

Vatanparast (2014: 142) points to the ambiguities, contradictions and problems associated with formalizing *jus post bellum* in a body of international law. The blurring of lines between war and peace also complicates the applicability of a *jus post bellum* framework from a temporal perspective of war, further adding to its ambiguity and indeterminacy (Vatanparast 2014:149). Moreover, *jus post bellum* may be instrumentalised in service of the interests of global elites rather than the victims of the war. If employed for the benefit of international actors such international financial institutions (IFIs) and other actors with vested interests, *jus post bellum* may become a neo-imperialist tool used by the powerful and in effect, ‘a continuation of politics by other means’ (Vatanparast 2014:156).

2.5. Normative International Relations Theory: the global as an ethical realm

Normative IR theory engages with questions of norms and ethics including: the role that normative ideas play in world politics (how values and principles applied to international

politics can be evaluated and analysed); the nature of ethical conduct (questioning what we ought to do) and evaluating the extent to which moral reasoning and behaviour is influenced by practical issues, politics and dilemmas in an evolving global arena (what can we do?) (Hurrell & Macdonald 2013:57).

The emergence of normative IR can be traced to the discontent during the 1980s and 1990s within IR with the discipline's positivist bias and the resultant rejection of an empirical/normative distinction in political enquiry; motivating the niche for a theoretical framework that employs both moral philosophy and political theory in explicating the ethical dimension of international politics. Furthermore, major international development in the 1960s and 1970s such as the nuclear deterrence policy of the Cold War, the Arab-Israeli Six Days War and the Vietnam War illuminated a number of moral dilemmas and ethical concerns on issues such as just war, distributive justice, cosmopolitan approaches to human protection, and duties in the aftermath of conflict, among others. For those who maintain a longer historical account, the roots of normative IR theory are linked to the works of Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Hegel and Marx (Erskine 2013:41). Overall, the purpose of normative IR theory is to determine what values, goals and reasons for action a political community 'ought to embrace and to realise through concerted political action' (Hurrell & Macdonald 2013:60).

Normative IR theory engages with first-order questions or 'policy questions', as well as second-order questions which deal with the content and scope of political values and what makes them 'good' or 'right' (Hurrell & Macdonald 2013:62). A dominant debate within normative theory is the divide between communitarianism and cosmopolitanism. Communitarianism emphasizes particularity and holds that ethical duties apply only within particular communities such as sovereign states or identity-based communities. On the other hand, cosmopolitanism advocates a 'global sphere of moral standing', which allocates ethical duties universally regardless of the particularities of identity or political community. The worldviews of cosmopolitanism and communitarianism are useful in the sense that they can help clarify the relationship between the 'source' of our values and the 'scope' of our obligations to others (Erskine 2013:43). A related debate within normative IR theory is the distinction between the conceptual categories of consequentialism and deontology. Consequentialism emphasizes the effects of actions, rather than the actions themselves whereas deontology asserts that some acts are wrong in themselves, regardless of their consequences (Erskine 2013:43).

The ambition of normative theory to be ‘political rather than meta-physical’ lends it to strong affiliation with constructivist methodological approaches that emphasize ideational view of international relations. For constructivists, ideas (such normative beliefs, ideologies) inform the material factors and shared understanding held between actors (Tannenwald 2005:19). Among these shared understandings and intersubjective awareness, norms and institutions play a number of roles: regulatory roles in the sense that they constrain choices; constitutive roles in that they create ‘new actors, interests or categories of action’, and evaluative roles in assessing moral sources of preferences (Finnemore & Sikkink 1998:891). An example of normative theorizing that utilised constructivist methodology in developing a theory on global justice is John Rawl’s *A Theory of Justice* (1971) which catalysed scholarly attention on conceptions of justice beyond the state. In addition to constructivism, normative theorizing in IR has also turned to interpretive approaches which combine various forms of discourse analysis with normative commitments of political actors and their communities. An example of an interpretive approach in normative IR is Michael Walzer’s work on just wars (1992, 1994).

2.5.1. Interplay between normative IR theory and the constructivism norm research agenda

The starting point of the interface between normative theory and the constructivist approach in IR is the relationship between normative theory and the role of norms in international relations, including how they change over time and how they affect outcomes (Hurrell & Macdonald 2013:69).

2.5.2. Norms matter

Constructivism and normative IR theory dovetail in the quintessential assertion that norms matter. Hence, the central argument of the constructivist turn in IR during the 1980s was that norms are not simply just ‘a superstructure on a material base, rather they help to create and define that base’ (Checkel 1998:328). Normative analysis revolved around a dual understanding of norms: norms as ‘regularities of behaviour among actors’, and norms as ‘reflective of prescribed patterned behaviour which give rise to normative expectations as to what ought to be done’ (Hurrell & Macdonald 2013: 69). According to Finnemore and Sikkink (1998:891), ‘norms are standards of appropriate behaviour for actors with a given identity.’ Additionally, a number of theories including classical realism and the English School,

recognize the significance of norms, however normative IR theory extends this commitment to evaluating their internal coherence and interaction with relative value and frameworks.

2.5.3. Key tenets of Constructivism

Generally, constructivism is a social theory premised on three main assumptions: (i) human relations are influenced primarily by ideational factors and not material factors; (ii) the core ideational elements which constructivists emphasize are intersubjective beliefs, underpinned by shared understandings, and (iii) these beliefs construct actors' identities and interests (Jackson & Sorensen 2013:213). Contrary to rationalist theories, constructivism views international relations as a social construction and a 'world of our making' rather than existing independent of human interactions and meaning (Onuf 1989). Put differently, constructivism takes up 'a sociological perspective on world politics, emphasizing the importance of normative as well as material structures, and the role of identity in the constitution of interests and action' (Price & Reus-Smit 1998:259). On the subject of ontology, constructivists maintain a social ontology according to which individuals and states cannot be extricated from their social context, which in turn shapes their identities and preferences. Pertinent to the agent-structure dynamics, constructivist approaches assert that agents and structures are mutually constituted. For instance, challenging the neorealist predilection for the anarchic self-help system, Wendt (1999:249) argues that discursive interaction between states can lead to three types of anarchy: Hobbesian, Lockean and Kantian. Hobbesian anarchy thrives on a logic of enmity, a Lockean culture espouses restraint and respect for sovereignty as a basis for co-existence, and in a Kantian culture, states underscore cooperation and peaceful settlement of disputes, in spite of anarchic conditions (Wendt 1999:257).

With reference to methodological approaches, IR constructivism has drawn on a range of philosophical and sociological perspectives such as neo-Kantian objective hermeneutics, linguistic subjective hermeneutics, critical theory and pragmatism. Subsequently, the imprint of various methodological approaches on IR constructivism is the emergence of various strands within the programme. Hopf (1998:181) identifies two branches of constructivism - critical and conventional. Conventional constructivism is represented by scholars such as Alexander Wendt (1999), Peter Katzenstein (1996), Christian Reus-Smith (1997), Emmanuel Adler and Michael Barnett (1998) and Martha Finnemore (2003). Conventional constructivists concede to making truth claims in their analysis by acknowledging a contingent universalism as

necessary. Critical constructivists such as James Der Derian (1987), Andrew Linklater (1989), Roxanne Doty (1996), Martin Weber (1995) Lene Hansen (2006) and Craig Murphy (2005) adopt an emancipatory or deconstructive attitude towards knowledge, drawing on reflexivity and a combination of objective hermeneutics (*à la* Habermas) and retain an agnostic view of material reality. Accordingly, critical constructivists also reject making truth claims given the lack of neutral ground on which to assess the validity of epistemic claims (Adler 2013:117). An additional variant of constructivism is ‘modern linguistic constructivism’ which stems from a combination of subjective hermeneutics and a conservative cognitive interest in explaining social reality by uncovering the role of language and rules in constituting social facts. Examples of modern linguistic constructivists include Friedrich Kratochwil (1989) and Nicholas Onuf (1989).

2.5.4. IR Constructivism’s analytical and empirical contributions

Seen as a bridge or middle ground between rationalists and poststructuralist approaches to IR, constructivism has tempered the debate of the ‘isms’ (neorealism and neoliberalism) prevalent within rationalism. Secondly, IR constructivism has contributed ‘sociological and methodological inventories’ to IR theory that have opened up understandings of the social dimensions of international politics. Therefore, constructivism seeks to explain not only *why* norms matter, but also the validity of the norms and the adherence or contestation by actors (Adler 2013:123; Weber 2014:517). Thirdly, constructivism offers an account for change as the result of a constellation of factors such as the emergence of new constitutive roles, the evolution of normative structures and dynamics of agent-structure mutually constitutive interactions (Adler 2013:123). Fourthly, constructivism builds on the potential of a ‘communicative turn in IR’ by presenting social communication as a means of diffusing shared understandings and as an avenue for agents to alter meanings of material reality through language (Luhmann 1985, Kratochwil 1989:8). Finally, in addition to norms research, constructivism has added to empirical research on salient issues in global political life for example, power (Barnett & Duvall 2005); military strategy (Adler 2009, Fierke 1998); identity (Katzenstein 2010, Hopf 2002) and sovereignty (Kratochwil 2010, Reus-Smit 2001, Weber 1995).

2.5.5. Status of current constructivist norms research

Initial constructivist studies on norm dynamics focused on three thematic concerns: (i) normative behaviour or how norms shape behaviour within a community; (ii) socialization or

how norms diffuse and are internalised by actors, and (iii) normative emergence or how norms reach a ‘tipping point’ at which a critical mass of actors adopt the norm (Finnemore & Sikkink 1998; Keck & Sikkink 1998; Risse *et al.* 1999; Acharya 2004). Accordingly, the added value of norm-centric constructivist research has been the elevation of the study of normative dynamics in international politics, and the growing influence of a solid constructivist research programme (Hofferberth & Weber 2015:78). Following the consolidation of an empirical research agenda that mainstreamed the study of norms and asserted *why* norms matter, current norms research has turned to analysis of *when/where* norms matter and *how/when* norms change in the context of interactions between actors and norms (Denemark & Marlin-Bennett 2010). One dimension of the current norms research is the focus on behavioural logics that shed light on mutual constitution of identities, roles and preferences. In this regard, rationalists subscribe to the logic of consequences in which actors’ actions are determined by a rational calculation of the most optimal material course of action. Inversely, the logic of appropriateness influences actors to undertake actions which they view ‘as appropriate for their specific identity’ (March & Olsen 1998).

Another perspective of normative change goes beyond linear models of norm diffusion to study compliance and contestation. Norm compliance studies focus on how actors reason about norms and the change in behaviour as a result of complying with prescriptions (Hofferberth & Weber 2015:83). Norm contestation focuses on the ‘contestedness’ of a norm and how actors re-interpret meaning of norms thus changing the scope, precision and robustness of norms in the local and international contexts (Hofmann & Zimmermann 2019:142; Wiener 2004: 190).

2.5.6. Bridging the gap between IR constructivism and normative theory

Having elucidated constructivism’s analytical and empirical purchase on IR in terms of a social analysis to change, sociality and processes of interaction, there have been nascent initiatives to bridge the gap between the ‘isses’ (constructivist accounts of the role of norms) and the ‘oughts’ (accounts of moral progressive change) in conceptualizing a solid relationship between normative theory and constructivism (Price 2008a:2). A good starting point for the envisioned link between constructivism and normative theory is a clear standpoint on the added value of normative theorizing for IR theory generally. According to Leander, we have to approach theorizing ‘not as producing cookbooks but instead as writing unfinished dictionaries’ in which ‘a growing number of terms are in need of being constantly updated, in themselves and in their relation to each other’ (Leander as quoted in Guzzini 2013: 523).

Pertinent to normative IR theory and its engagement with accounts of ‘what ought to be’, the various types of concepts, which could be specific phenomena (such as rights, duties), or empirical mechanisms (such as compliance, violation) or ideal-types (such as just peace, just war) serve to constantly rewrite the IR dictionary with a specific focus on ethical and moral issues (Guzzini 2013:537).

Broadly construed, the constructivist approach to normative theoretic enquiry has remained committed on a sociological understanding premised on social construction of knowledge and construction of social reality. The result has been its delineation from other disciplines, leading to construction problems such as analytical conservatism, filtering of normative content and marginal conception of culture, among others. In response to this identified problem in constructivist efforts to embrace normative theorizing, scholars such as Richard Price have attempted to establish a concrete research agenda that aims to engage constructivist IR with normative theory. According to Price (2008b:192) bridging the gap between constructivism and normative theory is aimed at: (i) enabling constructivist accounts of moral change to offer a convincing defence of moral progress, and (ii) demonstrating how constructivism’s success in empirical research can enrich normative theorizing by highlighting real world dilemmas and suggesting morally progressive aims. By referencing ‘hard cases’ such as humanitarian interventions or the ban on use of landmines in demonstrating how the constructivist research agenda can contribute to a normative theorizing of moral limit and possibility, Price concludes that ‘constructivist’s rigorous self-reflexive methodology on the question of moral limit and possibility lies somewhere between scepticism and the more Utopian poles of critical theory’ (Price 2008b:218). However, a limitation to Price’s approach is the reproduction of functionalist bias from sociological idioms containing argumentative and logical shortcomings that undermine the formulation of a normative theory of moral limit (Weber 2014: 524-529).

2.6. Conclusion

Beginning with a critical analysis of the history, foundations, normative tenets, conceptual basis and scope of responsibility to rebuild, peacebuilding and *jus post bellum*, this chapter sought to emphasize the interplay between these concepts, which have often been treated as disparate concepts in analysis dealing with questions of the aftermath of conflict and the quest for sustainable peace. It was argued that there exists functional value in understanding these concepts as rich nodal points leading to strategic sites of coordination and cohesive discourses on post-conflict situations.

Although the responsibility to rebuild has faced academic neglect, it finds strong resonance with a cosmopolitan human protection approach and builds on the momentum towards broader post-interventionist framings of human security highlighting empowerment, agency and responsibility. The analysis on the discursive and conceptual evolution of peacebuilding revealed that the critical juncture at which liberal peacebuilding finds itself – encapsulated by emerging research agendas such as resilience thinking, the pragmatic turn or hybridity - warrants deeper interrogation of the trajectory of peacebuilding and the ways its modalities are constantly reflective of practical issues and wicked problems at the global-local interface. In spite of contestation around *jus post bellum* with regard to its scope, contents and application, its focus on a just peace and its synergy with concepts such as transitional justice and peacebuilding present it as a useful interpretive tool in reimagining contemporary approaches to peace and security. Normative IR theory's attention to the ethical dimension of international politics unveils a range of possibilities in thinking through moral change in world politics, including difficult questions of moral agents and responsibilities.

Overall, this chapter has attempted to explore the dimensions and contours of the ethically charged debate on the responsibilities, obligations and duties to rebuild post-conflict societies while mapping out how the nuanced perspectives in the debate diverge and converge on not only framing 'the post', but also on what ought to unfold in this context.

Consistent with the process tracing method used in the study (see 1.5.3), this chapter made up the first step in developing a theory of causality. The in-depth analysis of the existing literature and knowledge on the relevant concepts, namely the responsibility to rebuild, *jus post bellum* and peacebuilding, uncovered a potential causal linkage between the lacuna in the post-intervention normative framework and the emergence of the stabilization agenda. Premised on this causal inference, the next chapters will proceed with the subsequent steps, namely the conceptualization and analysis of the causal mechanism, evidence gathering, and assessment whether the hypothesized mechanism is present in the selected case – which is the essence of process tracing.

The next chapter will focus on analysis of the Libya conflict, with a view to understanding the causes, actors, drivers and dynamics of the decade-long quagmire. It will also dissect the complexity of the conflict and its profile as an internationalized conflict, with implications for efforts at managing and solving a multidimensional crisis.

CHAPTER 3: A DECADE OF CONFLICT – LIBYA SINCE THE 2011 NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANISATION-LED INTERVENTION

3.1. Introduction

Could the ongoing conflict in Libya have been avoided? Did the international community abdicate its responsibility to help rebuild Libya in the aftermath of the NATO-led intervention? Are external actors exacerbating the conflict dynamics? These are some of the questions that confounded commentators and policy makers as the conflict in Libya rages in the years following the ouster of Muammar Gaddafi in 2011. The NATO-led intervention, which drew its mandate from United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973 that authorised a no-fly zone to protect civilians, was hailed as a solid test case for the emerging norm of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P). Codenamed Operation Unified Protector, the NATO campaign ended on 31 October and was deemed a military success and a reflection of the international community's willingness to use military force to prevent mass atrocities (Weiss 2011: 264). NATO's air campaign, premised on speed, austerity and precision, and the resultant characterization of the intervention in Libya as an 'ideal virtuous war' (Der Derian 2009:244) stood in stark contrast to mounting criticism with regard to mission creep and a regime change agenda that had employed narratives of the protection of civilians as a pretext to oust Gaddafi.

In addition to raising critical questions about the legacy of R2P and narratives about the material and representational aspects of the Libyan intervention, the aftermath and the ensuing conflict also point to symptoms of global disorder and the fraying of multilateral norms and institutions. The Libya case re-animated debates about interventions and the normative implications of the 'new politics of protection' grounded in post-Westphalian concepts of peace and security and tenets of the liberal peace theory (Bellamy 2004:4). The internationalization of Libya's conflict is also indicative of its geostrategic and geopolitical significance for a broad array of external actors with competing interests and agendas with effects on the character, trajectory and conflictual dynamics on the ground.

This chapter will focus on the conflict in Libya in the aftermath of the intervention, expounding on the profile of the conflict; interacting dynamics on the ground; the complexity and multi-layered facets of conflict across the local, national and international contexts and the interplay among actors across these levels. Limiting the scope of analysis to the period between 2011 and 2020, this section presents an overview of post-Gaddafi Libya with a view to highlight the Libyan case as a pivotal entry point to discourses in policy and academic circles about pertinent

themes such as contemporary interventions, virtuous war and the compounding effects of oil, geopolitics and realpolitik.

3.2. The wider geopolitical context of Libya's revolution: the Arab Spring

A majority of scholarly analysis on the Libyan conflict variably builds from the wider context of the Arab Spring in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region that begun in December 2010 in Tunisia and spread to Egypt, Libya, Bahrain and Yemen. The large-scale protests and uprisings which led to the downfall of authoritarian regimes in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya were driven by decades-long oppression under tyrannical rule characterised by high unemployment rates, deteriorating public sector services, pervasive corruption, human rights violations and suppression of civil and political liberties. The upheavals set in motion a chain of events that reverberated across the MENA region resulting in divergent trajectories across the affected countries. In Egypt, Hosni Mubarak was deposed, Ben Ali's dictatorship came to an end in Tunisia, Syria, Yemen and Libya descended into civil wars which are ongoing at the time of writing. To a degree, Tunisia was the exception given that it was the only case that realised a democratic transition, adopting a new constitution and holding successful elections in 2014. Egypt has relapsed into autocratic rule following the overthrow of Mohamed Morsi in 2013 by Abdel Fattah el Sisi who has since instituted a return to pre-2011 conditions with the military at the helm (Guetat 2020).

Although the roots of the Arab Spring ran a common thread across the MENA countries ranging from socio-economic grievances to suppression of democratic norms and institutions, Libya was the exception in several aspects. First, compared with the other countries that witnessed upheavals, Libya ranked high on indices of human development with high levels of literacy and per capita income, based on rising revenues from petroleum and gas exports.⁴ However, Libyans' discontent stemmed from discrepancies between their relatively flourishing economy and their declining standards of living and unequal distribution of wealth. Furthermore, the lack of meaningful political reforms, rampant corruption and deteriorating service delivery also added to the list of grievances that fuelled the uprisings. A second distinctive characteristic of the Libyan case was the near absence of civil society institutions, political parties and trade unions which had been outlawed under the Gaddafi regime. Under the *Jamahiriya* ('state of the masses'), codified in the Green Book which laid out the political,

⁴ According to Economy Watch data in 2010, GDP was \$75 billion, per capita income was \$ 12,377.53. The 2010 UNDP Human Development Index, a composite of health, education and income ranked Libya 53rd in the World and first in Africa.

economic and societal blueprint, political culture was informed by a trilogy of statelessness, Nasserist nationalism and abhorrence for bureaucratic structures (Vandewalle 2012:101). The emphasis on civic participation in people's congresses and committees leveraged a tribal ethos which fostered loyalty through patronage networks and informal structures of power and authority. The results of the bifurcation between formal and revolutionary, personalized rule around Gaddafi and the ban on political associations was a state of atomization and depoliticisation of the population coupled with significant levels of apathy as Libyans felt increasingly 'detached from a political system they had no chance of reforming' (Vandewalle 2012:127).

For a number of scholars of Libya's political history particularly under Gaddafi's rule⁵, the spectre of uprisings that had taken hold of neighbouring Tunisia and Egypt were deemed less unlikely to affect Libya given the extent to which revolutionary committees infiltrated society and enforced anti-dissident policies. However, the demonstration effects of the Arab Spring eventually reached Libya where the protests in Benghazi following the arrest of human rights lawyer Fathi Terbil sparked localised protests that would eventually build up to nationwide uprisings (Sawani 2013: 76). Hence, the protests that began in Benghazi on 15 February 2011 not only served as the catalyst of Libya's popular uprisings, but they also broke the barrier of fear among Libyans (Sawani 2013: 80) and strengthened their resolve for political reform.

Thirdly, Libya also stood apart from the other cases of the Arab Spring in the sense that the 'periphery conquered the centre' (Pack 2013:6) as the movement began in the eastern town of Benghazi and spread to other localities. The creation of the National Transitional Council (NTC) as the 'political force of the revolution' formed the locus around which the multiple uprisings could be organised, effectively 'institutionalizing the revolution' and laying the base for a transitional government in the aftermath of the revolution (Pack 2013:6; Sawani 2013:80). Hence, the NTC emerged as an 'alternative centre' that coordinated with liberated cities in restoring normalcy and organising territorial security. As it gained international recognition as the 'sole legitimate body representing the people of Libya and the Libyan state' (NTC 2011), the NTC was also remarkably successful in lobbying for access to \$160 billion in frozen assets to fund the state during the transition period and to ramp up oil production (Pack 2013:6). The centre-periphery dynamics that had long characterised Libya's political history since the

⁵ See Lisa Anderson, Qadhafi and his Opposition, *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 40, Issue 2, 1986, p.226; Ronald Bruce St John. 2014. *Libya: history and revolution*; Dirk Vandewalle, 2012. *A history of modern Libya*. Cambridge University Press.

Ottoman era fed into a strong de-centralization current that has fostered ‘ a weak centre’ in constant struggle to dominate ‘a dominant periphery’ (Pack 2013:10).

It was little coincidence that the birthplace of the revolution was in eastern Libya, which is also the location of the largest oil fields and key export terminals. The tribes⁶ and towns in eastern Libya had been marginalised under the Gaddafi regime and continued to press for greater representation in post-2011 transitional authorities. The Federalist elements also played a key role in fomenting the crisis of legitimacy that dogged the NTC and the GNC between 2011 and 2014, pointing to grievances over distribution of oil revenues as a key driver of conflict alongside competing claims of legitimacy (Costantini 2016:413).

3.3. The internationalization of Libya’s revolution: narratives, justification and intervention

3.3.1. The build-up to UNSC Resolution 1973

Going by the proliferation of literature on the role of outside actors in the Libyan uprisings, particularly the UNSC intervention led by NATO that aided the rebel forces in toppling Gaddafi’s regime, the internationalization of the Libyan revolution could be seen as the most analysed aspect of the responses to the Arab Spring by international and regional actors. Of all the movements that were part of the Arab Spring, only Libya involved intervention by the international community subsequent to the passing of UNSC Resolution 1973 which imposed a no-fly zone over Libya and authorized action ‘to protect civilians and civilian populated areas under threat of attack... while excluding a foreign occupation force of any form on any part of Libyan territory’ (S/RES/1973, 2011, para. 4).

Another extraordinary aspect of the Libyan case was the speed at which the military and diplomatic response came together: it took the international community 31 days to intervene in Libya, compared to Bosnia where the international response materialised after more than a year (Obama 2011). After the first protests erupted in Benghazi, as the Gaddafi regime brutally cracked down on protesters and pushed against the advances of the rebels from the east of the

⁶ In the Libyan context, ‘tribe’ refers to modes of social organisation through lineage and common ancestry. Over time, tribes have evolved to include ties through marriage and formation of political alliances. In the wake of the 2011 revolution, tribalism has come to play a pivotal role in the political dimension, especially in the areas of justice and security provision, conflict management and conflict resolution (see Cole & Mangan 2016; Lacher 2013b).

country, individual government officials, diplomats and military officers began breaking with the regime to join the uprisings and influence the international response to the unfolding revolution in Libya. Some of these high-level defectors included: Mustafa Abdel-Jalil, Gaddafi's Justice minister who later became the head of the NTC which was formed on 27 February 2011; Major General Abdul Fatah Younis (former Minister for Public Security); Mahmoud Jibril Ibrahim al-Warfali (former chair of the National Economic Development Board) who later became the NTC's foreign affairs representative ; and Ibrahim Dabbashi, Libya's deputy Permanent Representative to the UN who later became Permanent Representative in 2013 under the transitional General National Congress (GNC) government (Wester 2020:107). Liaising with the NTC, these defectors as well as Libyans in the diaspora played a pivotal role in shaping the narrative of the Libyan uprising relayed to the international community, as well as campaigning for support of the no-fly zone in Libya.

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay was one of the first responders to the violence in Libya on 18 February 2011, issuing a condemnation of the crackdown by security forces on protesters in Libya, Bahrain and other countries in MENA (UN OHCHR 2011). The UN Human Rights Chief's statement was shortly backed by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon on 21 February 2011, who expressed deep concern about reports of escalating violence against protests, and called for restraint and respect for freedoms and human rights (UN News 2011). Following a televised address on 20 February 2011 by Gaddafi's son, Saif al-Islam, in which he warned that government forces would 'fight until the last man, the last woman, the last bullet' (al Arabiya 2011), coupled with updates of death tolls by human rights organizations and mounting reports of human rights violations, war crimes and crimes against humanity by Gaddafi's forces (HRC 2011), the international response to the Libyan crisis accelerated significantly. An emergency session of the UNSC held on 22 February at the behest of the Libyan permanent representative to the UN, Abdurrahman Mohamed Shalgam (who defected on 25 February) and deputy permanent representative, Dabbashi, ended with a statement by the UNSC calling for 'an immediate end to the violence' and for the 'Government of Libya to meet its responsibility to protect its population' (UNSC Press Statement 2011). In a press conference after the UNSC meeting, Dabbashi highlighted Gaddafi's incendiary statements and threats which pointed to the prospects of mass killing of the Libyan people, including statements such as 'either we continue to rule you or we kill you' (Moynihan 2011).

The reticence of Gaddafi in response to calls for an end to the violence demanded a firm stance by international actors. On 26 February 2011, the UNSC adopted Resolution 1970 which

imposed an arms embargo on Libya, an asset freeze and travel bans on Gaddafi, his family and affiliates. Additionally, Resolution 1970 referred Libya to the International Criminal Court for an investigation into crimes governed by the Rome Statute (S/RES/1970). The turning point came in early March when it became apparent that the sanctions against Gaddafi were having negligible effect. Not only had Gaddafi's forces seized control of the oil crescent towns of Ras Lanuf, Brega and Zawiya, but they were 'making headway into the rebel stronghold of Benghazi' (Chorin 2012:249). Compounding matters further, a humanitarian crisis was unfolding as food supplies diminished and over 200,000 migrant workers fled to Tunisia, Egypt and Niger (Al Jazeera 2011).

In short course, France and the UK took up the lead roles in galvanising 'actionable international consensus' for a no-fly zone in Libya (Chorin 2012:374). France made the first move on 10 March by recognising the NTC, driven in part by French President Sarkozy's foreign policy goals of regaining French influence in North Africa and correcting France's initial response to the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt (Wester 2020:148). Commercial interests also played into French dynamism towards the Arab Spring as Sarkozy sought to recalibrate France's trade balance with Libya vis-à-vis Italian, British and German commercial engagements, a move that was seen as favourable to Sarkozy's standing in the 2012 elections (Northern & Pack 2013:118). As for the United Kingdom (UK), Prime Minister David Cameron called for stronger measures against the Gaddafi regime in a speech to the UK Parliament in which he referenced the prospects of a migrant crisis that would imperil both British and European interests (Cameron 2011). Tellingly, UK diplomats and intelligence officials were forced to respond to hard questions after a group of eight British Special Forces soldiers were detained near Benghazi. Foreign Minister William Hague later explained that the soldiers, who were in civilian attire at the time of capture, were there to protect diplomats who had been sent to liaise with rebels in the area (BBC 2011). Earlier at a NATO defence ministerial meeting on 10-11 March, the UK government outlined three conditions for NATO engagement namely: 'a demonstrable need for military action, a sound legal basis and strong regional support for outside intervention' (NATO 2011a).

The United States of America (US) took a more cautious approach to the evolving situation in Libya. President Obama was insistent on a set of criteria that would underpin an intervention in Libya namely 'the prospect of violence on a horrific scale, an international mandate for action' with support from 'a coalition of forces, and strong regional support' (Obama 2011). Engelbrekt (2013:49) has characterised the restrained approach of the US as one of 'moderate

interventionism' informed by the US 'experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan which had turned out to be long-drawn, costly military operations. The debate over intervention in Washington pitted the pro-intervention camp (including Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, NSC Director for Multilateral Engagement, Samantha Power and US Ambassador to the UN, Susan Rice) against the anti-intervention camp which included Defence Secretary Robert Gates, National Security Adviser Tom Donilon and Obama's chief of counterterrorism John Brennan, who cited the very real concerns of escalating cost and mission creep (Chorin 2012: 264).

Deliberations among NATO member states and officials also pointed to scant appetite for engagement in the Libyan crisis. Escalating costs of the military intervention in Afghanistan, coupled with shrinking defence budgets at home had resulted in an overall lack of political will to commit to additional military operations. The limited availability of intelligence on the evolving situation in Libya, the short planning period and deficits in resupply and ammunition capacities stood out as major constraints for NATO involvement; a reality which made European military and political leaders acutely aware of their dependence on US capabilities crucial for mission success (Michaels 2013:7). Thus, although NATO was well-placed to steer the air campaign by virtue of Europe's proximity to Libya, the constraints that confronted the Alliance necessitated a greater role for US military operations, a role that the US was reluctant to take up. Both President Obama and Defense Secretary Gates underscored that US involvement in the military intervention was limited and that the US was undertaking a supportive role with a view to hand over leadership of the mission to NATO in a couple of days (US DoD 2011; Obama 2011).

The final decision from Washington came on 15 March 2011 after an NSC meeting. US, UK and French advocacy for robust action culminated on 17 March 2011 with the passing of UNSC Resolution 1973. The resolution marked the first time that the UNSC had authorised the use of force without host state consent. Furthermore, as afore-mentioned (see 2.2.), the operative parts of the resolution were framed by the letter and spirit of R2P. R2P proponents view Libya as a milestone for the development of the norm noting that 'Libya suggests that we can say no more Holocausts, Cambodias and Rwandas and occasionally mean it' (Weiss 2011:291). For Bellamy (2011: 265). Libya showed that the 'debates about preventing and responding to mass atrocities are no longer primarily about *whether* to act but *how* to act.' Detractors have pointed to a more complex legacy for R2P in the aftermath of Libya, particularly the sticking points around implementation at the sharp end of the R2P response continuum (Evans 2012), as well as the potential misuse of R2P as a pretext for regime change in the guise of cosmopolitan

interventionism (Dembinski & Reinold 2010:15).

From a different vantage point, the build-up and deliberations leading up to adoption of Resolution 1973 have to be viewed against the backdrop of political, strategic and legal factors that amalgamated to form a ‘perfect storm’ that was conducive to intervention in Libya. The rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation, the brutal crackdown on protesters and Gaddafi’s incendiary statements to ‘show no mercy’ as his forces advanced into Benghazi created a crisis atmosphere that motivated robust action from the international community (Dunne & Gifkins 2011).

Outlining the ‘politics of justification’ that various actors engaged in the debate over intervention, Engelbrekt (2013:47) identified four key ‘constituencies’ or ‘constellations of political actors’ that were pivotal to framing, contesting and eventually delivering UNSC-authorized collective action embodied in Resolution 1973. The first group, comprising of the UK and France, can be categorised as proponents of ‘assertive interventionism’ as they were penholders of the draft resolutions on Libya and the most vocal supporters of a UNSC intervention. Outside the UNSC, assertive interventionism was supported by a broad range of organizations and individual countries that make up the humanitarian and pro-R2P constituency (Engelbrekt 2013:49). The second category, ‘moderate interventionism’ refers to actors such as the US during the first weeks of the crisis who followed a more cautious approach to developments on the ground. It is worth noting that the US position gradually shifted in March particularly after buy-in from Arab regional organisations and Clinton’s meeting in Paris with NTC foreign affairs representative Mahmoud Jibril (Engelbrekt 2013:20). The third key constituency was made up of regional actors such as the Arab League, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), the African Union (AU) and organizations such as NATO. This constellation of actors backed a position of ‘ambivalent interventionism’ with regards to the Libyan crisis. On 11 March, the GCC was the first regional organisation to call upon the UNSC to establish a no-fly zone to protect civilians (Al Jazeera 2011b). The following day, the Arab League voted for a landmark resolution that called for the UNSC to ‘shoulder its responsibilities and take the measures necessary to impose a no-fly zone on Libyan military aircraft’ (Resolution 7360 of the League of Arab States, cited in UN Doc. S/2011/137). For its part, the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) issued a communiqué on 10 March relaying its preference for a political solution to the crisis (PSC 2011).

The premium placed on regional consent for a no-fly zone was of utmost importance. The

condition of strong regional support was an absolute *sine qua non* for several Western powers, particularly important in reference to substantive and procedural legitimacy aspects of UNSC practice in a highly charged political context such as the MENA region (Engelbrekt 2013:50). Regional legitimisation was also important for an envisaged role for NATO in implementing a UNSC-authorized military intervention, noting that any action by NATO was to be guided by ‘a demonstrable need, a clear legal mandate and solid support from the region’ (Rasmussen 2011).

The group of countries that abstained in the UNSC vote for Resolution 1973 – Brazil, China, Germany, India and the Russian Federation – can be characterised as ‘reluctant interveners’ insofar as they did not vote or veto against the resolution. However, they expressed a broad array of concerns with the textual and operational aspects of Resolution 1973. Issues included the risk of mission creep, the emphatic rejection of a foreign occupation force, a lack of clarity around details of enforcement measures and concerns whether enough time had been allowed for pursuit of diplomatic channels. The general ambivalence that came across in the text of the resolution was particularly problematic in the view of Russia and China who highlighted a number of unanswered questions such as how the no-fly zone would be enforced, what the rules of engagement would be and what limitations would apply to the use of force (UN Doc S/PV/ 6498).

Recapping a key assertion in this study the intervening powers in Libya retreated from their remedial responsibilities in the aftermath of the intervention (see 2.4.4), the lack of a post-intervention strategy has been attributed to normative contestation surrounding the rebuilding norm (Donovan 2021:3). Through an examination of the official and non-official discourses in the lead-up to and during the 2011 intervention, particularly among the leading proponents of the intervention (namely France, the UK and the US), Donovan (2021:6) points to two major discourses that informed the meanings-in-use of the rebuilding norm by international actors. These discourses were: (i) ‘a responsibility to assist Libya’ (basic discourse I), and (ii) ‘Libya must not be like Iraq’ (basic discourse II). Subsequently, an analysis of the discursive use of the afore-mentioned discourses in light of the interveners’ understanding of the rebuilding norm revealed an inclination towards limited engagement, as well as an emphasis on Libyan ownership of the rebuilding phase (Donovan 2021: 9).

Further situating the de-emphasis on rebuilding responsibilities by international actors in the context of shifts in international interventionist frameworks, Chandler (2012: 221) asserts:

Libya illustrates how the post-interventionist discourse operates in a different and distinct register, dissolving the clarity of liberal security frameworks in the language of capacity-building and good governance... Libya was an intervention freed from liberal internationalist baggage, where the West could gain vicarious credit and distance itself from any consequences.

3.3.2. Narratives of humanitarian crises: space, time and speed

In retrospect, considering the heated debate that emerged around the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1973 in the aftermath of the intervention, specifically around issues of mission creep and morphing of mission into foreign-imposed regime change, Libya laid bare the ‘politics of exceptionalism’ at the heart of knotty debates about intervention (Cunliffe 2020:12). As Cunliffe (2020:142) elaborates, the politics of exceptionalism ‘collapses all issues of the viability and legitimacy of political representation into the simple question of whether or not the exercise of power is effective and rapid.’ He adds: ‘the prototypical form of exceptionalist politics in our era’ that is, humanitarian exceptionalism, goes hand in hand with the ‘immanence of humanitarian emergency in international order’ and the politics of emergency that frames legitimacy around questions of ‘efficacious action rather than legitimate representation’ (Cunliffe 2020:167).

The emphasis on urgency and rapid action at the core of the politics of exceptionalism and humanitarian emergency dovetails narratives of virtuous war in Libya that privileged speed, precision and austerity (O’Sullivan 2018:60). According to Der Derian (2009:244), ‘at the heart of virtuous war is the technical capability and ethical imperative to threaten and if necessary, actualise violence from a distance – with no or minimal casualties.’ The focus on spatio-temporal analysis stems from hegemonic conceptions of time and space in the liberal intervention discourse in which ‘spaces of crises are delineated in that they are seen as distant and separate from the intervening subject.’ Furthermore, time is also portrayed as ‘progressive, linear and universal’ (O’Sullivan 2018:42). A key component of the liberal understanding of time and space is the concept of ‘imaginative geography’ derived from the work of Edward Said (2003) and Derek Gregory (2004). Imaginative geography ‘enables the discourse on the need to save or rescue through violent intervention’, based on territorial separation and formation of hierarchical binary categories of ‘us’ and ‘them’ or ‘our space’ and ‘their space’ (Gregory 2004:17; O’Sullivan 2018:48). Hence, part of the justification of the military

intervention in Libya was the presence of othering in which the Libyans were ‘imagined as different and inferior’, paving way for the logic of intervention in minimising the risks to liberal progress such as state failure or failed border control (O’Sullivan 2018:55).

The Libyan intervention has been hailed as a ‘model intervention’ (Daalder and Stavridis 2012:3) and portrayed as ‘an ideal virtuous war that was quick, cheap and bloodless, all the while demonstrating its virtue by saving civilian lives’ (O’Sullivan 2018:60). In selling the idea of a quick and limited intervention in Libya to both domestic and international audiences, the assertive interveners emphasized the narratives of speed and precision that have gained ‘traction in the discourse on Western violence’. In one sense, their core argument was that ‘Libya would be neither Iraq nor Afghanistan’ in the sense that there would be no boots on the ground and it was going to be swift (O’Sullivan 2018:67). In addition to the claims of speed that were underpinned by a military-technical imperative, the Libyan intervention was also advanced on the basis of the protection of civilians, a purpose that was framed by narratives of precision weaponry and care to avoid civilian casualties. Yet, despite reports of civilian deaths in several instances, these reports were swiftly buried under the banner of the fog of war (HRW 2012:27). The emphasis on precision weaponry and speed as the terms of success of the Libya intervention not only obscure ethical assessments of the aftermath, but also raise critical questions about the fusion of military-technical imperatives with moral imperatives. Is there such a thing as clean and bloodless war? Moreover, ‘can we have a war that advances both ethical imperatives (protection of civilians) and military-technical imperatives (speed, austerity) in equal measure?’ (O’Sullivan 2018:77).

The Libyan intervention and its aftermath also raise salient questions about the interventionist responses and the implications of the multiple narratives that emerged around the politics of exceptionalism and the humanitarian emergency. The upheavals in Syria and the resulting paralysis that dogged the UNSC, wary of authorising another intervention, warrant the pressing question of *why Libya?* This question calls for a closer look at the geopolitical and geostrategic aspects of the Libyan context.

3.3.3. Libya’s geostrategic significance: the prisms of oil, migration and counterterrorism

A constant refrain among critics of the Libyan intervention is the geostrategic rationale behind the crusading zeal and calls for an intervention in Libya. Instead of getting wrapped up in the counter-factual speculations around the causes and outcomes of the intervention, this section will interrogate the renewed interest of the international community in post-Gaddafi Libya. As

questions persist about the lack of post-war planning in the aftermath of the intervention, coupled with arguments that the interventionist actors abandoned Libya, the renewed interest of regional and international powers in Libya in the wake of the migrant crisis and the growing threat of armed jihadist groups such as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and Al-Qaeda in the Maghreb (AQIM) point to far-reaching geopolitical considerations.

Between 2015 and 2016, ISIS gained a foothold in the coastal city of Sirte and launched attacks on infrastructure in Libya's oil Crescent. Alarm bells went off in European capitals about a looming terror threat on its doorstep. In spite of a six-month campaign by militias allied to Libya's Government of National Accord (GNA) to fight off the extremists, the poorly trained and ill-equipped Misratan forces were forced to seek assistance from outside. Help arrived in the form of US air strikes which led to a decisive victory on 17 December 2016 and the recapture of Sirte by GNA forces (Pargeter 2017: 12). The narrative in the counterterrorism air campaign was presented alongside the fear of migrant and refugee flows, given Libya's positioning as a key migrant transit point. Perhaps the term 'migrant' best describes the reactionary and securitized responses of the European Union (EU) states to scores of migrants and refugees who traverse the Mediterranean in an attempt to get to southern European shores. The International Organization for Migration estimates about 1.5 million cross-Mediterranean migrants between 2014 and 2016. The largest group of migrants were Syrians, followed by Afghans and other nationalities including Eritreans, Iraqis, Nigerians and Pakistanis (Fargues 2017:11).

As migrant numbers swelled, EU countries moved to enact tougher border controls and refugee policies. Populist movements that espoused strong anti-immigrant sentiments added to the political pressure for harsher interception and detention policies. In 2016, the EU and Turkey reached a deal to detain and return irregular migrants crossing from Turkey onto the Greek islands (Becatoros 2019). In 2017, Italy signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Libya's internationally-recognised GNA to ensure reduction of illegal migratory flows (Reidy 2020).

European engagement with Libya on border control and migration management has a long history, going back to the launch of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) in 2003. The ENP is aimed at fostering effective partnerships between the EU and countries in its neighbourhood on priorities such as good governance, democracy, economic development, security and migration (EEAS 2016). In addition to offering political and financial incentives to reduce migratory flows to Europe, EU countries have also supported interceptions and

returns such as the 2008 Italy-Libya deal strengthening Libyan border control and equipping the Libyan Coast Guard for patrols, interceptions and return of migrants (Reidy 2020). The deals between Italy and Libya to curb migration based on forced returns and interdictions have been found to be in violation of the principle of non-refoulement, in addition to violating human rights of migrants and asylum seekers (HRW 2009). Moreover, the EU third-country arrangements on border control are indicative of the prevalence of a securitized approach to migration and the externalization of border controls (Bigo 2006:395).

With the migration issue in mind, it can be argued that the fear of an influx of refugees was a key driver of Europe's interventionist response to the crisis in Libya. The lingering concerns of the Western proponents of intervention about curbing migratory flows from Libya also exposes the hollowness of the claims about protecting civilians that was put forward as the purpose of the intervention. As Cunliffe (2020:64) avers:

No longer justified by anything as grand as expanding the reach of human rights, destroying cataclysmic weapons, overthrowing tyrants, defending civilisation or building new global orders, intervention is becoming a crude politics of containment: stemming refugee flows or suppressing new eruptions of insurgency.

From a geostrategic standpoint, the fact that Libya holds the largest oil reserves in Africa, in addition to massive gas deposits and its proximity to the Mediterranean may be incontrovertible proof that Libya matters. As the saying goes, 'to the victor belong the spoils,' the prize of Libya's oil wealth could be uncovered as one more motive for the 2011 intervention in Libya. Prior to the intervention, a number of foreign oil companies were operating in Libya including France's Total, Italy's Eni, British Petroleum, Exxon Mobil, Chevron and Norway's Statoil, among others. For Western actors with a stake in increasing their access to Libya's oil wealth, an intervention would serve economic interests as well as the ouster of Gaddafi who had acrimonious relationships with Western powers. It is rather telling that as the civil war raged in Libya during 2011, France and the UK were negotiating oil deals. On 3 April 2011, French newspaper *Libération* carried a story which revealed a deal between France and the NTC for 35% of the crude oil share in exchange for support of the revolution (Borger & Macalister 2011)

The geopolitical angle also applies to the regional level where Libya has emerged as a 'proving ground' for geopolitical competition, driven by ideology and realpolitik. During the civil war in 2011, armed groups received military support from foreign powers, notably the United Arab

Emirates (UAE) and Qatar who mobilized their assistance through proxies. Qatar leaned towards armed groups who espoused an Islamist ideology whereas the UAE opted for proxies who had close links to the old regime (Megerisi 2020a: 3). The competition intensified in the wake of the 2014 civil war that ruptured the political landscape into an east-west divide, with foreign powers backing the two opposing factions. The ensuing security vacuum in Libya, coupled with the US' retrenchment from the region presented an opportunity for the UAE to advance its ideological vision for the regional order, fashioned as an affront on Islamist groups and terrorism. In reality, the UAE's policy towards Libya was mostly driven by fear of the Arab Spring revolutionary currents reaching its borders (el Gomati 2020a:13). Moreover, Libya's strategic positioning aligned with the UAE's economic vision to dominate shipping lanes in the Mediterranean while securing a base for its energy diversification plans (Megerisi 2019a:6). Thus, a combination of economic and geostrategic interests informed the engagement of foreign sponsors in a fratricidal post-revolutionary Libya, split between those that backed the UN-recognised GNA in Tripoli (Qatar, Turkey, Italy); and those who sided with Khalifa Haftar, a Gaddafi-era general whose anti-Islamist and counterterrorism agenda found resonance with Egypt, the UAE, Saudi Arabia and France (Megerisi 2020a:4). As the subsequent sections will illustrate, the involvement of foreign actors in the Libyan conflict has been a key factor in amplifying and prolonging conflictual dynamics. The plethora of competing interests and overtures also complicated the efforts aimed at a peaceful solution to the conflict as foreign actors manipulated levers of power in Libya through military operations, diplomatic dealings and pervasive propaganda and disinformation campaigns (Wehrey 2020a:5).

Having laid out a big picture of the profile of the intervention in Libya against the backdrop of regional flux and geopolitical considerations, the next section will comprise of a conflict analysis in post-Gaddafi Libya. The analysis will be limited to the period from October 2011 when the NATO operation came to an end, until December 2020 (see Table 1) which marked a stalemate that opened up to political talks and a fragile ceasefire, brokered by UNSMIL in October 2020 (Dorda *et al* 2020a:6). This approach to conflict analysis will explore the Libyan crisis chronologically while also including a discussion of the actors central to the conflict (see Table 2), outlining their interests, capacities and relationships, as well as those who can be identified as spoilers who held an interest in maintaining a negative status quo. The section will conclude with an overview of the structural drivers and trends that are central to the dynamics of the conflict.

3.4. Post-intervention Libya: a decade of conflict 2011-2020

When NATO declared the end of Operation Unified Protector on 31 October 2011, there was a moment of enthusiasm in Libya. The revolution had toppled the Gaddafi regime and Libyans were now faced with the task of establishing a new political system. However, the euphoria turned out to be short-lived as the transitional phase deteriorated into chaos and eventually civil war, exacerbated by a range of structural and proximate drivers of conflict. This section will map out the trajectory of the conflict in Libya across four phases: (i) Phase one covers the 2011-2014 period which entails the immediate aftermath of the revolution the elections of the GNC and the power struggle that built up to the outbreak of civil war in 2014; (ii) Phase two covers the 2014-2016 period which can be labelled as the second civil war between two rival factions, fragmentation along east-west divide and the rise of ISIS in Libya; (iii) Phase three focused on the third civil war in Libya (April 2019- June 2020) and the military stalemate that followed Haftar’s military setbacks; (iv) Phase four will focus on the latter half of 2020 which has been characterised as a turning point in the Libyan crisis amidst a military stalemate, fragile ceasefire and cautious momentum across political, security and economic tracks in peace initiatives facilitated by international interlocutors.

Table 1: Timeline of key events in the Libyan conflict 2011-2020

2011	
30 October:	NATO’s Operation Unified Protector comes to an end
2012	
January:	clashes among rebels in Benghazi are first signs of discontent within the NTC
7 July:	elections for a new 200-member national assembly known as the General National Congress are held
8 August:	NTC formally hands over power to the GNC. Mohamed Yousef el-Magariaf is elected as chairman of GNC
11 September:	Islamist militants storm US consulate in Benghazi, killing four Americans, including US Ambassador Chris Stevens
15 October:	Ali Zeidan is elected as Prime Minister
2013	
5 May:	The Political Isolation Law is passed. The law, which bans Gaddafi-era officials from politics for 10 years, escalates polarization within the GNC.
17 August:	Ibrahim Jadran, leader of the Petroleum Facilities Guards and his allies, seize four key oil terminals, precipitating a year-long blockade of oil exports

2014	
3 February:	Protests erupt in response to GNC refusal to disband after mandate expires
14 February:	Constitutional Assembly is elected to undertake drafting of a new constitution
8-10 March:	Clashes erupt between Misratan forces and Zawiya Martyrs brigade over control of Libya's oil fields and terminals. Zeidan is removed as prime minister after failing to resolve oil crisis.
16 May:	General Khalifa Haftar launches Operation Dignity against Islamist militias in Benghazi; Haftar frames his military campaign as a war to root out all Islamists and terrorists
23 May:	Misratan allies of GNC move into Tripoli to face pro-Haftar forces
25 June:	a new parliament is elected in low-turnout polls as a result of insecurity; fighting breaks out between forces loyal to outgoing GNC and new parliament
13 July:	a coalition of Islamist and Misratan forces launch Operation Dawn to counter Haftar's Operation Dignity Prime Minister Khalifa Ghwell, supported by GNC's speaker Nuri Abu Sahmain form National Salvation Government
26 July:	as security situation deteriorates, foreign embassies close and UN staff and foreigners are evacuated
30 July:	Armed Islamist groups, Ansar al-Sharia seize control of Benghazi
4 August:	House of Representatives (HoR) holds its inaugural meeting
14 August:	Bernardino Léon is appointed as the first Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) for Libya
23 August:	Libya Dawn forces take control of Tripoli, forcing HoR to relocate to Tobruk in eastern Libya
14 October:	HoR officially allies with Haftar
October:	ISIS seizes partial control of Derna, a port city in eastern Libya
6 November:	Constitutional Chamber of Libyan Supreme Court rules HoR elections unconstitutional.
2015	
14 January:	UN-brokered peace talks in Libya begin in Geneva
15 February:	ISIS establishes foothold in Sirte and its surroundings
5 March:	Libyan factions hold UN-brokered peace talks in Skhirat, Morocco
10 June:	GNC delegation drops out of UN-backed peace talks and rejects power-sharing plans
17 December:	Representatives of GNC and HoR sign the Libyan Political Agreement (LPA) in Skhirat. The LPA established the Government of National Accord (GNA), with Fayeze al-Sarraj as Prime Minister and head of a nine-member Presidency Council
2016	
20 March:	the UN-recognized GNA arrives in Tripoli by boat
1 August:	US launches airstrikes targeting ISIS in support of GNA operation to recapture Sirte
17 December:	GNA officially declares Sirte's liberation from ISIS
2017	
6 July:	General Haftar declared Benghazi liberated from Islamist militias

25 July:	French President Macron hosts Sarraj and Haftar in Paris, outcome of talks is a ceasefire agreement and promise to hold elections in 2018
20 September:	UN SRSG , Ghassan Salamé outlined a new action plan for Libya political process, entailing amendment of the LPA, a planned national conference and holding of elections
16 October:	HoR withdraws from UN-facilitated negotiations thus stalling UN action plan, no agreement is reached between HSC and HoR on power sharing and a new LPA
2018	
29 May:	Paris Peace Conference brings together Prime Minister Sarraj, LNA commander Haftar, HoR speaker Aguila Saleh and head of Council of State Khaled al-Mishri. Libyan parties issue a joint statement of agreement to hold elections on 10 December 2018
11 July:	National Oil Corporation announces re-opening of four oil export terminals.
August-September:	The Kaniyat and other armed groups launch assault on Tripoli, facing off against forces loyal to the GNA such as the Tripoli Protection Force
26 September:	GNA announces UN-brokered ceasefire aimed at ending months-long conflict between armed groups in Tripoli.
12-13 November:	Libyan and international leaders meet in Palermo, Italy for a conference to discuss political solutions to conflict in Libya
3 December:	El Sharara, Libya's largest oilfield, is shut down by local militias and a unit of PFG
2019	
16 January:	LNA launches counter-terrorist operations across southern Libya
16-21 January:	UN-brokered ceasefire falters as fighting resumes in Tripoli between the Seventh Brigade militia and Tripoli Protection Force
28 February:	General Haftar and Prime Minister Sarraj meet in Abu Dhabi and agree to hold elections
20 March:	UN Special Envoy Salamé announces a national conference planned to take place in April 2019 in Ghadames
27 March:	Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and UAE representatives meet with Haftar in Riyadh
3 April:	Haftar and his LNA forces launch assault on Tripoli, taking control of towns on the outskirts of Tripoli
7 April:	GNA announces counter-offensive against Haftar's forces
16 June:	UN-recognised government announces a peace initiative to break deadlock in civil war, the plan includes a national peace forum and elections before end of 2019
September	Hundreds of Russian mercenaries employed by Wagner Group arrive in Libya to support LNA
28 November:	GNA and Turkey sign maritime and security agreements, securing Turkish military backing for GNA
10 December:	UN releases report detailing violation of arms embargo on Libya by a number of countries
2020	
5 January:	Turkey announces deployment of its troops to Libya to support the GNA
12 January:	Turkey and Russia broker a ceasefire between GNA and LNA
14 January:	General Khalifa Haftar leaves Moscow without signing ceasefire agreement

18 January:	NOC declares <i>force majeure</i> , suspending oil export from eastern oil ports
19 January:	German Chancellor Angela Merkel hosts Berlin Conference, bringing together Libyan and international participants. Berlin Conference ends with a 55-point outcome document and emphasizes support for Libyan-led peace process
12 February:	UNSC passes a Resolution 2510 calling for a lasting ceasefire and endorsing the conclusions of the Berlin Conference including support for a monitoring system and confidence-building measures
31 March:	EU launches Operation IRINI to support implementation of the arms embargo on Libya
18 May:	GNA forces take control of al-Watiya airbase, an important foothold for Haftar's forces
3 June:	GNA forces retake Tripoli International Airport and control of Tripoli and its suburbs
6 June:	Egypt announces a ceasefire agreement following a meeting between Aguilu Saleh and General Haftar in Cairo. The Cairo Initiative is floated as a potential political roadmap.
7 June:	GNA announces an offensive on Sirte, after retaking control of western Libya
22 June:	Egyptian President el Sisi threatens military intervention in Libya if Turkish-backed GNA forces cross the 'red line' of Sirte
21 August:	GNA and LNA announce cessation of hostilities
18 September:	Haftar announces deal to lift oil blockades following Russia-backed deal between him and Deputy Prime Minister in the GNA Ahmed Maiteeq
15 October:	NOC announces lifting of <i>force majeure</i> on el Sharara oil field, ramping up oil production
23 October:	UNSMIL announces permanent ceasefire between Libyan warring parties following talks under the 5+5 Joint Military Commission
7-15 November:	The Libyan Political Dialogue Forum (LPDF) is held in Tunis, as part of the UN-led peace process. The LPDF brought together 75 Libyan delegates to discuss a roadmap to elections on 24 December 2021 and structure and selection of executive authority and interim transitional government.
15 December:	Acting head of UNSMIL, Stephanie Williams announces that LPDF had been unable to agree on selection mechanism for the new Libyan transitional executive authority; UNSMIL reiterates commitment to support roadmap to elections at the end of 2021 and facilitation of meetings of LPDF advisory and legal committees.

3.4.1. Phase 1: 2011-2014: challenges of the transitional period

(i) *Political divides and crisis of legitimacy*

As the revolution was underway in 2011, the NTC was engaged in a different kind of struggle - shaping the roadmap for a new Libya after the ouster of Gaddafi. On 3 August 2011, the NTC passed the Constitutional Declaration which outlined the handover of authority from the NTC and the elections for a 200 member GNC to be held within 240 days after the announcement of liberation. The GNC would elect a prime minister who would form an interim government. A Constituent Committee would also be created to draft a constitution to be entered into a national referendum, followed by parliamentary elections (Bartu 2015:52). Foreshadowing the power struggle and intense polarization that would set post-intervention Libya on the path to

spiralling conflict, the build-up to the Constitutional Declaration was marked by heated debates and clashes over competing visions that played out across ideological and regional faultlines, compounded by long-running mutual suspicions and mistrust among political and military figures (Bartu 2015:53).

In addition to rampant insecurity brought on by a proliferation of militias after the war, the NTC faced political challenges from Federalist and Islamist currents who presented vastly divergent visions for Libya's transition. Tensions escalated into a power struggle between the Islamist-leaning camp and the secularist-leaning camp of the NTC, leading to further fragmentation and a crisis of legitimacy for the transitional authority (Fitzgerald 2015:193). The Federalist forces in the east also grew disillusioned with the NTC's policies on decentralisation, resurfacing deep-seated regional grievances that further widened the east-west divide. The political differences and demand for greater autonomy came to a head in June 2013 when the Barqa Council declared itself as the interim government of Cyrenaica and called for a boycott of the 2014 parliamentary elections. The fissures in the post-revolutionary political landscape were largely indicative of the variegated and localized nature of the uprisings as neighbourhoods and towns joined the revolution to topple the Gaddafi regime. Faultlines also emerged between those who fought during the revolution (*thuwwar*) and the political and military elite who staked claims in the new order; between communities that benefited under Gaddafi's rule and those marginalised by it; between Libyans who returned from years in exile and those who had remained; and between those who wanted to overhaul the system and those who wanted to retain aspects of the old order (ICG 2011:13).

There is little doubt that the legacy of Gaddafi's 42-year rule also bequeathed the new leadership a series of problems that complicated the process of rebuilding institutions and reforming the economy. The hyper-personalized reign that leveraged tribal and regional loyalties via patronage networks, moribund state institutions and a disenfranchised population deeply distrustful of central authority made the task of consolidating central government authority fraught with difficulties (Vandewalle 2015:22).

The centrifugal forces of oil, religion, ideology and tribalism collectively undermined the legitimacy of an already weak NTC which fell prey to a policy of appeasement in dealing with competing political forces, including Federalists, Islamists and jihadists. The practice of appeasement led to an uneasy Faustian bargain between the centre and the periphery that not

only exacerbated polarization but also fuelled the structural drivers at the heart of Libya's interlocked political and security crisis (Pack *et al.* 2014:17).

In spite of an increasingly fragmented political landscape, Libya held elections on 7 July 2012, hailed as a 'marker of success' of the transition to democracy (Wehrey 2016:2). Despite tensions stoked by federalists, voter turnout was relatively high and both local and international observers declared the elections free and fair. The success of the elections was a big boost of confidence for the Libyan electoral commission which had worked with UNSMIL and non-governmental election institutes to oversee the electoral process. At the political level, the high hopes that the elected GNC would be resilient in the face of widening divisions were dashed by infighting that drew out the election of Prime Minister Ali Zeidan and appointment of his cabinet (Chivvis and Martini 2014:42). The deep rifts within the GNC reached crisis point in May 2013 with the passage of the highly controversial Political Isolation Law, aimed at excluding ex-regime high-ranking officials from political life. The debate around the law pitted the largest group within the GNC, the National Forces Alliance against the Islamist Justice and Construction coalition, who used militias to strong-arm the GNC into passing the law at gunpoint (Chivvis and Martini 2014:44). The Political Isolation law overextended the process of lustration and criminal prosecution of large numbers of senior officials, and generated extensive backlash that aggravated divisions and the drift into civil war (Sayigh 2015:13).

(ii) A fragmented security landscape and the proliferation of armed groups

Parallel to the fragmentation in the political arena, the security sector was also characterised by hyper-localism and fragmentation, setting the stage for proliferation of armed groups who proved resistant to attempts at disarmament, integration under a central authority structure and broader security sector reform. The absence of a fully legitimate, representative and effective government with central authority, coupled with ideological, political and local faultlines, has fostered the power of militias with competing claims to power and legitimacy. A defining character of the political and security landscape, localism, had a major effect on the contours of the post-2011 security landscape. The decentralised nature of the revolution that saw revolutionary fighters mobilize on the basis of towns, neighbourhoods or tribes carried over to the post-revolutionary landscape, evidenced by the embeddedness and fluid nature of political and military actors with complex ties to their localities (Lacher 2020a:2). The resurgent localism in Libya harks back to the structural conditions of the Gaddafi era, which had cultivated an aversion to state institutions and mistrust of central authority. During the

revolution, the revolutionary forces formed military councils to coordinate armed groups in various towns and neighbourhoods, while also ensuring provision of security to liberated areas. However, what had been seen as a pragmatic move in the absence of central unified command during the revolution, set the stage for communal conflicts as the myriad military councils advanced competing agendas and ideologies (ICG 2012:9).

The collapse of the security apparatus during the uprisings locked in the local factional rivalries. Furthermore, the NTC found it increasingly difficult to disband militias who had access to huge amounts of weapons across the country, including man-portable air defence systems, anti-tank missiles, self-propelled multi-launch rocket systems and mortars. The access to massive weapons depots also undermined disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes by transitional authorities, who pursued self-defeating policies and strategies in attempts to establish some form of control over the plethora of armed groups. In December 2011, the NTC set up the Warriors' Commission to register revolutionary fighters and integrate them into the Interior and Defence ministries. The Interior Ministry also established the Supreme Security Committee (SSC) to absorb brigades and link them to training and employment opportunities. These very basic DDR programmes espoused a co-option and appeasement strategy which translated into the transitional authorities bankrolling the newly-formed brigades, and allowed for the penetration of the political system by militias. By deputizing and 'legitimizing' the brigades, the transitional authorities viewed co-option as a stop-gap measure to fill the security vacuum in lieu of a cohesive and central security sector (Pack *et al* 2014:45). Over time, the co-option strategy proved counter-intuitive as it entrenched security pluralism and encouraged opportunistic and rent-seeking behaviour among militias who could use force to influence electoral bodies and processes (Badi 2020a:14).

The decision by the transitional authorities to put armed groups on the payroll not only fostered a mushrooming of new militias and brigades, but also engendered what can be described as a 'hybrid security order' with long-term implications for future security sector reform in the Libyan context. According to Badi (2020a:8), hybridity in the Libyan security sector is manifest in the way the state's 'formal' security institutions operate alongside a range of 'non- or quasi-state actors.' The effect of the hybrid arrangement was destabilizing for the political and security orders as the 'authorised' brigades such as the SSC, the Libya Shield Force and the Petroleum Facilities Guard (PFG) emerged as a parallel track to the regular army and police. As time went by, militias developed a predatory relationship with the state, using force to

further their political. Criminal and ideological agenda in electoral bodies and seizing strategic assets such as border checkpoints, oil facilities, armouries and airports (Wehrey 2014:5).

Moreover, the hybridity in the post-revolutionary landscape hindered security sector reform by entrenching rifts between the new and old orders and between supporters of the former regime and the revolutionary camp. The rival factions instrumentalized various militias to forcefully advance their political and ideological agenda, leading to increased militarisation of the political landscape. The affiliations between the various political and armed groups such as the Qaaqaa brigade which had close ties to the National Forces Alliance, the Islamist blocs who had close ties to the Libya Shield Forces, the 17 February Martyrs Brigade or the Federalists who were affiliated with the Cyrenaica Protection Force and the Army of Cyrenaica, contributed to further polarization and penetration of state institutions by militias (Pack *et al.* 2014:26). The instrumentalisation of armed groups by political actors promoted violence as a political tool in Libya, pointing to a weak government that lacked both the capacity and the will to implement reform and exert control over a fragmented security sector. The penetration of government by militias was on full display in 2013 when militias who backed the Islamist bloc besieged government buildings to force the GNC to pass the Political Isolation Law. The same tactics were also used to pressure the GNC into sacking Prime Minister Ali Zeidan (Pack *et al.* 2014:42).

While the political, ideological, religious and tribal faultlines that cut across Libya were mostly driven by localism, the divides and dynamics of hybridity and fragmentation found resonance with a diverse array of foreign powers. Hence, as Badi (2020b:221) observes, ‘the entrenchment of neo-hybridity in Libya’s security sector became a function of wider geopolitical interference’ as external actors provided military and financial support to their local proxies. Qatar and the UAE extended their geopolitical rivalry to the post-2011 landscape as they sharpened the fissures between Islamists and anti-Islamists, and the divide between east and west (Wehrey 2020a:12). Foreign rivalries also played out during the elections of 2012 as Qatar had close ties with Libyan Islamists whereas the UAE and Western support leaned towards Mahmoud Jibril’s NFA who were seen as more secularist. The ouster of the Muslim Brotherhood and Mohamed Morsi in Egypt in 2013 by Abdel Fattah el Sisi, and the massacres of hundreds of Muslim Brotherhood supporters by Egyptian military reverberated across the polarized Libyan political scene and heightened tensions between Libyan Islamists and anti-Islamists. The Egyptian *coup* hardened the resolve of radical Islamists who called for strengthening of their political and military power as a guarantee against violent repression.

For anti-Islamists, the Sisi *coup* emboldened their cause, with some calling for a ‘Sisi-like strongman’ who would restore order and get rid of the Brotherhood (Wehrey 2020b:674).

The post-2011 Libyan landscape, characterised by extreme fragmentation and hyper-localism, embodied what has been termed as an ‘area of limited statehood’ (Risse 2013:2), that defied categorisation of statehood in Weberian terms (central authority and monopoly over the use of force). In the Libyan case, ‘a form of central authority persisted but it lacked the ability to implement and enforce rules and decisions, and lacked the legitimate monopoly over means of violence’ (Risse and Stollenwerk 2018: 405). What has emerged in Libya is a ‘kind of governance in spite of government’ (Droz-Vincent 2018:452) in which local authorities are embedded in the social networks. Communities, neighbourhoods and families, provided rules structures and collective goods. For instance, municipalities, notables, wisemen (*hukama*) and elders (*kibar al-sinn*) came to play a key role in negotiating ceasefires among warring communities and in coordinating provision of security, justice and conflict resolution mechanisms (Droz-Vincent 2018:442). Similarly, the armed groups who were socially embedded in their social fabric, mobilised in response to local social ties as well as changing strategic conditions that shaped their interests and identities (Lacher 2020a:8). The prevalence of localism in Libya’s socio-political terrain transformed national politics, carrying over local factional rivalries and pre-war centre-periphery dynamics that allowed for entrenchment of hybridity. Hence, the armed groups combined dimensions of (i) ‘a moral and political economy of survival’ based on the need for local communities to defend themselves in the absence of a strong central authority; (ii) ‘sources of authority based on their services to their members and communities or on their societal relations combined with revolutionary legitimacy’; and (iii) ‘their interactions with foreign powers’ who crystallized fissures in an already fragmented political landscape (Droz-Vincent 2018:452).

As the bifurcation in state institutions intensified and political fragmentation threatened a weak transitional government, the security situation worsened as jihadist groups gained footholds in several cities. Violence was felt more strongly in Benghazi and in the east where radical jihadists terrorized the populace with assassinations, shootings and car bombs against activists, judges and humanitarian workers (Wehrey 2020b:673). The violent trend came to a head in September 2012 when an attack on the American consulate in Benghazi resulted in the death of four Americans including Ambassador Christopher Stevens. By early 2014, the security vacuum had become fertile breeding ground for radical Islamists led by Ansar al-Sharia. The GNC’s failure to dissolve after expiry of its mandate on 7 February 2014 also aggravated the

tensions between Islamist and anti-Islamist factions, edging the political process to the verge of collapse. The embattled GNC faced a number of challenges between February and June 2014, which was a compromise date for fresh elections, including attempted coups by General Khalifa Haftar on 14 February 2014, followed on 18 February 2014 by the Qaaqaa and Sawaiq brigades who threatened the GNC demanding resignation within five hours (Pack et al. 2014:4). On the back of former Prime Minister Zeidan's removal in March 2014, Haftar began to consolidate support in the east in the lead up to the launch of 'Operation Dignity', a military campaign targeting Islamist armed groups and their affiliates and jihadist groups who were collectively labelled as terrorists. Haftar's supporters included a broad array of militias, tribal forces, Madkhali Salafist fighters and former army and air force units. Western Libya-based armed groups such as the Qaaqaa, Madani and Sawaeq brigades also joined Haftar's forces, which received political backing from the NFA and Libyan politicians such as former NTC chair Abd-al-Jalil. On 16 May, Haftar's forces which had coalesced under the banner of the Libyan National Army (LNA), began operations in Benghazi targeting bases of the Ansar al-Sharia, the February 17 Revolutionary Martyrs brigade and the Libya Shield One (Wehrey 2014:20).

3.4.2. Phase 2: The 2014-2016 civil war and the entrenchment of polarization (*Operation Dignity vs. Operation Dawn*)

The convergence of emerging dynamics – polarization between Islamists and their opponents; geopolitical rivalries in the Persian Gulf; the growing power and leverage of Libyan militias; the intercommunal conflicts between former revolutionary strongholds and ex-regime forces, and the turf war for influence and control over state resources in Tripoli came together to produce the civil war of 2014 (Wehrey 2020a:16). Shortly after Operation Dignity was launched, Zintani forces allied with Haftar, the Qaaqaa and Sawaiq brigades challenged the GNC a few weeks before the parliamentary elections for the HoR scheduled for 25 June 2014. Haftar's campaign galvanised a closing of ranks among Islamists who combined their firepower under the umbrella of 'Operation Dawn', made up of a Benghazi Revolutionary Shura Council (a coalition of Islamist militias), Misratan brigades, the Libya Revolutionaries Operations Room, the Libya Shield Militia and the Tripoli Brigade. In one sense, the emergence of the Dawn coalition could be attributed to the poor showing of Islamists in the elections for the HoR, as well as the threat of a return to authoritarianism presented by Haftar. Furthermore, the Zintani alliance with Haftar had offset the militias' balance of power in

Tripoli as Haftar's forces controlled two strategic assets- the Benghazi and Tripoli airports (Eriksson 2016:822).

On 13 July 2014, Libya Dawn militias attacked Dignity-aligned forces in an attempt to recapture the Tripoli airport. A six-week battle ensued from which the Dawn coalition emerged victorious, allowing for the reinstatement of the incumbent GNC and the establishment of the Government of National Salvation headed by Khalifa Ghwell. The newly elected HoR retreated to Tobruk in eastern Libya resulting in the emergence of two parliaments and two claims to governance. As the Dawn vs. Dignity battles raged in Tripoli, the entire country became engulfed in civil war as fighting spread to the east and south. A turning point came in August 2014 when Egypt and the UAE intensified their backing for Operation Dignity through a series of air-strikes on Dawn-aligned militias in Tripoli. The Emirati strike was a pivotal moment in intensification of proxy warfare in Libya as an array of foreign powers joined the fray in backing both warring factions. Haftar's forces also received a political boost in August 2014 when the internationally-recognised parliament, the HoR, publicly aligned with Operation Dignity, hardening the battle lines and ushering a vicious contest for legitimacy and power that has been a key driver of ongoing conflict in Libya (Barr and Gartenstein-Ross 2015:29). The political turmoil became even more complex in November 2014 when the Libyan Supreme Court overturned the HoR elections, a decision that was rejected by the HoR while the UN and Western governments adopted ambiguous positions (Lacher 2020a:42)

(i) A tenuous Libyan Political Agreement

As a military stalemate took form, the two coalitions began to fragment as key figures warmed up to the prospects of negotiations and various notables and commanders negotiated local ceasefires in towns. UN Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) Bernardino Leon managed to convene a wide array of Libyan factions, including HoR members and representative of several municipalities in Geneva for rounds of talks in January 2015. Although the GNC refused to participate in the talks, and the HoR later withdrew from talks on 23 February 2015, the UN facilitated a series of talks in the course of 2015 between the parties. In March 2015, UNSMIL unveiled a six-point plan that included a unity transitional government, the HoR as a legislative body and a High State Council as an advisory body (UNSMIL 2015). Talks around the draft agreement were moved to Skhirat, Morocco in August 2015, reflective of momentum towards broad consensus as well as widened consultation to include parallel tracks with tribal leaders and civil society and women representatives. However, a major shortcoming of the UN-brokered talks was the failure to bring armed groups

together in a security track, an oversight that later turned out to be the undoing of the LPA given the ambivalence around security arrangements and terms of ceasefire between key military actors (Lacher 2015:5).

Signed in Skhirat on 17 December 2015, the LPA established a nine-member Presidency Council which included a prime minister, five deputy prime ministers and three ministers. The HoR would remain as the legitimate parliament while the parallel government linked to post-2014 elections would be dissolved. The Presidency Council would preside over the Government of National Accord (GNA), which would be the executive branch and be based in Tripoli and govern for a renewable one-year period. A point of contention in the LPA was Article 8 which transferred power over the armed forces to the Presidency Council as Supreme Commander, a proviso that stirred vehement opposition from Haftar who rallied his backers in the HoR to block endorsement of the agreement. For Haftar, Article 8 amounted to a plot by his opponents to side-line him, leading to his rejection of the agreement in January 2016 (ICG 2016:14).

Despite a narrow support base for key stakeholders in the agreement and significant opposition from hardliners across both the GNC and HoR, SRSB Martin Kobler pushed for the signing of the LPA without an official mandate of the two rival parliaments. Increasingly concerned by the deteriorating security situation and the growing threat of ISIS, international actors were at the forefront in pushing for the deal to be finalized. Western powers, particularly US, UK and France were worried that the incompatibility of demands and widespread objections would derail negotiations and give room for alternative talks to emerge that would undermine the UN-led dialogue. International support for the LPA was also pegged on the imperative to work with a strong government in Libya in tackling the terrorist threat and the migration crisis (ICG 2016:7).

On the face of it, the LPA was hailed as breakthrough but in practice, what emerged was a rushed agreement that widened regional and political divides, aggravated distributive conflicts in power centres and enlarged potential for emergence of spoilers who felt excluded or side-lined from the deal (Gazzini 2015:3). Furthermore, the LPA had also underestimated the institutional and political hurdles that would militate against its implementation on the ground, including the lack of local legitimacy and ambiguity around terms of ceasefire and security arrangements for the GNA and other state institutions that would be based in Tripoli (Lacher 2015:5).

Newly-elected Prime Minister Fayez el-Sarraj and the GNA arrived in Tripoli in March 2016 via a naval base to a city controlled by a myriad of militias. Many western municipalities as well as the Tripoli-based Central Bank of Libya (CBL) and the National Oil Corporation (NOC) recognized the authority of the Presidency Council (PC) (ICG 2016:10). However, the PC's control of Tripoli was tenuous and encountered constant opposition from the HoR which did not recognize the GNA's authority, meaning that Sarraj's government oversaw an embattled state facing liquidity shortages, rising inflation rates and oil blockades. On 11 September 2016, LNA forces attacked the PFG in the oil crescent area and seized control of the Sidrah, Ras Lanuf, Burayqah and Zuwaytinah oil ports (UNSG 2016:4). The LNA's takeover of the oil ports ushered in a new balance of power and cleared the path for Haftar to consolidate power in the east. On 5 July 2017, the LNA announced the liberation of Benghazi amidst ongoing clashes with a coalition of jihadist and Islamist forces in Darna (UNSG 2017:3).

Amidst the power struggles on Tripoli, a third force had emerged in the form of ISIS who had made advances in the coastal town of Sirte. ISIS had first emerged in Libya in 2014 when jihadists returning from Syria re-organised themselves into a group known as the Islamic Youth Shura Council which pledged allegiance to ISIS (Wehrey and Al-Rababa'h 2015). The threat of ISIS using Libya as a staging ground to extend its operations across the region spurred the GNA to launch Operation al-Bunyan al Marsous, backed by US airstrikes to roll back ISIS over a six-month period. By the end of 2016, Libyan forces declared victory over ISIS having recaptured Sirte and flushed out ISIS cells and fighters from eastern cities. Although the 2016 campaign was successful in rooting out ISIS from Libyan territory, regrouping remained a real possibility in the context of the political and security chaos that had engulfed Libya. The conditions for remnants of ISIS to reconstitute were ripe given the long history of jihad, grievances among the Libyan population and a persistent governance vacuum (Wehrey and Lacher 2017).

(ii) A fragile equilibrium 2017-2019

Having consolidated his hold in eastern Libya and the oil crescent, Haftar set his sights on southwestern Libya, with Tripoli and western Libya being the last piece of the broad design for power. The LNA offensive in central and southern Libya occurred for most of 2017, involving a series of clashes with the Third Force, an armed group allied with Misrata (Profazio 2017). Gunning for the Tamanhent and Jufra air bases, Haftar sought reinforcements by recruiting fighters from Chad and Sudan for combat in Sabha and Umm al-Aranib. The use of African

mercenaries in Libya's conflict point to its profile as a nodal point in establishing transnational networks that straddled sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East. While the Libyan factions often acted as direct recruiters for African mercenaries, Libyan networks also acted as brokers for the capital-intensive nodes in UAE and Qatar who supplied weapons and financial resources to foreign fighters deployed on the ground (Lacher 2020b:6).

While Haftar's power base was gradually expanding, the GNA's was crumbling as it was reduced to being a unity government in name only. By 2017, it was clear that the LPA had failed as infighting within the PC rendered it powerless and local constituencies who had supported the Shkirat agreement grew increasingly disillusioned with the GNA's ineffectiveness. The international backers who had rubberstamped the LPA, and gambled on the establishment of a UN-backed presidential guard, found themselves having to contend with a shift in the balance of power in favour of Haftar who was receiving uninterrupted military and financial support from Egypt, UAE, Saudi Arabia (Megerisi 2020a:5). Haftar's uncompromising attitude towards political negotiations with the GNA was evident in May 2017 when the UAE brokered a meeting between Sarraj and Haftar that yielded little in light of Haftar's insistence on a reconfigured PC with solid guarantees of his oversight over the armed forces (Toaldo 2017).

On the battle fronts, pro-PC militias had gained immense influence over state institutions and dislodged rival militias in various turfs across the capital⁷. In addition to state funds, the militias' economy of expansion was built on protection rackets against increased kidnappings, protection services for banks during the currency crisis and contracted security services to businesses and state-owned enterprises. The aggressive expansion of the cartel of militias and their expansive infiltration in political, business and administrative networks granted them unprecedented access to levers of power and influence including control over new appointments to government posts and access to letter of credit for their allies (Lacher & al-Idrissi 2018:12). The dominance of the militia cartel and the extent of state capture placed them on a collision course with marginalised armed groups and militias from Zintan and Misrata who were keen on re-asserting territorial control over the capital. Taken in sum, the lack of a sustainable security arrangement in Tripoli, an incapacitated GNA and the emergence of a

⁷ The four largest militias that dominated Tripoli as of May 2017 were the Tripoli Revolutionaries; the Nawasi Brigade, the Special Deterrence Force (SDF) and the Abu Salim unit of the Central Security Apparatus (Lacher 2018a:1)

powerful militia cartel in Tripoli created a combustible situation that set the capital on the brink of a new war (Lacher & al-Idrissi 2018:16).

The trigger went off on 27 August 2018 when the Tarhuna-based Seventh Brigade launched a surprise offensive against the oligopoly of militias in Tripoli, plunging southern Tripoli into a new round of deadly clashes that lasted over a month, resulting in widespread destruction and the death of at least 120 civilians (UNSMIL 2019:2). Beneath the power struggle amidst the militias, the renewed fighting in Tripoli has to be viewed against the plan to hold elections in December 2018, following a peace conference on 29 May 2018 that brought the main political figures together (Mezran 2018). The proposal to hold elections was part of a new UN Action Plan for Libya proposed by then UN Special Envoy Ghassan Salamé in October 2017 which included: amendments to the 2015 LPA through agreements between the HoR and the HSC; organisation of a National Conference as a ‘synthesis of the hopes of the Libyan people’ and to enhance inclusivity; and the holding of elections (Salamé 2017a). In spite of a UN-brokered ceasefire between fighting militias on 4 September 2018, the escalation of violence underlined the complexity of the conflict, underpinned by multiple faultlines as well as the growing significance of external actors whose involvement in Libya impacted developments on the ground and influenced local calculations (Miller 2018).

The intermeddling by foreign actors in Libya, who publicly supported the UN’s action plan while pursuing their disparate interests was a constant frustration for Salamé who called out the UNSC members for their ‘hypocrisy’ in undermining UN-led mediation efforts in Libya through a series of actions. These actions included dissuading Libyan actors from participation in negotiations, failure to hold violators of the arms embargo accountable and continued direct and indirect military support to warring factions (Salamé 2018). Additionally, the plan to hold elections as part of the UN’s Action Plan was doomed to fail given the precarious security situation, the lack of a functioning, effective electoral management body and the absence of a legal framework enshrined in a constitution, which was still in draft format pending a national referendum (Mezran 2018). Notably, the biggest obstacle to elections came from a section of Libyan political and military actors who stood to benefit from the status quo of violence and polarization via political rents and economic leverage (Megerisi 2018a). Overall, the period between 2017 and early 2019 exposed the failings of the LPA and was marked by low-intensity conflict across multiple local theatres, compounded by complex posturing and alliance building across fragmented political and military fronts. The foreign patrons of Haftar had also shifted

to covert influence and military operations targeted at controlling the disposition of the state financial institutions namely the Central Bank and the NOC (Wehrey 2020a:23).

3.4.3. Haftar's ascendancy and the third civil war (January 2019-)

Following General Khalifa Haftar's gains in the oil crescent in mid-2018, the LNA commander launched a military campaign in Fezzan, in southwestern Libya. Although the LNA advance on the south was touted as an operation to flush out terrorists and rid the country of foreign mercenaries, the campaign was a pivotal part of Haftar's grand plan. On top of securing access to the country's biggest oil fields, El Sharara, an expanding base in the south would also shore up legitimacy of the LNA and 'translate Haftar's factual control on the ground into real 'political currency' specifically his positioning major power broker in an internationally recognised government (Megerisi 2019b:2). The offensive into southwestern Libya would also give Haftar the upper hand in the political power contest against Sarraj and the GNA as he would be in control of two-thirds of the county as well as majority of oil installations (Wintour 2019a). By March, Haftar's forces had been successful in taking over the El Sharara oil field and most of the southwestern region, including Sebha, Ubari and Murzuq and were on the verge of advancing into Tripolitania and Tripoli, which was the ultimate prize for total political control. Haftar's takeover of the south was mostly undertaken by Sudanese mercenaries alongside a coalition of Arab Awlad Suliman, Zway and Ahali who had felt increasingly marginalised by the GNA (Profazio 2019). Haftar's courting of the Arab tribes in Fezzan also re-ignited age-old rivalries with the Tubu, who resisted LNA's incursion into Fezzan, escalating in deadly fighting in Murzuq that resulted in more than a dozen civilian deaths and over 200 displaced families (Tossell 2020:14).

At the same time of the LNA's offensive in Fezzan, Emirati and Saudi covert backing for Haftar's planned march into Tripoli was shaping up as the UAE convened a meeting on 27 February 2019 in Abu Dhabi that brought together key Libyan political figures, as well as UN Special Envoy Salamé, who saw the Abu Dhabi meeting as an opportunity to revive the stunted political process. Short of a concrete agreement, the Abu Dhabi meeting concluded with a promise to hold elections by December 2019, although no specific date was set (Wintour 2019a). The meeting also underlined the UAE's political clout as NOC chairman Mustafa Sanalla was pressured to end *force majeure* at el Sharara oilfields, a much-needed boost for oil production following three-month blockade as a result of a NOC-LNA standoff (Laessing

2019). Emboldened by the success of his incursions in Fezzan, on 3 April 2019, Haftar launched an offensive to seize control of Tripoli in a surprise move that brought the UN-led political process to a dramatic halt and upended plans to hold the Libyan national conference which had been scheduled for 14 April 2019 in the city of Ghadames. The first phase of Haftar's plan entailed short-term alliances with local armed groups to capture Tripoli and convert his foothold into political power at the planned national conference (Harchaoui 2019:2). The chosen strategic staging grounds were the cities of Gharyan and Tarhuna, which lay approximately 90km south and southwest of Tripoli, well situated to serve as critical LNA supply lines and operations rooms (el Gomati 2019:2). Instead of the quick victory that Haftar had envisaged, his bid to take Tripoli prompted a major counter-offensive by GNA forces declared on 7 April 2019, unifying militia factions in what Lacher (2019) has characterised as 'the largest mobilization of forces since 2011.' The anti-LNA forces were unified in the goal of preventing Tripoli's takeover by Haftar's forces, an objective that temporarily overrode rivalries over turf and state resources in the highly lucrative war economy in the capital (Lacher 2019). Dubbed 'Operation Flood of Dignity,' Haftar's campaign into Tripoli was met with a stifled response from the international community and approval from his sponsors in Abu Dhabi and Riyadh, who continued to channel military and financial resources for what they deemed as 'a military solution to the Tripoli problem' (Harchaoui 2019:3).

The war in Tripoli transformed the dynamics and trajectory of the conflict in significant ways, with far-reaching implications for the conduct of warfare. First, the assault on Tripoli brought unparalleled devastation on civilians with local sources reporting over 400 civilian fatalities and 1,614 new strikes between April and December 2019 (Imhof 2019a:17). Second, the war in Tripoli ushered the war into a new stage of urban warfare, entailing aerial bombardment and drone strikes in densely populated areas and widespread damage to infrastructure. Additionally, the dominant use of combat drones supplied by foreign powers underscored the transformation of the Libyan conflict into the 'largest drone theatre,' compounded by high degrees of plausible deniability and sophisticated disinformation and propaganda campaigns (Lacher 2020c). According to Airwars (Imhof 2019a:18), there were 967 LNA/Emirati drone strikes and 357 GNA/Turkey strikes in 2019, amounting to a 647% increase in total air strikes between April and December 2019.

A turning point in the war came on 26 June 2019 when GNA-allied forces captured Gharyan, delivering a major setback for Haftar, crippling his ground offensive and cutting off a central strategic supply line. Subsequently, Haftar made up for the loss of Gharyan by launching a

foreign-backed air campaign which saw an uptick in the use of drones, especially Emirati Chinese-made Wing Loong II drones, in addition to US-made Javelin missiles, Jordanian armoured vehicles and aircraft spare parts delivered by Russia and Egypt (Imhof 2019b). On the opposing side, the GNA forces also ramped up their war machinery with Turkish Bayraktar TB2 drones which enabled the GNA strikes on crucial LNA base in Jufra, essentially broadening the geographical scope of the conflict towards the east (Imhof 2019b).

Haftar's assault on Tripoli has to be viewed against the backdrop of international acquiescence as many diplomats and UN officials had hoped that political dialogue would progress following the February meeting in Abu Dhabi. Not only had his international backers given the green light for Haftar's operation into Tripoli, but mixed messages from the US, including a call from US president Trump served to rubberstamp his advance as part of counterterrorism efforts (Harchaoui 2019). On the UNSC, Russia blocked a UNSC statement that would have condemned Haftar's offensive (France24 2019), while the EU policy was hampered by divergences between Italy and France who backed rival sides in the Libyan conflict (Baczynska & Guarascio 2019). The AU issued a communique calling for an immediate ceasefire and urged for an all-inclusive Libyan National Conference in July 2019 as part of efforts towards a political solution to the crisis (PSC 2019).

As the GNA counteroffensive applied pressure on LNA forces and pushed the frontlines of the battle towards Tarhuna, Turkey and Russia brokered a ceasefire on 12 January 2020, although Haftar left Moscow without signing the agreement, a possible indication that he was firmly set on an outright military victory and imposing his own political roadmap (Reuters 2020). In spite of Haftar's uncompromising stance, the Moscow talks set the tone for a flurry of mediation initiatives and international summits during 2020 that breathed life into the stunted UN-led peace process. Tellingly, the Moscow talks came on the heel of two key developments that pointed to Ankara's and Moscow's upscaling of their engagement in the Libyan conflict from clandestine operations to overt action, including deploying 'boots on the ground.' First, hundreds of Russian paramilitary fighters from the Wagner Group, A Kremlin-linked private military contractor firm, arrived in September 2019 to back up LNA forces on the frontlines outside Tripoli (Al Jazeera 2019). Second, the Turkish government and the GNA had finalized maritime deals on 27 November 2019, along with a memorandum of understanding to enhance military and security cooperation. The maritime deal between Turkey and Libya extended Turkey's maritime jurisdiction over gas-rich Mediterranean waters which cutting across a zone claimed by Greece and Cyprus (Cupolo 2019). In return for securing its geostrategic interests

in the east Mediterranean by demarcating new maritime boundaries, Turkey committed to enhance military support to GNA, adding to the drones and armaments already being supplied with ground forces and intelligence and defence support (Wintour 2019b).

The momentum of political negotiations shifted to the Berlin Conference on 19 January 2020, co-chaired by Germany and the UN, convening Libyan parties and international stakeholders. With the objectives of cementing a constructive political roadmap, securing a practical ceasefire and coordinating international efforts in support of a peaceful solution, the Berlin Conference participants included governments of Algeria, China, Egypt, France, Germany, Italy, Russia, Turkey, The Republic of Congo, UAE, UK, US, and high-level representatives of the UN, AU, EU and the Arab League. The 55-point outcome document of the Conference detailed major conclusions including *inter-alia*: (i) affirmation of SRSG Salamé's three-point plan presented to the UNSC on 29 July 2019; (ii) reiteration for a Libyan-led, Libyan owned process underpinned by the 2015 LPA and subsequent dialogues in Paris, Palermo and Abu Dhabi; (iii) establishment of a 5+5 Joint Military Commission bringing together 5 top military officers from each camp; (iv) a call for an end of foreign military engagement in the Libyan conflict, (v) a permanent ceasefire and lasting cessation of hostilities; and (vi) strengthening enforcement of the UN arms embargo and UNSC sanctions. As a follow-up on the implementation of the Berlin process, the conference also established an International Follow-up Committee (IFC) made up of representatives from participant countries and multilateral organisations (Germany 2020).

The Berlin Conference occurred in the context of unpredictable developments on the ground in 2020 including LNA blockades on oil production in the oil crescent ports and Haftar's defiance of a ceasefire that had been in place since the Moscow talks, as his forces made headway in the capture of the strategic city of Sirte. The UAE and Egypt also carried on with shipment of weapons in flagrant violation of the arms embargo, further undermining feasibility of an enforcement mechanism in the aftermath of the Berlin conference (el Gomati 2020b).

By April 2020, the impact of Turkey's military support was starting to turn the tide of war in favour of the GNA, thanks to an upsurge in drone strikes over LNA-controlled territory and the deployment of 2000 Turkish-backed Syrian fighters into Tripoli and Misrata (Traina 2020). A major turning point came on 18 May when GNA forces captured the al-Watiya airbase, a major stronghold of LNA forces, decidedly tipping the balance of military power in favour of

the GNA who thereafter directed forces towards Tarhuna, the last line for Haftar's offensive (Al Jazeera 2020a).

With the majority of western Libya under control of GNA forces, and making swift advances towards Sirte and Jufra, Egypt announced a ceasefire agreement on 6 June 2020 following a meeting between speaker of the HoR Aguila Saleh, General Haftar and several western and Arab Diplomats in Cairo. The newly-announced Cairo Initiative outlined a range of proposals aimed at reviving the political process and building on the decisions of the Berlin conference, including: (i) calls for ceasefire; (ii) a new political roadmap premised on a restructured three-member representative of Libya's historic regions; (iii) the LNA as Libya's sole security provider; and (iv) new roadmap for constitutional drafting and elections (Mada Masr 2020). Amidst waning confidence in Haftar's profile as a key power broker, the Cairo Initiative could be seen in one sense, as a pivot by Egypt and the UAE towards Aguila Saleh as their preferred Libyan interlocutor. Moreover, in anticipation of a potential takeover of Sirte by Turkish-backed GNA forces, Egyptian President Sisi declared Sirte a 'red line' that would trigger direct military intervention in Libya were it crossed (ICG 2020a: 3). As the gateway to the oil crescent and midway between Benghazi and Tripoli, the coastal town of Sirte was declared a red line for not only Egypt, but also for Ankara and Moscow, making it the site of a military standoff between the GNA and the LNA. From Egypt's perspective, the expansion of Turkish military presence in central Libya constituted a national security threat for Cairo and the region given Ankara's support for Islamists (ICG 2020a:3). The appearance of Russian warplanes in the Jufra air base in June 2020 and the stationing of Russian mercenaries in oil fields in LNA-controlled territory also indicated the strategic importance of Sirte and Jufra for ensuring Russia's presence in the Mediterranean. Turkey was keen on securing its energy interests in the east Mediterranean and the continuation of the maritime deals it had signed with the GNA. Hence the convergence of strategic interests in Sirte and Jufra was the main impetus behind a Turkey-Russia entente in Libya in June 2020 as the conflict tilted towards an impasse (Tastekin 2020).

3.4.4. Military stalemate and the revitalization of the UN-led peace process (June 2020-)

In the wake of the tense stalemate around the Sirte-Jufra red line, Algeria and Morocco also stepped up their diplomacy in pushing for a political solution to the conflict in Libya. Following a virtual meeting of the Arab League foreign ministers on 23 June which called for a political solution, Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune reiterated his country's readiness to

mediate between Libyan warring parties (Al Jazeera 2020b). A series of talks were also held in Bouznika, Morocco between September and November 2020, which brought together delegations from the HoR and the HCS to discuss unification and appointment of leadership of sovereign institutions according to Article 15 of the LPA. On 23 October, the 5+5 JMC announced a permanent ceasefire and agreement on four noteworthy follow-up issues: (i) the departure of all foreign fighters from Libya by 23 January 2021 and a freeze on all foreign training agreements; (ii) the withdrawal of all Libyan military forces from frontlines in Sirte, Jufra and Misrata; and (iv) reopening of central Libya's roads and resumption of flights between Benghazi and Tripoli. Although the ceasefire was welcomed a monumental step in the security track, implementation is likely to run up against backtracking by both sides and potential manipulation to serve divergent agendas, especially given the operational ambiguity and lack of monitoring mechanism for the ceasefire (ICG 2020b:3).

There was also significant progress on the economic front on the back of a Russian-brokered deal between Deputy Prime Minister Ahmed Maiteeq and Khalifa Haftar to lift a nine-month oil blockade on 18 September 2020, allowing for the resumption of oil production. Despite shortcomings such as the omission of the issue of foreign mercenaries in oil facilities, the Maiteeq-Haftar oil deal proposal for the establishment of a Joint Technical Committee to oversee distribution of oil revenues was seen as a boost for steps towards alignment of sovereign institutions such as the CBL and the NOC (Dorda *et al* 2020b:15).

The political track of the UN-led process culminated in the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum (LPDF) talks in Tunis from 9-15 November 2020. Comprised of 75 delegates including key political actors and representatives from civil society, women, youth and minorities' groups; the LPDF was envisioned as an inclusive platform that would emphasize meaningful participation and Libyan ownership. The LPDF laid out key steps in the political process known as the 'Preparatory Phase for a Comprehensive Solution' which outlined a roadmap towards presidential and parliamentary elections on 24 December 2021, as well as the structure of the executive authority during the transitional phase. Additionally, the LPDF agreed on implementation mechanisms of the roadmap, including a 60-day period for establishment of constitutional arrangements for the electoral process and new appointments for key sovereign institutions (UNSMIL 2020). Notwithstanding commendable progress in the political track and a high point for the UN-led process, the LPDF was criticised for being a 'Skhirat 2.0' in light of concerns about its local legitimacy, transparency of process and the continued opportunism by political elite who were accused of vote-buying (Kadlec 2020).

Overall, the revitalization of peace initiatives facilitated by UNSMIL in 2020 were a welcome development on the treacherous road to sustainable peace. The Berlin process was also notable for its incorporation of a multi-track approach which advanced political, economic and security negotiating tracks, in marked contrast to the 2015 Skhirat process which had under focused on the security component. The multi-dimensional character of the Libyan conflict calls for a nuanced approach to conflict analysis as fundamental aspects of pragmatic efforts to sustain peace. As part of conflict analysis, a deeper understanding of the drivers of conflict is equally important as mapping the actors and conflict dynamics. Important questions in this regard include: what new factors contribute to prolonging of conflict dynamics? Which factors of the conflict profile, actors and causes reinforce or undermine each other? Which conflict dynamics balance or mitigate others? What are windows of opportunity for peacebuilding and how can they be strengthened? (Herbert 2017:13).

Table 2: Main actors in the Libyan conflict

1. Domestic actors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Political elites</i> who had flourished during the Gaddafi era, for instance technocrats, government contractors. • <i>Local politicians</i> representing local interests such as the Misratan business community • Local notables (<i>hukama</i>), including prominent personalities and family heads who played a key role in establishment of local councils and engaged in dispute resolution mechanisms, including negotiating ceasefires between warring communities. • <i>Political parties</i> such as the National Forces Alliance, Justice and Construction, Salafists • <i>The Government of National Accord (GNA)</i>: borne out of the 2015 Libya Political Agreement, it was comprised of a 9-member Presidency Council made up of a prime minister (Fayez al Sarraj), five deputy prime ministers and three ministers. • <i>The House of Representatives (HoR)</i>: the 200-member legislature elected on 25 June 2014. As the parliament, the HoR is responsible for endorsing the GNA. The HoR was based in Tobruk and was allied to Prime Minister Abdullah al-Thini based in the eastern city of al-Bayda. Prime Minister Al-Thini and his government later resigned in September 2020 in the midst of protests across Libya over power cuts and deteriorating living conditions. • <i>High Council of State (HCS)</i>: advisory council created as part of the Libya Political Agreement • <i>National Salvation Government</i>: a parallel government formed by political groups from the General National Congress blocs that refused to concede in the June 2014 elections. Based in Tripoli, the NSG was headed by Khalifa Ghwell and established a parallel parliament from the elections of 2012. The NSG stepped down in April 2016 after the arrival of the Presidency Council in Tripoli in March 2016. <p>(Sources: Winer 2019:7, ICG 2012, Fitzgerald & Toaldo 2016)</p>
2. Major armed groups

- Libyan National Army, LNA*: also known as the Libyan Arab Armed Forces (LAAF), the LNA is the most high-profile non-state armed group headed by Khalifa Haftar, a former general in Gaddafi's army. Formed in 2014 to fight Islamist factions and terrorist groups in eastern Libya, the LNA is comprised of defected army and air force units; military brigades such as the Saiqa Special Forces, the 106th Brigade and the 166th Brigade and local and tribal militia such as the Awaqir, Awlad Suleiman and al-Ahlali, among others.

Affiliated with the Tobruk-based HoR, the LNA is also backed by the UAE, Egypt, Russia and France, who have framed their financial and military support around Haftar's counter-terrorism and anti-Islamist agenda.
- Militias affiliated with GNA*: opposed to Haftar's LNA, the armed groups and militias aligned with the GNA in Tripoli include a coalition of militias from Tripoli, Misrata, Zintan and Zawiyah. Tripoli militias include the Tripoli Protection Force, Special Deterrence Force (SDF); Presidential Guard; Fursan Janzour Brigade and National Mobile Force. Militias from Misrata include the Infantry 301 Brigade, Al-Majoub Brigade, Anti-Terrorism Force (ATF), Abu Bakr Sadiq Brigade Operation Solid Structure (Al-Bunyan al-Marsous) and the Samoud Front, among others. Militias from the south include Ahrar Fezzan, Shuhadaa Sabha and Shuhadaa Murzuq.

(Sources: IISS 2020:196)

3. Foreign actors

3.1. Pro-Haftar camp

- United Arab Emirates*: the largest and longest-standing military sponsor to the LNA, motivated by a mix of ideological, geopolitical and economic interests. The UAE's fear of spread of democratisation that drove the Arab Spring, as well as its aggressive stance against political Islam are major pillars of its support for Haftar's military campaigns. The UAE has been a major supplier of arms to LNA including drones, missiles and combat aircraft.
- Egypt*: motivated by an anti-Islamist ideology, especially against the Muslim Brotherhood, Cairo's alignment with Haftar saw it use its vast border with Libya to funnel weapons and provide logistical support and training to LNA forces.
- Saudi Arabia*: Riyadh was a major financial sponsor of Haftar, based on its established religious and ideological links with Madkhalist groups in Libya. Saudi policy in Libya is also influenced by its drive for economic diversification and expanding energy infrastructure seen as a key part of maintaining the UAE-Saudi led regional status quo favourable to authoritarian stability.
- France*: France played a double game in Libya, officially supporting the internationally-recognised GNA while covertly providing military support to Haftar. A key driver of French policy is counterterrorism, linked to its interests and participation in counterterrorism operations in the Sahel. France has also provided diplomatic cover for Haftar in the UNSC, blocking attempts to condemn his operations against Tripoli as well as fending off criticism of the UAE's continued violation of the arms embargo.
- Russia*: Russia engaged with both sides of the Libyan conflict, lending credence to its designation as a 'wildcard power' (Megerisi 2019a:10). Its links with the GNA are perceived as important for the re-establishment of contracts and deals signed with the Gaddafi government, as well as gaining greater access to Libya's oil and gas wealth. From a geopolitical standpoint, Moscow has its sights

on establishing a naval base on Libya's coast as means of projecting military presence in the Mediterranean and undermining NATO and European interests in the region.

3.2. Pro-GNA camp

- *Turkey*: As an ideological and systemic rival to the UAE, Turkey was the GNA's largest military backer, drawing on a maritime boundary agreement and military cooperation pact signed in November 2019. Turkey's foreign policy in Libya is influenced by its interests in the east Mediterranean where geopolitical competition from Cyprus and Greece, backed by Israel and Egypt have thwarted its energy security plans. The maritime demarcation agreement with the GNA has not only enabled Ankara to launch a counter-claim to the exclusive economic zone claimed by the East Med Gas forum, but to also advance its ideological outlook on civil-military relations and secular rule in Libya, in opposition to the UAE and LNA preference for authoritarianism and pivotal role of the military in politics. Turkey's intensified military support was a key element behind the GNA's counteroffensive against Haftar's siege of Tripoli in 2019, mainly through Turkish drones aided by Turkish-backed Syrian mercenaries on the ground.
- *Qatar*: Qatar played a major role in support of revolutionary armed groups during the 2011 uprising against Gaddafi. After the ascension of Emir Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani in 2013, Qatar scaled back on its intervention in Libya, opting to funnel financial support to Libyan factions that oppose Haftar as a way of undermining systemic rivals, the UAE and Saudi Arabia. Qatar has also played a key role in the disinformation and propaganda war of narratives through deployment of social media trolls, bots and prominent television channels and news networks.

(Source: Megerisi 2019a)

United States of America

The US policy in Libya was guided by the 'leading from behind' paradigm espoused by the Obama administration. Although it preferred to cede post-conflict transitions to Libyans supported by the UN and the EU, the US has acted to protect vital security interests such as its air support in the campaign against ISIS in 2016. Under the Trump administration, the US sent mixed signals with regard to Haftar's offensive on Tripoli, following a phone call Haftar and Trump who expressed support for the General's counterterrorism agenda. Signs of a shift in US policy emerged in 2020 following the threat of sanctions on Haftar, coupled with US Africa Command's public information campaign to criticize Russia's increasing militarized presence in Libya.

(Sources: Megerisi 2019a:12; Wehrey 2020: 36-37)

European Union

EU policy in Libya has been characterised by paralysis and division. The failure to advance a cohesive foreign policy on Libya has been evident in the competing agendas of member states particularly Germany, France and Italy who have found themselves on opposite sides of divides in Libya. For instance, French policy focus on counterterrorism has seen it side with Haftar, whereas Italy's emphasis on migration control meant that a deal with the GNA was more favourable to its interests. Additionally, the weak enforcement of the EU naval operation EUNAVFOR MED IRINI, launched to monitor violations of the arms embargo on Libya, underlined the ineffectiveness of European policy and its entanglement in the geopolitics of the east Mediterranean entailing Turkey's contested maritime boundaries claims and energy interests.

Germany's championing of the Berlin process has been hailed as a positive for multilateral rules-based diplomacy, and a boost for the UN-facilitated talks. However, European policy faces risk of being undermined by member states' interests and impediments to policy implementation such as politicization and lack of cohesion.

(Source: Megerisi 2020d:37)

3.5. Libya conflict: dynamics, drivers and trends

An important point in engaging with a nuanced perspective of the conflict in Libya is to go beyond the over-simplified narratives often circulated in international media and commentary. Beneath the basic binaries of Islamist vs. anti-Islamist, east vs. west, GNA vs. LNA, are intersecting faultlines that cut across political, social and geopolitical dimensions. The dynamics of the Libyan conflict have been influenced by a number of centrifugal forces such as localism and fragmentation, and conflict traps such as geopolitics and oil.

3.5.1. Localism

While explanations of the post-2011 conflict in Libya have tended to focus on historical factors such as the legacy of the Gaddafi regime, which left behind moribund state institutions and the effects of a divide-and-rule politics, there is merit in delving deeper into the socio-political 'approaches that analyse war as 'socially constructed and socially constrained' (Ahram 2020:13). From a socio-political analytical framework, Libya (before and after the 2011 revolution) presented a specific political sociology that was rooted in localism. The 2011 revolution was highly localized as towns, neighbourhoods and communities mobilized towards the common objective of toppling the Gaddafi regime. In the institutional and security vacuum that emerged after the uprising, military and local councils were formed to provide local governance. Communal tensions and differences that had been entrenched under Gaddafi's rule came to the fore after the 2011 civil war as the number of armed groups calling themselves revolutionary brigades proliferated with diverse agendas. Militias that hailed from revolutionary strongholds and cities such as Misrata, Zintan and Zawiya, clashed with tribes and militias who were regarded as loyal to the regime or 'losers of the revolution' in towns such as Bani Walid, Tawergha, Sirte and Sebah (Lacher 2013a:8).

The militias' power was precipitated by the availability of weapons, with some groups profiting from smuggling weapons across the Maghreb and Sahelian borderlands, arming and

strengthening armed rebel movements in Mali in 2012 and enabling acquisition of arms by jihadist groups such as al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (Koné 2020). Motivated by the claims of revolutionary legitimacy, militias increasingly infiltrated political networks and state apparatus, with more powerful factions asserting dominance over state resources and fuelling distributive conflicts. Failed attempts at SSR and DDR by transitional authorities, including integration into parallel security institutions such as the SSC and the LSF proved counter-intuitive and exacerbated power struggles in the security sector and the politicization of armed groups (Wehrey 2014:13). The outcome was a worsening security vacuum, political fragmentation and the upscaling of factional local rivalries to the national level, becoming the ‘crux of national politics in the absence of state structures’ (Droz-Vincent 2018:438). In other words, the resurgent localism that characterised the post-Gaddafi period was a key driver of conflict, fuelling power struggles in both the political and security landscapes and exacerbating enduring conflicts between the centre and periphery across various contexts.

3.5.2. Fragmentation

Parallel to the pronounced localism of political and military actors, Libya is also illustrative of the phenomenon of fragmentation, defined by Lacher (2020a:4) as ‘establishment the processes through which a multiplicity of political and military actors emerge and continue to proliferate, preventing the maintenance of a credible claim to the monopoly on the concentrated means of violence’. Moreover, it can be argued that Libya stands out as a *sui generis* case in the study of fragmentation in civil wars with regard to two aspects. One, in Libya, the focus on the state as the central actor in suppressing or co-opting armed groups is called into question given that in post-2011 Libya, ‘the state has existed only as a vestige – there is no central authority to rebel against’ (Lacher 2020a:3). Instead, non-state armed groups and militias cultivated their own revolutionary legitimacy and set up a form of governance rooted in localism. Two, Libyan armed groups are socially embedded in their social networks, resulting in low degrees of formalization and greater influence of social ties on mobilization, identities and interests of armed groups (Lacher 2020a:8).

The absence of effective central authority, coupled with the fluctuation of ‘strategic conditions’ and localism locked in a fragmented landscape after 2011, meaning that ‘fragmentation became both a cause and consequence of the collapse of central authority,’ further aggravating obstacles towards negotiated settlement and escalating drift towards civil war which erupted in different phases since 2011 (Lacher 2020a:9).

Fragmentation extended to the political arena where the GNA and LNA were riven with divisions, undermining utility of approaches focused primarily on a GNA-LNA binary. The diverse array of political groupings and affiliations that make up the GNA has given way to competing agendas and interests, severely undermining internal cohesion of the coalition. For instance, rifts have emerged between Prime Minister Fayez al Sarraj and Deputy Prime Minister Ahmed Maiteeq in a contest for power. Similarly, internal fighting has pitted hardliners such as Islamists, who are set on a military victory, against moderate ‘non-Islamists’ who are more inclined towards negotiations and a ceasefire. The divisions within the GNA also heightened confrontations between armed groups allied to it who engaged in clashes over dominance and turfs in western Libya (Dorda *et al.* 2020c:8). Political rifts and factional rivalries also played out in eastern Libya where differences between Haftar and Saleh resulted in power plays and shifting dynamics, especially with LNA’s foreign backers. In a move to consolidate the LNA’s profile as a power broker in the east, Haftar reorganized its commands structures, enhancing its tribal networks and entrenching an authoritarian grip on ranks and patronage networks (Dorda *et al.* 2020d:16).

3.5.3. Oil and the war economy

Discourses on the political economy of conflict have often highlighted the linkages between abundance of natural resources and the eruption and prolongation of violent conflict. Libya’s oil wealth as a prize has primarily been the focus of economic explanations of the civil war, but the connections between oil and conflict need to transcend simplistic motivations of ‘just stealing or just seizing it’ (Ahram 2020:7). In addition to fuelling loot-seeking behaviour among political and military actors in competition for control over oil revenues, the dependence on oil underpinned the rentier state model that shaped the political and economic landscape of Libya both during the Gaddafi era and the post-2011 period. A rentier state privileges distributive policies over extractive ones, leading to the pervasion of patronage and clientelistic structures on society (Beblawi & Luciani 2015:3); inefficient political and economic institutions and entrenchment of predatory and corrupt political economies. The pre-war economic practices that were prevalent during the Gaddafi regime carried over to the post-revolutionary period, evidenced by the continued polarization and sustained forms of patronage centred around a myriad of power centres (Heydemann 2018:52). In the same manner that the oil economy fostered integration of illicit economic networks into prominent state-regime-business relations during peacetime, the post-2011 period also saw the continuation of a hybrid political economy in which the oil economy interacted with an informal economy based on

illicit activities such as smuggling of goods and weapons, extortion and predation of state resources (Eaton 2018:6).

In the context of a weak central authority, the absence of a centralized mechanism for distribution of oil revenues through the NOC and CBL fuelled competition for control over the oil crescent as political leverage. The power contest has played out in several attempts to seize key oil ports by rival forces such as Ibrahim Jadran, local commander of the PFG and the LNA, resulting in oil blockades and plummeting of revenues with devastating impact on the economy. However, in spite of challenges by eastern authorities to bypass the Tripoli-based NOC and sell oil in international markets, the international community's legitimation of NOC in Tripoli as the only official exporter of oil proved effective in strengthening the authority of the sovereign authorities (Eaton 2018:23).

Therefore, the contest for oil revenues and the sustained forms of illicit activities had a cumulative effect in reinforcing dynamics that contributed to prolonging of conflict, reflective of some patterns of continuity such as patronage networks and distributive conflicts, while inflaming fragmentation in the security and political arenas.

3.5.4. Ideological drivers of conflict: clash of political cultures

According to el Gomati (2020a:2), a major pitfall of the various initiatives by international stakeholders to end the conflict in Libya was a failure to address the ideological characteristics of the conflict, while over-focusing on power sharing and political compromise. El Gomati (2020:2) makes the observation:

‘the peacebuilding process identified the power struggle, but does not explain how politicians and armed groups will exercise their power in a unified state, whether their visions of power are compatible and whether institutional unification is sufficient to ensure peaceful cooperation.’

Put differently, the assumption by international interlocutors that cooperation in a unity government would automatically follow political compromise through mediation neglected the role of ideology as a key driver and its effects on state-society relations, power struggles and faultlines of resurgent conflict. At the heart of the conflict were two incompatible political cultures advancing two competing visions of state and society. On one hand, the LNA espoused an authoritarian political culture premised on tribal patronage networks, dominance of military power and central role of tribes in electing the Presidency Council (PC). On the contrary, the

GNA favoured a democratic culture based on civilian oversight over the military and a PC that is elected democratically by inclusive and representative process (el Gomati 2020a:3).

The clash of political cultures and ideologies also affected the processes of diplomatic and political negotiations, including the UN-brokered LPA which had led to formation of the GNA. A major bone of contention in the LPA, which widened political rifts, was its framework of political pluralism and the designation of the PC as Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces – a provision that was completely unacceptable to Haftar and the LNA. Given the impediments to political compromise and further polarization that came in the wake of the LPA, the UN moved to formulate a ‘Plan B’ through political talks between Haftar and Sarraj that aimed at tweaking the LPA by reconfiguring the PC into a smaller three-person council and accommodating the LNA’s demands with respect to civil-military relations (el Gomati 2020a:6).

The UN’s strategy of accommodating the LNA and focusing on a reconfigured PC may have worked in the short-term by bringing the LNA to the negotiating table, but there remained a constant risk that the ideological clash that had been at the core of the LNA’s reticence over the years could come to the fore and precipitate a return to conflict. For instance, the Geneva talks under the security track put forward proposals for DDR and SSR programmes and the creation of a unified military. The LNA could work against reform efforts by resisting the dismantling of its core, tribal-based forces that are a main source of military clout. Similarly, the GNA’s network of variegated armed groups could also reject unification based on subordination of its forces to a structure that legitimised LNA’s command structure. Hence, the continued failure by the UN-led process to address the ideological differences and incompatible political cultures at the political and military level may have worked to freeze the conflict, but it faced the serious risk of re-igniting conflict in case of contested election outcomes or fierce resistant to proposed institutional reforms by hardliners bent on getting their way (el Gomati 2020a:22).

3.5.5. Geopolitics: Libya at the intersection of geopolitical faultlines of the east Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf

Geopolitics adds one more layer to the complexity to the conflict in Libya, underlining its profile as a proving ground for geopolitical rivalries and competition, attended by states with myriad interests and agendas. The involvement of foreign actors in the Libyan conflict, whose support has ranged from supply of weapons to financial support and diplomatic backing,

unfolded against broader developments in the international order. The retrenchment of the US from the MENA region that aligned with the policy of ‘no ownership’ or ‘active neutrality’ left room for more assertive actors like Russia and Turkey to fill the void (Al Arabiya 2020). The crisis of multilateralism that has given way to paralysis and inaction by the UNSC on a range of issues, coupled with the weak enforcement of the arms embargo also facilitated continued foreign interference in the Libya conflict (Wehrey 2020:9). Proximate to the Libyan crisis, the EU foreign policy towards Libya was hampered by disunity and divergent agenda in Libya, giving way to its peripheral role as a geopolitical actor in a crisis in its neighbourhood. Structural conditions notwithstanding, foreign powers were also drawn into the Libyan conflict as a result of various individual strategic, economic and geopolitical interests and agendas.

The UAE’s involvement in Libya was motivated by both ideological and geopolitical interests. Primarily, its main objective was to counter the democratic forces that had spurred the Arab Spring and prevent it from reaching its borders. Hence, a core objective of the UAE was to prevent Islamist forces from gaining ground in post-2011 Libya and thereby potentially altering the status quo of authoritarian stability in the regional order. In addition to the ideological battle against political Islamist groups, Libya’s strategic positioning aligned with the UAE’s economic plans to dominate shipping lanes that link into the Mediterranean, enhancing its appeal as an investment location for energy diversification and infrastructure reconstruction. The complementarity between the UAE’s vision and Haftar’s counterterrorism agenda resulted in long-running support for the LNA through shipments of weapons, including drones, missiles and combat aircraft (el Gomati 2020a:14).

Ideologically aligned with the UAE in the fight against Islamists, Egypt also backed Haftar’s military campaigns which were framed in the ‘Western-palatable grammar of counterterrorism’ (Megerisi 2020b). Egypt’s shared border with Libya was additional motivation to protect its national security from the existential Islamist threat. Furthermore, Egyptian dependence on Libyan oil supply and significant numbers of Egyptian migrant workers in Libya also underpinned the economic importance of a stable Libya for Cairo (Megerisi 2019a:5).

France’s policy found common purpose with the counterterrorism agenda; an objective that became increasingly pronounced with the threat of an ISIS presence in Libya in 2016. Diverging from European counterparts who backed the internationally-recognised GNA, Paris not only provided Haftar with clandestine military and intelligence support, but it also shielded him from international criticism and provided diplomatic cover on the UNSC for the UAE’s

continued violation of the arms embargo. For French President Macron, Libya presented an opportunity to re-assert French foreign policy in the EU's neighbourhood and enhance its profile as a key geopolitical actor (Megerisi 2020b).

Russia has employed a flexible strategy in Libya, often engaging both sides of the conflict since 2014. A part of Moscow's strategy is to use the Libyan conflict as a platform to extend its sphere of influence in the region and position itself as a pivotal mediator, while also undermining US, EU and NATO interests. The positioning of Libya on NATO's southern flank also informed motivation for a Russian naval base that would secure its presence in the Mediterranean. Furthermore, Russia also has its sights on access to Libya's hydrocarbons, in addition to lucrative contracts from arms sales and infrastructure reconstruction projects (Harchaoui 2021).

Italy's policy in Libya was primarily centred on the migration issue, manifest in the financial deals with Libyan militias to stem influx of migrants to Europe. Additionally, the presence of Italian multinational Eni as the largest foreign energy operator in Libya also elevated economic interests as a prominent factor in Rome's strategic calculus. The location of Eni's oil and gas assets in western Libya informed Italy's support for the GNA, a relationship that was also shaped by Libya's dependency on Eni's provision of power production capacity to cover deficits plaguing the General Electric Company of Libya (Tanchum 2020a:5). Hence, Italy's interests in Libya are tied to migration control as well as securing its market advantage in oil and gas interests, a key part of its plans to expand its commercial presence across the North African region.

For Turkey, Libya presented an opportunity to break out of its regional isolation in the eastern Mediterranean and secure its gas drilling rights in the Mediterranean, countering the exclusive economic zone claimed by Greece, Cyprus, Israel and Egypt. The discovery of Egypt's abundant Zohr natural gas field had drawn Cyprus, Egypt and Israel together in a deal to pool resources and market liquid natural gas to Europe, effectively blocking out Turkey and undermining its long-term plans to be a regional energy hub (Tanchum 2020b). In defence of its interests, Turkey turned to the GNA, finalizing a maritime demarcation deal in November 2019 that would challenge the zone established by the Greece-Cyprus-Egypt deal. In addition to the maritime deal, Ankara and Tripoli also signed a military cooperation pact, facilitating the dispatch of drones, advanced weaponry and Syrian mercenaries, which eventually enabled the GNA's success in pushing back Haftar's forces, backed by Emirati arsenal, eastward

towards Sirte (Megerisi 2020c). Hence, the Libyan conflict constituted a convergence of two key drivers of Turkish interests – ensuring that the UAE does not undercut its programme to create Afro-Mediterranean commercial connectivity via the central Maghreb, and protecting its energy interests in the east Mediterranean by challenging Greece over maritime boundaries. Turkey also has economic interests in deals for reconstructing Libya’s infrastructure valued at \$50 billion, in addition to its standing as largest exporter to Libya after China (Tanchum 2020a:7).

Qatar’s involvement in Libya began during the 2011 uprising in which it provided military support to revolutionary fighters through operation rooms. Contrary to the UAE, who channelled support to armed groups that espoused anti-Islamist ideology, Qatar’s camp included Islamist-leaning armed groups. As the rifts in the Gulf Cooperation Council deepened in 2017 with the blockade on Qatar, pitting a Saudi-UAE-Bahrain-Egypt axis against a Qatar-Turkey alliance, intra-Gulf rivalries were also reflected on the ground in Libya with Qatar and Turkey backing the GNA while the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Egypt backed Haftar and the LNA. Qatar’s engagement has been most pronounced in terms of financial support to Libyan Islamist groups, although it has also played a role in the war of narratives utilising traditional media outlets and social media trolls and bots to promote anti-Haftar messages (Wehrey 2020:18).

The intersection of multiple geopolitical faultlines in Libya has led to intensified interference by foreign powers who have not only sharpened the fissures between warring Libyan factions, but have also capitalised on the turmoil to advance a mix of competing strategic, security and economic interests. The net effect of foreign intermeddling has been an undermining of efforts to find a negotiated solution to the conflict by enabling belligerents, fuelling fragmentation and prolonging conflict.

3.5.6. Proxy warfare: Libya as a forerunner of future wars

As local and global forces of violence converged in Libya and integrated the conflict into larger regional and geopolitical scales, Libya also emerged as an important case study of the prevalence of proxy warfare as a trend in the international war and security landscape (Ahram 2020:160). As Wehrey (2020a:10) avers:

Libya’s civil war, especially its post-2019 phase, embodies the intersection of several military and technological trends with potentially far-reaching consequences... giving foreign competition in Libya a distinctive character marked by opacity, lethality and toxicity.

The internationalization of the Libyan conflict has its antecedents in the 2011 NATO-led intervention that saw the UAE, France and Qatar establish operations rooms which facilitated flow of information and intelligence coordination. When the second civil war broke out in 2014 between Libyan factions aligned to Operation Dignity and Operation Dawn, foreign powers backed local proxies in line with the entrenched faultlines, with counterterrorism and anti-Islamist agenda serving as key reference points for intensification of military and financial support to Libyan actors (Wehrey 2020a:17). The 2019 offensive on Tripoli by Haftar was an inflection point in terms of escalation of foreign involvement as drone strikes increased alongside intensification of the war of narratives marked by the dissemination of propaganda and disinformation to sway public opinions in favour of competing causes (Wehrey 2020a:18).

In addition to the provision of weaponry including drones, advanced weapons and technical and intelligence support by foreign powers, the Libyan conflict was also characterised by the use of foreign African mercenaries, particularly fighters from Sudan and Chad. The use of mercenaries pointed to the interconnected transnational networks that traversed the Middle East, the Maghreb and the Sahel, with Libyans serving as intermediaries and brokers in subcontracting fighters for both sides of the conflict. For instance, Sudanese fighters were a major component of the LNA military campaign in Fezzan, while Misratan forces and the Benghazi Defence Brigades also deployed Chadian fighters in 2017 (Wehrey 2020a:19).

The 2019-2020 war in Tripoli realized an upscaling of the foreign military engagement as warring factions launched massive air campaigns, supported by ground-based mercenaries. Apart from being cheaper to run than fighter jets, the widespread use of combat drones by both sides was aimed at bolstering airpower as a means of gaining on opponents and maintaining superiority. For the LNA, airpower was key to maintaining a presence and supplementing its weakened ground offensive. For the GNA, an increase in air strikes was aimed at matching the LNA's air capacity and striking critical LNA supply lines (Iddon 2019). The increased use of drones in an internationalized theatre lends itself to the plausible deniability that attends proxy warfare, rooted in discretion and avoidance of institutional and reputational costs by intervening states (Groh 2019:97).

Once a prominent feature of the Cold War era, proxy warfare has made a comeback in recent decades as a low-cost option for states seeking to advance 'strategic objectives and ideological gains while avoiding direct costly and bloody warfare' (Mumford 2013:40). Mumford (2013:40) defines a proxy conflict as 'a conflict in which a third party intervenes directly in

order to influence the strategic outcome in favour of its preferred faction.’ Krieg and Rickli (2019:4) prefer the term ‘surrogate warfare’ as an umbrella concept which refers to the ‘externalization of the strategic, operational or tactical burden of warfare, partially or wholly to a delegate or substitute.’ Surrogates can refer to human surrogates such as mercenaries or insurgency groups, or to technological surrogates such as cyber technology, drones and autonomous weapon systems (Krieg and Rickli 2019:4).

The appeal of proxy warfare has been shaped by a number of systemic and technological developments that have oriented states towards proxy methods. One, the evolving international order which has been increasingly characterised by multipolarity or what Brown (2016:244) has labelled ‘a polyarchic international order’ marked by high interdependence and the preponderance of non-state actors engaged in shifting relationships with states has made indirect or proxy intervention more attractive. Two, the economic headwinds of the 2008-2009 global financial crisis coupled with policy adjustments towards lean militaries and reduced defence budgets increased the economic and political appeal of proxy warfare (Mumford 2013:45). Linked to this is the contemporary context in which wars have become simultaneously ‘globalized, privatized, securitized and mediatized,’ contributing to growing public aversion towards engagement in large-scale, costly deployments in pursuit of arguably peripheral interests (Krieg and Rickli 2019:73). Finally, technological progress and the revolution in military affairs has resulted in industry-changing advancements in the speed, precision and austerity dimensions of war-fighting, offering states alternatives for the externalization of the burden of warfare (Krieg and Rickli 2019:78).

Groh (2019:8) outlines a four-part typology of proxy warfare: the first type is *in it to win it* in which an intervening state deems that there are vital interests and hence will increase its support and commitment to enable a proxy to win. The second type, *holding action* is applicable when localized threats to the intervening states are low but the threat may spread to the region, precluding non-intervention. The third type is *meddling* in which the intervening state wants to alter the status quo while avoiding loss in capability or prestige. Finally, in *feeding the chaos*, the intervening has little to gain in terms of vital interests, but supporting a proxy will undercut opponents from gaining power and influence. A successful proxy strategy is centred on maximizing a proxy’s utility and efficacy in delivering the sponsor’s desired objectives. Additionally, the intervening state has to ensure ‘coherence or the degree to which all aspects of the policy contribute to the intervener’s desired objectives and the policy’s ability to adapt

to changing conditions’ (Groh 2019:11). Equally important is control of the proxy and over strategies employed in sustaining the proxy policy (Groh 2019:12).

The principal-agent dynamic at the core of proxy warfare also opens it up to a number of challenges. One problem is the adverse selection in which there is asymmetrical access of information regarding a proxy’s skills, capacity and the degree to which these factors align with the objectives of the sponsor. A second problem is the moral hazard which refers to a situation whereby a proxy may deviate from the objectives of the sponsor due to a lack of means to oversee or monitor its actions by the sponsor, raising risks of potential overreach or counterproductive actions to intended objectives. Third, Madison’s dilemma may arise, referring to a situation in which the proxy ‘may misuse the resources or authority from a sponsor’ and work against the broader objectives or intended outcomes (Krieg and Rickli 2019:118).

While proxy warfare in Libya resulted in a complex configuration of alliances, rivalries and proxy relationships, it is important not to overlook the agency of Libyans who acted as power brokers, intermediaries and fixers for the flows of weapons, money and media support by foreign sponsors. Not only did this complicate the principal-agent dynamic, but it also fuelled competition as Libya brokers jostled for access to various kinds of foreign support (Wehrey 2020:6). Ultimately, the main drivers of conflict in Libya stemmed primarily from the local level as Harchaoui and Lazib (2019:13) assert:

Libya’s conflicts are often both hyperlocal and closely linked to foreign states. External interference has helped empower some Libyan actors by granting them financial, military, and political means. However, international backers are almost never able to dictate their proxies’ actions. Libyan actors’ tactics and strategies are largely based on their own internal organizational logic and calibrated based upon local, sometimes personal, considerations. Those indigenous parameters impose stronger constraints on armed groups’ trajectories, as compared to the influence of external patrons.

3.6. Conclusion

The decade-long conflict in Libya is the result of multi-dimensional causes and drivers. This chapter undertook a comprehensive assessment of the profile, trajectory, dynamics, actors and drivers of the conflict in Libya between October 2011 and December 2020, with the aim of fleshing out a number of pertinent themes and observations for the evolving discourse on international peace and security. Post-2011 Libya stands as an instructive case of

internationalization of civil war and the role of foreign actors in exacerbating conflict dynamics by influencing strategic calculus of local actors, transforming the conduct of warfare through increased use of drones and complicating mediation and negotiation efforts aimed at conflict resolution. The failure of the transition in the aftermath of the revolution that ousted Muammar Gaddafi in 2011 also holds important lessons about the particular socio-political character of the Libyan landscape, characterised by localism and the absence of a central authority.

Furthermore, the fragmentation that took hold in the ensuing security and institutional vacuum highlights the Libyan conflict as a case of governance in an area of limited statehood and the inapplicability of the Weberian construct of statehood to the Libyan case where multiple political and military actors are engaged in a contest for power based on competing claims of legitimacy informed by hyper localism. In addition to economic and socio-political explanations of the conflict, geopolitics has also been a major driver of the conflict as a myriad of foreign powers intermeddled in the Libyan conflict through proxy warfare, pursuing competing interests and agenda and sharpening local fissures that have led to intensification and protraction of the conflict. As the trajectory of the conflict in late 2020 pointed to a military stalemate, it was yet to be seen whether the fragile ceasefire would hold and whether the UN-led political process centred on the 2020 LPDF Roadmap would lead to a successful transition and elections at the end of 2021, or whether the frozen conflict would be reignited once more by an abundance of spoilers and the converging dynamics of fragmentation, hyperlocalism and proxy warfare.

With reference to process tracing, which is the core analytical method underpinning this study (see 1.5.3), this chapter served the purpose of clarifying the contextual conditions (also known as scope conditions) in which the theorized causal mechanism is embedded in. Taking into account the conceptual and temporal delimitations, post-intervention Libya can indeed be thought of as the *mise-en-scène* of the complex causal story that is being traced in this study.

Following this chapter which provided an in-depth analysis of the conflict, the next chapter provides an ‘outside-in’ perspective, examining the engagement by external actors and the impact of their policies and actions on both conflict dynamics, as well as conflict resolution efforts.

CHAPTER 4: INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN LIBYA - FROM THE 2015 LIBYAN POLITICAL AGREEMENT TO 2020 THE BERLIN PROCESS

4.1. Introduction

As discussed in Chapter 2 (see section 2.4.4), references to post-intervention responsibilities, premised on *jus post bellum* or the responsibility to rebuild were largely absent with respect to long-term post-conflict reconstruction engagement in Libya following the NATO-led intervention. Instead, what took precedence were quick-fix, short-term rebuilding tasks driven by a focus on security and the strategic interests of international actors such as border security, counterterrorism and migration control. The emphasis on stabilization by international actors in the Libyan context occurred alongside particular shifts and dynamics in the international political environment and normative backdrop that set the stage for a growing interest in stabilization as a strategic response to an evolving geopolitical context and the crisis of the liberal peace model.

As a follow-up to chapter 3 which provided an analysis of the dynamics, drivers and actors of the Libyan conflict, this chapter is focused on an analysis of international engagement in conflict resolution in the Libyan case in order to glean the rationales, trade-offs and frameworks by external actors in efforts to end the violent conflict. By outlining the role of international stakeholders in conflict resolution, the strengths and weaknesses of selected mechanisms of conflict resolution in the Libyan context as well as the complexities of multi-track approaches aimed at peaceful resolution, this chapter is a key step in the process-tracing method utilised in this research study. As was mentioned at the outset of this study in Chapter 1 (see 1.5.3), process-tracing is used to theorize causal mechanisms that link causes and outcomes based on within-case evidence. Beginning with conceptualization of a theory of causality based on existing literature and logic reasoning, the next step involves making causal inferences from within-case evidence and depicting them as causal process observations (Bennet & Checkel 2015:10). Thus, from within the case of post-2011 Libya, observable manifestations of the hypothesized causal mechanism (lacuna in the post-intervention normative framework) are identified and analysed as evidence causally linked to the outcome (uptake of the stabilization agenda as dominant paradigm). (see Fig. 1 in Chapter 1).

Additionally, the focus on a politically negotiated settlement and inclusivity at the expense of underlying issues of justice and reconciliation also raises questions about the compact of peace that has been prioritised and the dilemmas of a peacemaking strategy in fostering local legitimacy while navigating interests and agendas of a plethora of international and local actors.

4.2. Changing global context of warfare: implications for conflict management

The internationalization of the conflict in Libya since 2011, characterised by involvement of foreign powers with a broad array of interests and goals, raises pertinent questions about the role of external actors in conflict management and resolution, and implications for sustainable peace. The role of external actors in conflict resolution has been shaped by the changing nature of conflict in the post-Cold War era and the evolving international conflict management approaches in response to shifting patterns of violence and social, material and human impact of conflict. The proliferation of intrastate wars after the end of the Cold War has spurred debates in academic and policy circles about the concept of ‘new wars’ to describe the qualitative changes that characterize contemporary civil wars. A number of scholars (Duffield 2001, Münkler 2004, Drake 2007, Kaldor 2007,) have analysed various aspects of new wars, such as the evolution in the motives, methods of warfare and social and economic contexts of wars. These wars are occurring mostly within states, are driven by material, identity-based or ideological motives, funded through illicit war economies with links to transnational networks, and entail a deliberate targeting of civilians resulting in increased forced human displacement and high proportion of civilian to combatant casualties (Kaldor 2001:6, 9). The new war thesis points to widespread changes in the objectives, actors, spatial context, human impact, political economy and social structure of conflict, with implications for international security and responses to these contemporary conflicts.

The contemporary global context of warfare has been shaped by the processes of globalization, mediatization, privatization and securitization. Globalization has enhanced interconnectedness of social, political and economic activities across borders and fostered transnationalisation and blurring of the boundaries between the ‘local’ and the ‘international’. The context of globalized sociopolitics, economics and security has resulted in the undermining of state authority by non-state actors engaging in transnational activities. The weakening of state legitimacy and capacity has given way to privatization of security through outsourcing of security functions to military and security contractors, as the state’s monopoly on violence is challenged by non-state actors in addition to an undermining of the state’s ability to provide public goods (Krieg & Rickli

2019:44). The digital and communications revolution in a globalized world has allowed for rapid and expansive dissemination of information and data, including media coverage of conflicts and wars relayed through satellite televisions and the internet. The images and reporting from frontlines of wars and humanitarian shelters hosting refugees and displaced persons have provoked international responses and pressure on the international community to do something (Sisk 2009:32). The prevalence of transnational threats in a shared risk environment in a globalized world has led to an overlap between homeland and global security, altering the global security calculus such as global terrorism, insurgency, financial crises and state failure. The securitization process of framing the range of delocalized risks as ‘existential threats’ (Buzan *et al.* 1998:23) has not only been a driver of security policies of states with interests in far-away conflicts, but it has also informed the post 9/11 focus on security-oriented stabilization and statebuilding as dominant approaches to peacebuilding in ‘failed’, ‘fragile’ or war-torn states (Tschirgi 2013:204).

Logically, the challenge of contemporary civil wars has also necessitated a shift in the conflict management approaches by the international community. The standard treatment regime to end civil wars has drawn primarily on the liberal peace model comprised of negotiated settlements based on power-sharing; deployment of peacekeeping operations (PKOs) to secure ceasefires and monitor disarmament processes; and engagement of international organizations, donors and NGOs in support of post-conflict reconstruction and development activities and promoting the democratic processes, the rule of law, human rights and the free market (Gowan & Stedman 2018:172). The impetus for international interventions in civil wars has also been shaped by normative shifts such the reconceptualization of sovereignty as responsibility, as encapsulated by emerging norm of R2P. Additionally, interest-based considerations have also underpinned international involvement in civil wars, including efforts to contain negative externalities such as refugee flows, spillover of conflict and material costs in terms of humanitarian assistance and environmental destruction (Sisk 2009:32). It is equally important to bear in mind that conflict resolution is a multi-stakeholder engagement involving the international community made up of regional and international actors, third-party conflict managers with a broad array of interests, the main belligerents in a conflict and peripheral parties such as external sponsors or spoilers and the local population.

4.3. Definition of key concepts related to conflict resolution

This section aims to provide functional definitions of the main concepts pertinent to understanding the processes, objectives and parties involved in efforts to bring an end to contemporary conflict. *Conflict management* refers to the ‘limitation, mitigation and containment of violent conflict’ (Ramsbotham *et al.* 2005: 24). *Conflict settlement* means ‘an agreed ending to the conflict by the parties’ or ‘a compromise solution in which conflict parties are willing to give up their escalated struggle’ (Pruitt & Kim 2004:190). A much broader and deeper concept, *conflict resolution* refers to ‘a process whereby the deep-rooted sources of conflict are addressed and resolved’ (Ramsbotham *et al.* 2005:24). Thus, conflict resolution goes beyond conflict management and conflict settlement in ensuring the ‘dissolution of incompatibility’ (Wallensteen 2011:50). *Conflict transformation* entails a dynamic approach to conflict aimed at ‘transforming unjust social relationships and a deep transformation in the parties and their relationships and in the situation that created the conflict’ (Ramsbotham *et al.* 2005:24). Therefore, whereas conflict management has to do with the behaviour of parties and conflict resolution deals with the issues at the heart of a conflict, conflict transformation entails a mid-to-long range horizon in addressing the structural drivers of conflict and promoting ‘constructive change processes that minimize violence’ in the long term (Beyond Intractability 2003). In light of the interrelated nature of the concepts outlined above, this study will use conflict resolution as an umbrella concept to refer broadly to the approaches of stakeholders to address the issues at the core of the Libyan conflict via a variety of tools and processes in light of contextual factors. The various conflict resolution approaches include both coercive options such as sanctions and non-coercive approaches such as mediation and negotiations.

Based on consent of conflict parties to enter into dialogue to resolve differences, a peace process refers to ‘a series of step-by-step, reciprocal and self-reinforcing actions that are taken to steadily move a conflict away from violence toward regularized, consensual non-violent rules of interaction’ (Sisk 2009:38). *Negotiations* ‘are exchanges between parties designed to reconcile their differences and produce a settlement’ (Brams 1990:xiv). Negotiations primarily involve the conflict party with no direct involvement of third-party actors and can occur at all phases of conflict to prevent conflict from escalating, to manage conflict by de-escalating violence and engage parties in dialogue, and to resolve conflict by addressing and resolving main incompatibilities of positions and potentially transform them into constructive relationships (Zartman 2009:322). Negotiations entail a three-stage process including: (i) diagnosis where parties across the divide identify their interests and issues as way of finding

mutually acceptable terms of agreement, (ii) formulation of a resolving formula to address deep-rooted issues or a minimal agreeing formula to terminate conflict as a basis for long-term conflict resolution mechanisms; (iii) the concession stage involves a meeting point in the middle to shift positions from zero-sum to positive sum through bargaining (Zartman 2009: 332). Notably, the onset of negotiations does not mean an end to violence, instead political violence and the threat of violence are an inherent part of peace talks and often used by conflict parties as ‘beyond the table’ tactics to maximize their bargaining positions, to undermine opponents or to even sabotage talks. An understanding of the violence-negotiation nexus as a key element of the peace process has implications for the strategic choices of the parties engaged in negotiations, or the mediator in altering the incentive structure for violence in favour of de-escalation and continued talks (Sisk 2009:40).

Unlike negotiations where only the conflict parties participate, mediation involves third-party assistance in the search for a settlement. Various definitions of mediation focus on different aspects such as the actorness of the process, mediation as an extension of the negotiation process, or a focus on distinctive features of mediation such as neutrality, impartiality and trust. Nathan (1999:2) offers a comprehensive definition of mediation as ‘a method of mitigating the concerns through the presence and support of an intermediary who is not party to the conflict, who enjoys the trust of the disputants and whose goal is to help the disputants forge agreements which they find acceptable.’ The level of engagement and strategy employed by the mediator results in different forms of mediation and involvement in the conduct of the talks. For instance, communication or facilitation strategies position the mediator as a go-between the conflicting parties facilitating dialogue and supplying information that will help disputants reframe issues and positions (Greig *et al* 2019:154). Above providing good offices, mediators can offer carrots and sticks to incentivize an agreement while maintaining limited direct control over the talks. For Diehl and Greig (2012:8), pure mediation entails a deeper level of engagement by the mediator by exerting more control over the talks by controlling the information flow between the parties, assisting the formulation of settlement terms and reasoning with and persuading disputants to come to an agreement. Given the voluntary nature of mediation, the logic and potential of mediation lies in its capacity to offset the informational and commitment problem of the disputants as a credible and impartial mediator can serve as both ‘buffer and bridge’ between the conflicting parties (Nathan 1999:2) Power mediation is the most coercive form of third party intervention in which the third party uses various forms of leverage (coercive and non-coercive) to induce the parties towards agreement over a negotiated settlement. Non-

coercive leverage or rewards offered to parties to encourage acceptance of a settlement may include foreign aid and investment or legitimation of a group. Coercive leverage can include threats or pressure such as sanctions or the use of military force (Sisk 2009:56).

4.3.1. Timing of conflict resolution the concept of ripeness

The issue of timing of conflict resolution is an essential one given the widely accepted notion that there are particular turning points in a conflict that are propitious for resolution. Such moments for the onset of negotiations or mediation have been described by the concept of ‘ripeness’ which refers to a moment ‘when the perceptions of all parties converge on the belief that negotiation, reciprocal compromise and the arrival at a mutually beneficial settlement will yield greater dividends than continued conflict’ (Sisk 2009:62). Zartman (1995, 2000) argues that there are certain conditions for a conflict to be ripe. The first condition, a ‘mutually hurting stalemate’ (MHS) refers to a deadlock in which both sides of the conflict cannot escalate to victory and it is costly to continue the fighting therefore they open to looking for ‘a way out’ (Zartman 2008:22). Following the perceptual condition of a mutually hurting stalemate, the second dimension of ripeness is a viable alternative to the status quo or a ‘mutually enticing opportunity’ (MEO), complementing the ‘push factor’ MHS with a ‘pull factor’ that brings the parties towards a mutually acceptable solution (Mitchell 1995:38). Based on a cost-benefit analysis, an exit strategy may be accepted as an alternative to the costs of escalation or continued violation, focusing attention on prospective settlement options. Third parties can play a role in influencing parties’ perception of opportune moments or inducing ripeness by presenting a range of inducements (carrots and sticks) or formulating potential settlements to influence the cost-benefit calculations of the conflict parties (Sisk 2009:65).

The success and failure of various conflict resolution approaches is contingent on a variety of ‘supply-side’ and ‘demand-side’ factors (Greig *et al* 2019:182). For instance, the success or failure of mediation efforts are often dependent on the attributes and strategies of the mediation, as well the conflict context and parties’ perceptions of structural conditions for ripeness (Greig *et al* 2019: 182). Although the issue of failure or success of mediation is a subjective one, given the variance in conflict contexts, scholars point to three broad indicators. The first is a cessation of violence and production of a ceasefire. Some ceasefires are temporary, lasting a few hours, while others can last for decades. In some conflicts such as Libya, there has been a ‘revolving door of mediated ceasefires’ which have broken down after relatively short periods (Diehl &

Greig 2012:105). The second indicator is the conclusion of an agreement which can take the form of partial or comprehensive settlements which seek to resolve the core grievances and issues in a conflict. Third, mediation can also be labelled as successful if it changes the relationship between the conflict parties for instance if it promotes constructive engagement and fosters trust among participants and with the mediator, consolidating pathways for long term settlement (Greig *et al* 2019:178). Thus, the delineation between success and failure is context-dependent and a matter of perspective. The time horizon of the conflict is also a factor for consideration, relative to the cost of conflict. A settlement achieved in a drawn-out conflict, even if short-lived, may be seen as a success in terms of laying the groundwork for a sustainable agreement in the future.

The challenges of distinguishing mediation success from failure are also linked to the complexity of mediation. International mediation is premised on consent of the parties therefore the mediator faces the challenge of overcoming ‘the bargainer’s dilemma’ in getting the conflict parties to the table and presenting mediation as an attractive option to belligerents often locked in a zero-sum game. Furthermore, the logic of rational cost-benefit analysis by parties may be clouded by issues of imperfect information, indivisible issues and credible-commitment problems which may cause conflict parties to continue digging their heels in (Greig *et al* 2019: 270). Another dimension of the complexity of mediation entails the multiplicity of actors in a conflict context, especially if the civil war is internationalized. The external actors engaged in a conflict as allies or sponsors of proxies on the ground not only shape calculations of conflict parties, but they may also complicate conflict resolutions offers by creating alternative forums thereby promoting forum shopping among belligerents (Nathan 2014:6). The local civil society groups, including women’s groups, youth groups, tribal associations and municipality representatives, which are a part of the dialogue may also make it harder to forge consensus as the more the participants the more ‘complex and overloaded’ the mediation process can be (Nathan 2014:7). Multiparty mediation which may comprise of a coalition of mediators pooling resources in a coordinated effort, or a series of sequential and simultaneous mediation efforts by a variety of third parties may give rise to coordination problems and undermine peacemaking as conflicting parties may play one mediator against another in a crowded context (Sisk 2009:51). Finally, an international mediator has to contend with the systems and structures of a regional or international conflict system impacting the dynamics of a conflict. The agreement cannot focus only on cessation of hostilities but may also need to resolve deep-seated grievances between parties and produce a reconfigured

blueprint for state–society relations and civil-military relations. Therefore, a pivotal aspect of the mediator’s job is to help the belligerents arrive at consensus on the details and implementation mechanisms of the blueprint, while also transforming the adversarial relationship between conflicting parties to one premised on cooperation and accord (Nathan 2014:8).

Overall, conflict management and resolution approaches are often employed at different phases of the conflict and often interact with one another in a conflict context. For instance, 77% of conflicts that receive conflict management will experience multiple approaches such as negotiation and mediation, or mediation and peace operations (Bercovitch and Fretter 2004: 15). Following a phases approach to conflict de-escalation and escalation in line with the different stages of the conflict resolution process may provide crucial insights into the sequence, timing and interaction of the constellation of approaches and the range of considerations and interests that inform involvement of third parties (such as states, IGO’s or NGOs) in resolution efforts at different stages (Greig *et al* 2019:263). Mediation may be mixed with coercive approaches such as sanctions to pressure belligerents towards negotiations or to stem the flow of arms and weaponry through arms embargoes. Peace operations may be deployed after a ceasefire agreement, but mediation may continue in the background to reach full settlement of issues. The issues of timing and sequencing of various conflict management approaches underscore the utility of a multi-pronged approach in which interventions by local actors, governments, IGOs and NGOs complement conflict resolution efforts at different stages of the process (Ramsbotham *et al* 2005:196).

4.4. The UN’s pacific settlement and support for the transition in Libya

The UN has an established role in international conflict resolution with a mixed record in various contexts. This section delves into the UN’s peacemaking role in Libya vis-à-vis the realities on the ground and the internationalization of the conflict, comprised of an array of actors with agendas and motives that had implications for the UN-led process and the broader conflict dynamics.

4.4.1. The infeasibility of the standard civil war treatment in Libya

In light of the UN’s principal role in the maintenance of international peace and security, it stands as the ‘only institutional expression of the international community in its conflict resolution capacity’ (Ramsbotham *et al* 2005:44). The centrality of peaceful resolution of conflicts is enshrined in Article 33 (1) of the UN Charter which outlines options for conflict

resolution, including ‘negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements or other peaceful means of their choice.’

The changing nature of conflict in the post-Cold War era characterized by the prevalence of intrastate conflict also necessitated a change in the UN’s approach to peacebuilding, epitomized by the UN’s landmark report, *An Agenda for Peace* (Boutros-Ghali 1992) which expanded the UN’s response to conflicts to include prevention, peacemaking, peace enforcement, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Pertinent to conflict resolution, the UN’s methodology is framed by three main approaches: (i) a power-based approach centred around the UNSC; (ii) a rights-based approach centred around the International Court of Justice; and (iii) an interest-based approach centred around the Secretary-General and his/her special envoys, special representatives and the Mediation Support Unit (Peck 2008: 413). The trio of approaches dovetails Weiss’ (2018:36) portrayal of ‘three UNs’ made up of ‘the First UN’ (main arena for decision-making, the ‘Second UN’ (the Secretariat and international civil service), and the ‘Third UN’ (the constellation of NGOs, independent experts, consultants, civil society groups that are a part of UN discussions, operations, advocacy and monitoring). As the UN organ with direct oversight over maintenance of international peace and security, matters on its agenda are binding and enforceable through sanctions or use of military force. As one of UNSC’s power-based instruments in peace and security, the evolution of UN-mandated peace operations is reflected in the expanded scope of mandates from monitoring ceasefires to multidimensional peace missions in support of peacebuilding efforts such as organization of elections, DDR, humanitarian aid delivery and human rights promotion (Kenkel 2013:129). The debates around robust peace operations and the use of force in implementation of peace enforcement or protection of civilian mandates attest to normative and policy shifts that have shaped the frequency, organization and mandates of peace operations in a rapidly evolving international security context. Furthermore, the compatibility between mediation (to birth an agreement between warring parties) and peacekeeping (to implement agreement) has facilitated what Gowan and Stedman (2018:172) have characterized as ‘the standard treatment for civil war.’ Although the success of the international regime has resulted in a mixed record across different conflict contexts since 1990s as the changing nature of conflict, *realpolitik*, geopolitics of peace and security interventions and the crisis of the liberal peace model have raised doubts about the viability of the international treatment in response to complex internationalized conflicts such as Libya.

Notwithstanding the appeal of the ‘PKO-plus’ regime as an arguably effective and low-cost approach to conflict management, its applicability to civil wars in the MENA region is impeded by a number of factors. First, the civil wars in the MENA region have led to negative externalities such as refugee flows and security vacuums that could be exploited by violent extremists. The instability as a result of civil war and state collapse in the MENA region has not only posed risk of proliferation across the neighbourhood but has also carried security or strategic concerns for a range of foreign powers that have intervened militarily or diplomatically in conflicts in Yemen, Libya and Syria. As detailed in Chapter 3, the geopolitical rivalries and proxy warfare underpinned by the competing ideologies, interests and agenda of external actors has shaped the dynamics of the Libyan civil war, aggravated fragmentation and undermined the applicability of the international treatment regime. Second, the PKO-plus treatment regime requires backing of major powers, particularly agreement among the P5 on the UNSC. Instead, pertinent to the Libyan conflict, what has emerged are paralysis and divisions within the UNSC on a range of issues from holding violators of the arms embargo accountable to condemnation of external actors who have actively undermined conflict resolution efforts. Third, the explicit rejection of foreign boots on the ground by transitional authorities precluded deployment of peacekeeping forces in Libya, in addition to the challenge of sourcing capable peacekeeping forces from the region enmeshed in geopolitical and regional faultlines (Fearon 2017:28-29).

Apart from the UNSC, the UNSG and his Representatives also play a key role in the peaceful settlement of disputes. The UNSG deploys a Representative (also known as Personal Representative, Special Representative, Envoy or Special Adviser) to oversee a UN political or peacebuilding mission. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) is responsible for coordination of negotiation and mediation efforts engaging conflicting parties on the ground as well as coordination with humanitarian and development stakeholders (Peck 2008:416). In addition to being the ‘lead actor’ in multiparty mediation processes, the SRSG is instrumental in inducing ripeness in a conflict situation by persuading conflicting parties to get to the negotiating table when a window of opportunity opens. Moreover, the SRSG can assist with navigating preconditions set prior to negotiations by urging parties to reconsider positions; promoting confidence-building measures; facilitating consensus on venue for peace talks and formulating a framework agreement as a fundamental step in the mediation process

(Peck 2008:421). Between February 2011 and December 2020 there have been seven SRSGs⁸ heading UNSMIL whose roles have included facilitating mediation efforts and oversight over UNSMIL's role in supporting the transition, monitoring and reporting on human rights, capacity-building and support for SSR and DDR programmes (UNSMIL 2020a).

4.4.2. The United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL)

As early as March 2011, the UN had begun the pre-assessment process for post-conflict support to a Libyan-led transition and rebuilding process. Parallel to the appointment of UN Special Envoy Abdelelah al-Khatib on 10 March 2011 to mediate between the NTC and the Gaddafi regime, UNSG Ban Ki-Moon appointed Ian Martin as special adviser to head up the planned UN political mission in Libya. On 16 September 2011, the UNSC authorised the establishment of the UNSMIL to support the transitional authorities in the areas of rule of law, human rights, public security (capacity-building of national security architectures including policing, defence, arms and ammunition management); coordination of international assistance; national reconciliation and electoral support (UNSC Resolution 2009). The UN had envisaged UNSMIL as a 'light footprint' civilian presence made up of a core of 250 staff supported by external civilian experts providing technical assistance in line with context-specific needs. The aversion to a foreign military presence on the ground as explicitly articulated by the NTC informed the concept of operations of UNSMIL, alongside the imperative of political expediency, economic realities and intention of some UNSC member states to avoid a large, costly military presence in light of the backlash against mission creep of the 2011-NATO-led intervention. Additionally, UNSMIL's light footprint approach was seen as tailored to the Libyan context characterised by evolving and security realities and 'Libyan-defined parameters' on timing, priorities and extent of external assistance (CIC 2013:104). Libya's oil wealth also meant that it was well-positioned cover its own post-conflict reconstruction without straining international funds, adding to the case for a minimalist UN presence in Libya operationalized through a phased approach with an initial three-month mandate as a basis for longer-term engagement (Snyder 2015).

⁸ These SRSGs are: Abdelelah al-Khatib (2011-2012); Ian Martin (2011-2012); Tarek Mitri (2012-2014); Bernardino Leon (2014-2015); Martin Kobler (2015-2017); Ghassan Salamé (2017-2019) and Stephanie Williams (in acting capacity 2019-2020); see El-Gamaty 2020.

The immediate area of focus for UNSMIL was electoral support in view of the elections scheduled for 7 July 2012. Partnering with the UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and the UN Development Programme (UNDP), UNSMIL worked with the Libyan High National Election Commission (HNEC) to organize an election in under five months, providing assistance in the basic electoral processes, including voter registration, training of electoral officials and public outreach. The July 2012 elections were a qualified success for the HNEC in a new institutional setting and a boost for UNSMIL's electoral support strategy in delivering a top priority for Libya's transition, culminating in the election of the Government of National Congress (GNC) and nomination of new executive authority by September 2012 (Martin 2015:137). In contrast to the success in electoral support, the security sector turned out to be a major challenge for UNSMIL given the fragmentation of the Libyan security sector, permeated by hybridity and localism. The *ad hoc* measures of transitional authorities in SSR and DDR initiatives came up against entrenched ideological, tribal and religious faultlines which exacerbated power struggles among non-state armed groups and militias. Moreover, the hollowing out of Libyan armed forces as part of the Gaddafi regime's efforts to 'coup-proof' the *Jamahiriyah* had resulted in the preponderance of informal, parallel security structures centred around loyalty to Gaddafi and regime security (Badi 2020b:213). The pattern of hybridity continued in the post-revolutionary security landscape, making it increasingly difficult for Libya's transitional authorities to exercise effective control over the security sector characterized by a myriad of armed groups and militias engaged in vicious competition over state resources and predatory relations with a weak government. The NTC's policy of co-opting revolutionary militias and integration of revolutionary fighters under new umbrella structures such as the Supreme Security Committee (SSC) led to mushrooming of militias as self-proclaimed *thawwar* rushed to get on to the state's payroll (Sayigh 2015:11). Despite UNSMIL's efforts to support SSR and DDR through programmes such as the UNSMIL-UNDP Policing and Security Joint Programme, the lack of a clear and well-formulated legal framework on issues such as oversight responsibilities and powers of various security sector actors and institutions impeded wholesale SSR (UNSMIL 2020b, para. 57). Additionally, the politicization of armed groups by competing power factions aggravated fragmentation in a polarized political landscape, subverting efforts at effective SSR or DDR by weak and delegitimised state institutions. The focus on strengthening formal institutional structures while ignoring the social and political effects of hybridity, coupled with the political economy of armed groups, has proved mostly short-term and ineffective at establishing long-term security sector governance (Badi 2020a:89).

Another important aspect of UNSMIL's broad mandate was to provide technical assistance and coordination for arms and ammunition including clearance of explosive remnants of war, risk education and data management. For instance, between 2019 and 2020, experts working with the Mine Action Service cleared more than 540 explosive remnants of war in areas surrounding southern Tripoli and Misrata (UNSMIL 2021, para. 68). Pertinent to promotion of human rights, the rule of law and transitional justice, UNSMIL has been involved in monitoring and reporting on human rights, supporting capacity-building in the justice and corrections sector and promoting transitional justice processes (Human Rights Council 2017.) According to a 2017 report of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on the human rights situation in Libya and the effectiveness of technical assistance provided by UNSMIL, the lack of a functioning judicial system had allowed for entrenchment of impunity and violations of international human rights and humanitarian law by armed groups in Libya. The security vacuum had also resulted in increased abductions and killings of adults and children, arbitrary detention of migrants and torture of targeted persons by armed groups. Overall, the report noted that there had been limited progress on transitional justice in Libya since 2012, impeded by institutional and security vacuums which had been seized by armed groups to commit violations and abuses of human rights (Human Rights Council 2017, para. 82).

The unique context of post-intervention Libya presented an opportunity to put UNSMIL's concept of operations, premised on a light footprint approach, to the test amidst a fluid and rapidly evolving political and security landscape. In spite of the envisaged light and flexible mission concept, UNSMIL's mandate has been broad and ambitious, and implementation has been contingent on support of external civilian and technical expertise supplementing a small core staff (Boutellis 2012). Like other UN political missions, UNSMIL also struggled with a capacity-expectations gap in meeting 'an ambitious statebuilding mandate', compounded by the institutional vacuum and lack of functioning institutions in Libya. Not only was UNSMIL's advice and policy guidance to transitional authorities often side-lined in a polarized climate, but also its failure to influence the transitional process in key sectors such as security and transitional justice weakened its legitimacy in the eyes of the Libyan populace (Snyder 2015).

On the mediation front, the multiplicity of mediation forums initiated by a range of external actors with a variety of interests and agenda also complicated the UNSMIL-led peace process. As part of its mandate, UNSMIL was expected to play a lead role in coordination of mediation efforts initiated by states, regional organizations, NGOs and local actors. The SRSGs to Libya had to contend with the proliferation of mediation forums by France, UAE, Egypt, Turkey and

Russia who were simultaneously involved in furnishing Libyan conflict parties with military and diplomatic support. For instance, following the stalling of the UN-led political process after the breakdown of the 2015 Libyan Political Agreement (signed in Skhirat, Morocco), a number of parallel peace talks were convened in Cairo (December 2016), Paris (May 2018), Palermo (November 2018) and Abu Dhabi (February 2019), in attempts to reach a viable agreement between Libyan warring factions. The intensification of foreign interference in both proxy warfare and parallel mediation forums worked to undermine the UN-led process in terms of reduced leverage and room for manoeuvre with regard to enticing parties to the negotiating parties (Lacher 2018a:21). For this reason, the UN's lead role in mediation was subject to a number of contextual and political challenges that militated against the mediation strategy and effectiveness. The next section will examine UNSMIL's role as mediator in facilitating the 2015 Libyan Political Agreement (LPA) and the 2020 Libyan Political Dialogue Forum (LPDF) which was premised on the Berlin Process.

4.4.3. The 2015 Libyan Political Agreement

Following the eruption of civil war in mid-2014, the UN launched a round of talks in an attempt to broker an agreement between the rival governments in Libya deadlocked along an east-west divide. It was in the context of war between the Libya Dawn and Dignity factions, flanked by two rival governments and two parliaments (Tobruk-based HoR and Tripoli-based GNC) that UNSMIL initiated political dialogue to address the institutional crisis brought on by competing legitimacy claims. Initial attempts in September 2014 by SRSG Bernardino Leon to bring the HoR and GNC together faltered due to rifts over key issues on agenda for talks, but eventually the parties settled on Geneva as the venue and the two parliaments as the main negotiating parties. To get around the enduring issues of representativeness and struggle over legitimacy, the UNSMIL-led process opted to include a broad array of actors including representatives of militias, political parties, municipalities and tribes engaged in parallel tracks to the HoR-GNC political negotiations. Although the UN viewed this as a strategy to 'dilute the polarization' between the main negotiating parties and to deter spoilers from derailing talks, the UN's decision to include actors who had no links to the conflicting parties meant that participants lacked a power base and had little sway over the armed actors fighting on the ground (ICG 2015:5). A second major challenge for UN mediation was the time pressure on SRSGs Leon and later Kobler to forge an agreement in 2015. The rush towards an agreement emerged from security concerns of Western governments alarmed by the looming threat of ISIS gaining a foothold in Libya amidst the deteriorating security situation and political chaos. Western

backers of the UN-led political process wanted the deal finalized swiftly so that there would be an internationally-recognized government in Tripoli with which they could partner with on counterterrorism agenda. Moreover, European governments were keen on expanding EU naval operations under EUNAVFOR Med/Operation Sophia into Libyan territorial waters to counter migrant smuggling, a step that required cooperation with a unity government in Tripoli (ICG 2016:6).

Adding to the complexity of the international and regional backdrop, Haftar's regional backers, the UAE and Egypt, prioritized their anti-Islamist and counterterrorism agenda above a negotiated solution, paying lip service to the UN-led process while continuing to supply Haftar's forces with weapons in violation of the arms embargo. Egyptian and Emirati support encouraged Haftar's intransigence towards the 2015 LPA and hardened his pursuit of military victory. The inability of the UN and international community to halt the continued violations of the arms embargo was the result of increased internationalization of the conflict which entangled foreign powers in a complex game of geopolitical and ideological rivalries. This divided approach extended to the UNSC where differences among member states precluded imposition of sanctions on hardliners who could hinder the political agreement, while Russia and France shielded Haftar's regional backers from criticism about violation of the arms embargo (Wehrey 2020a:9). Consequently, UNSMIL found itself beholden to a crude game of geopolitics and international pressure while a substantial majority within the principal negotiating parties opposed several aspects of the proposed agreement such as composition of the Presidency Council, military and security provisions and mode of selection for the members of the State Council (Lacher 2015:2).

Reflective of the fluid dynamics on the ground, the fracturing of alliances and tensions among military actors compounded the question of representativeness at the negotiating table, eventually leading to the collapse of the security track of the UN-led process. The absence of a security track in the UN-led mediation efforts later turned out to be a costly oversight that set up the resultant LPA for failure at its onset (Author's interview with Lacher 2020). Several issues pertinent to military and security arrangements were left unaddressed by the 2015 LPA, key among them being the question of security for the Government of National Accord (GNA) in Tripoli and how to ensure compliance of military actors with security provisions of the agreement. As Lacher (2018a:24) observes, the oversight over security arrangements pertinent to the implementation of the 2015 LPA were premised on a number of miscalculations by UNSMIL and international backers of the accord. These assumptions included: the view that

the Presidency Council and the GNA ‘would overcome their initial legitimacy deficit by creating new facts on the ground’; that opponents in the HoR would eventually support the GNA in return for continued access to much-needed cash flow; and that the Presidency Council would control key institutions and access to revenue and subsequently build up local legitimacy (Lacher 2015:24).

As the odds stacked up against the draft agreement by November 2015, the UN’s credibility as an impartial mediator was thrown into question as reports surfaced about SRSB Leon’s ties to the UAE, who had a job offer for him to head an Abu Dhabi diplomatic academy, raising concerns about a conflict of interest. Leon’s successor, Martin Kobler, took up office amidst growing pressure by western powers for a quick finalization of the peace deal that had essentially stalled not least due to adverse local and international circumstances. Ignoring the incompatibility of demands and increased alienation of key stakeholders of the deal from their local bases, SRSB Kobler forged ahead with the finalization of the deal on 17 December 2015 in the presence of a small group of negotiators, regardless of no endorsement from the GNC and HoR parliaments (ICG 2016:2). The result was a fragile LPA that was essentially dead on arrival, protracting the installation of a weak GNA that drew its legitimacy from external powers with little traction particularly in eastern Libya. Tensions and boycotts by some members of the Presidency Council rendered it powerless and limited access to state funds by the Central Bank denied the GNA means to implement most of its policies. The tenuous security situation, exacerbated by the failure to establish the planned Presidential Guard as a protection force forced the GNA into alliances with the oligopoly of militias that dominated Tripoli and an assortment of politicians with clout in business and political networks in western Libya (Lacher 2018a:19).

As a weak and embattled GNA attempted to assert authority in Tripoli and the failure of the LPA became apparent by mid-2016, some of the international backers of the peace accord sought alternative channels to pursue their counterterrorism and migration control policy priorities. France’s counterterrorism agenda, linked to its operations in the Sahel, increased the appeal of Haftar as a viable partner and key aspect of its Libya policy. Consequently, France played a double game with regard to Libya, publicly stating support for the LPA while secretly funnelling military support to Haftar. As from June 2016, the US, UK and Italy supported the GNA’s operations against ISIS in Sirte, which ended in victory by December 2016 thanks to US airstrikes (Lacher 2018a:20). At the same time, European concerns about the increasing refugee and migrant flows through the central Mediterranean route via Libya prompted the

Italian government to sign a memorandum of cooperation with the GNA to combat illegal migration, human trafficking and assistance with reinforcing Libya's border control and patrols. Italy took its migration control policy a step further by signing agreements with militias that dominated the migrant business in Libyan port cities, including well-known businessmen who were notorious for smuggling and human trafficking (Howden 2017).

The fracturing of international consensus on the power-sharing agreement and the unity government became more evident as competing unilateral peacemaking initiatives and mediation forums emerged parallel to the UN-led process. On one hand, there was one group of states, mostly western powers that supported the institutional framework of the LPA in spite of the lack of a HoR endorsement and called for support of the Sarraj government in asserting itself against opponents. On the other hand, another group made up of states such as Russia, UAE and Egypt, rhetorically supported the GNA but stopped short of granting Sarraj full diplomatic privileges given that the HoR had not endorsed the GNA. The divergent positions also affected the use of sanctions against spoilers with the EU and the US imposing travel and financial sanctions in 2016 on speaker of the HoR Aguila Saleh and Khalifa Ghwell, prime minister of the Government of National Salvation, a move that was criticized by Russia and France who were intent on shielding Haftar (ICG 2016:22).

4.4.4. The drift towards parallel mediation efforts

The deepening political rifts between the HoR and the GNA, coupled with the ascendancy of Haftar on the political scene empowered by his international sponsors, modified positions of several Western officials and diplomats with regard to accommodating him in a 'Plan B' to the LPA. The strategy of accommodating Haftar in a reconfigured institutional arrangement and restructured Presidency Council (PC) kicked off in Cairo (January 2017) and later in Paris (July 2017). Seeking a compromise between Sarraj and Haftar, these summits not only based dialogue on the logic of equivalence between the LNA and GNA, but also aimed at political and institutional amendments to the UN-brokered framework agreement, including a three-member PC, holding of elections, unification of state financial institutions and adoption of a constitutional framework (ICG 2018:4). A second round of talks in Paris on 29 May 2018 yielded a tentative agreement to hold elections by the end of 2018, following SRSG Ghassan Salamé's announcement of a new UN Action Plan in September 2017 (Irish & Pennetier 2018).

At the regional level, the AU High Level Committee on Libya convened a series of meetings on Libya between 2016 and 2017 that called for a meeting between Libya stakeholders and a

political solution to the deadlock in the aftermath of the LPA. As part of the AU's proposed Roadmap for resolution of the Libyan conflict, which included the organization of an Inclusive Inter-Libyan Dialogue, the AU convened a summit of the Libyan conflict parties in Brazzaville, Congo Republic on 9 September 2017, which Haftar chose not to attend (PSC 2017). According to Chothia (2020), the AU has been largely side-lined as a pivotal interlocutor amidst the multiple international peacemaking initiatives with regard to Libya mostly due a perception problem and the power differentials among external actors in an internationalized civil war. The imprint of Gaddafi's largesse across Africa reinforced a negative view of the AU's role as a would-be neutral mediator, not least in part due to the cosy relationship that Gaddafi shared with a number of African leaders. This perception was reinforced by the fact that a large percentage of the AU's peace and security budget was sourced from external donors, some who had significant strategic interests in Libya. Hence, the AU's influence as a mediator in Libya was limited in terms of policy and capacity.

In a bid to reinvigorate the UN's role in mediation among a plethora of parallel initiatives, SRSG Salamé (2017-2019) presented a new Action Plan in September 2017 that prioritized three goals: the adoption of a constitutional framework, the rebuilding of a Libyan national polity through national reconciliation and the holding of elections (Salamé 2017b). The Action Plan's emphasis on elections has been seen as particularly problematic in the absence of a constitutional and legal framework, added to the deteriorating security situation. On closer inspection, the focus on 'elections as conflict termination' is inextricably tied to the liberal peace paradigm at the core of internationally-sponsored conflict resolution efforts which have privileged elections as a marker of successful transitions and reconstruction of the political order in countries emerging from conflict (Costantini 2019:149). Seen as a key part of a sequential transitional process following conflict de-escalation, elections are also presented as 'the principal means through which a negotiated political settlement is legitimated by the affected polity' (Sisk 2013:259). For the international mediators in a protracted conflict such as Libya, elections are viewed as 'primary instruments' of implementing peace agreements and signals for stakeholders engaged in peacebuilding-as-statebuilding initiatives (Lyons 2004:272). However, the prevalent framework of elections as conflict termination is riddled with contradictions such as the potential to resurface deep-seated cleavages by advancing a system of winners and losers, as well as the potential entrenchment of factionalized politics dominated by rent-seeking and neo-patrimonial elites and politicians (Sisk 2013:262). The high likelihood of a relapse into civil war, particularly in the aftermath of a contested electoral

process, raises critical questions about the sequencing of elections in post-conflict contexts and their viability in fostering legitimacy and shaping state-society relations in settings characterised by institutional vacuums and deep divides (Sisk 2013:260).

As the LPA faltered in the face of institutional and political hurdles, between 2016 and 2019, Haftar was consolidating his political and territorial clout across southern and eastern Libya. After a successful campaign into Fezzan in southwestern Libya, Haftar launched an offensive on Tripoli on 3 April 2019, a few days before the planned Libyan national conference was scheduled to take place. Haftar's surprise offensive on Tripoli obliterated diplomatic gains under the UN-led political process and laid bare the depth and reach of foreign powers over conflict dynamics in Libya. As afore-mentioned, the divisions and faultlines that paralyzed the UNSC had a knock-on effect on the enforcement of the arms embargo and an undermining of UN-led mediation by interlocutors who advanced competing initiatives as a way of securing individual interests. The challenge of foreign interference was reiterated by SRSR Salamé in briefings to the UNSC on several occasions, in which he warned about the uptick in the use of combat drones, precision airstrikes and foreign mercenaries made possible by 'the complicity and outright support of foreign governments' in violation of the arms embargo (Salamé 2019).

According to el Gomati (2020a:2), a major shortcoming of the UN's mediation strategy in Libya was an emphasis on power-sharing in a negotiated settlement to be validated by elections. This focus on political compromise through well-publicized handshakes not only ignores the ideological drivers at the core of the power struggle, but also advances a simplistic binary between the GNA and LNA which fails to account for the complex multidimensional dynamics and drivers of the conflict. Lacher (2018a:22) attributes the fits and starts of the UN mediation in Libya to a confluence of contextual and systemic factors including: competition from mediation efforts initiated by actors with a broad array of interests and agendas; oversights in UNSMIL's process design and implementation; time pressure from international stakeholders and misguided assumptions about the buy-in and legitimacy of a unity government. Overall, the failure of the LPA stemmed from its mismatch with realities, including the absence of a security track that would have brought military actors to the negotiating table. Thus, a major lesson from the shortcomings of the Skhirat process is the interlinkages between the political and military tracks is a critical success factor for a peacemaking strategy.

4.4.5. The 2020 Berlin Process and the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum

On the back of a series of successes by the Turkish-backed GNA counter-offensive against Haftar's forces, the military stalemate that took hold in late 2019 opened a window of opportunity for resumption of the UN-led political process. Cognizant of the escalating costs of continued violence, Turkey and Russia facilitated a temporary ceasefire between the GNA and LNA on 12 January 2020, although Haftar left Moscow without signing the ceasefire agreement. The mediation effort by Turkey and Russia has to be viewed in light of their strategic and economic interests in Libya that had to be secured on their own terms. In other words, Turkey and Russia's parallel mediation was a function of their military involvement on the ground in the form of mercenaries and airpower to their respective proxies (Author's interview with Profazio, 2020). Frustrated by the divisions in the international community's approach to the conflict in Libya and the continual undermining of the UN-led political process by foreign interference, SRSF Salamé approached German Chancellor Angela Merkel with a view of forging a coordinated internationally-led initiative in support of a political solution in Libya. On a related note, the weak enforcement of the arms embargo and the UN's failure to hold to account the violators was a source of consternation for Salamé who had felt stifled by the international community (Author's interview with Megerisi, 2020). Germany's hosting of the Berlin Conference on 19 January 2020 was in tune with Berlin's foreign policy priorities in support of multilateralism and its lead role in enhancing Europe's geopolitical profile in its neighbourhood and in the world more broadly (Megerisi 2020d:37) .

The Berlin Conference was generally aimed at infusing coherence into the UN-led process by 'unifying the international community in their support for a peaceful solution to the Libyan crisis' and exerting pressure on external actors to halt their interference in the conflict supply of weapons to warring parties (Germany 2020). Bringing together a wide array of international and regional stakeholders, the Berlin conference affirmed the lead role of UNSMIL in mediation and the imperative for multilateral rules-based diplomacy as the main framework for engagement and coordination in the Libyan crisis along three parallel tracks. Drawing on Salamé's (2017) three-point plan which included a truce, an international high-level meeting and talks between Libyan conflict parties, the Berlin process was structured along a political track, a military/security track and an economic track. This multi-track approach was a pivotal aspect of the Berlin process and one that indicated an improvement of the UN's mediation strategy from the flawed 2015 LPA (Author's interview with Alunni, 2020). In addition to the parallel tracks, the Berlin process outlined commitments to strengthen the enforcement of the

arms embargo; the establishment of an International Follow-up Committee (IFC) made up of security, political, economic, international human rights law (IHRL) and international humanitarian law (IHL) working groups; and establishment of a ceasefire monitoring mechanism (Germany 2020).

To support the operationalization of the Berlin Conference conclusions, the IFC organized a series of meetings in its various clusters. First, the security working group, co-chaired by France, Italy, Turkey, UK and the AU, was focused on the establishment of a ceasefire monitoring mechanism to bolster the ceasefire agreement realized under the 5+5 Joint Military Commission made of LNA and GNA representatives. Complementary to the political track, the follow-up political working group co-chaired by Algeria, Germany and the League of Arab States was tasked with supporting the UNSMIL-facilitated intra-Libyan dialogue and the implementation of policy recommendations of the military and economic tracks. Third, the economic working group, co-chaired by Egypt, the US and the EU, was tasked with cooperating with the Libyan Experts Economic Commission to support implementation of key economic reforms such as unification of sovereign economic institutions, currency reforms and streamlining of funding for reconstruction and development (UNSMIL 2020b, par. 12-17). The Berlin Conference conclusions were endorsed by UNSC Resolution 2510 (2020), which underlined the call for international actors to cease supply of weapons to Libyan conflict parties, but fell short of calling out or condemning the states that continued to violate the arms embargo.

The Berlin Process has been hailed as a qualified success and pivotal step towards strengthening peacemaking efforts in Libya. However, beneath the veneer of international approval and perfunctory support, the Conference was held against the backdrop of airstrikes on GNA targets by Haftar's forces, shutdown of eastern oil ports following a LNA takeover and continued violation of the UN arms embargo. The facts on the ground seemed to indicate that the 'appeasement approach' towards Haftar had failed and that several foreign powers were paying lip-service to the UN-led process while shoring up their interests in Libya (Kausch 2020). For Mezran (as cited in Bibbo 2020), the Berlin Conference was a clear signal that the fate of Libya would be determined by foreign powers. The elevation of Haftar as a legitimate Libyan interlocutor not only played into his strategy to 'buy time', but also emboldened and legitimized his offensive on Tripoli. Furthermore, the international community's engagement was indicative of the traction of the 'strongman narrative' that had been pervaded by his French and Emirati backers (Mezran 2020). The international backers of Haftar had bought into the

narrative of authoritarian stability, packaged in a counter-terrorist and anti-Islamist agenda that resonated with the interests of the UAE, Egypt, France and Russia. However, as the GNA's counteroffensive prevailed and shifted the military balance of power on the ground, Haftar's allies adjusted their policies in favour of political arrangements that would be favourable to their long-term interests in Libya (Mezran & Cristiani 2020). The international community's accommodation of Haftar in a negotiated political settlement also points to the 'peacemaking dilemma' at the core of internationally-backed mediation efforts, linked to broader debates about the inclusion of 'villains' in power-sharing arrangements and the implicit trade-offs of peace and stability versus justice and accountability (Nathan 2020:474).

The momentum in the political track of the UN-led process culminated in LPDF held in Tunis from 9-15 November 2020. Drawing on the institutional framework set out in the 2015 LPA, the LPDF aimed at building consensus around a new executive authority in charge of the transitional period in the run-up to the planned elections on 24 December 2021, as well as the facilitation of the LPDF political roadmap (known as the 'the preparatory phase for a comprehensive solution') that would be the key reference point for a transitional government of national unity. A priority for UNSMIL in convening the LPDF was to ensure inclusivity, representativeness and ensuring that the political agreement was attuned to the needs and interests of the Libyan populace including marginalized groups, women, youth and civil society (UNSMIL 2020c).

The fragile peace held by a military and political stalemate, as well as sustained momentum across the three tracks of the UNSMIL-facilitated process has been a positive for the UN's mediation in the Libyan conflict. However, the strategic uncertainty of an internationalized conflict environment, compounded by the abundance of foreign and local spoilers called for cautious optimism. The path through the transitional period towards holding of elections at the end of 2021 is riven with procedural and institutional roadblocks, entanglements in international power plays by key foreign powerbrokers, fits and starts in the military and economic tracks and constant risk of relapse to armed conflict should the structural drivers of conflict remain unaddressed. A major concern is the issue of Libyan agency in the flurry of forums and summits, and the extent to which the legitimacy of the Libyan factions involved in negotiations was drawn from either international backing or military power (Hamdi 2020). The military contribution and entrenchment of external actors such as Turkey and Russia, who had inserted themselves into the Libyan conflict at the behest of the warring parties, has implications for the popular legitimacy of interim governments elected to steer the country out

of the transitional period. Since June 2020, the military build-up of Turkey and Russia in the strategic Sirte and Jufra areas, including shipments of military equipment, landing of combat aircraft, installation of new runways and planeloads of mercenaries are an ominous sign for the UN-backed ceasefire agreement that called for the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Libya. Nevertheless, the war weariness among both external sponsors and their local proxies, informed by the military stalemate on the ground, mitigate the risk of a return to violence in the short-term. Moreover, foreign actors have not signalled intent to ignite a new round of fighting, ostensibly leaning more towards a political solution that would not undermine their gains and long-term interests in Libya (ICG 2020c:3).

The interlinkages between the political, economic and security tracks of the UN-led peace process in Libya also point to how outcomes in one track have an impact on the other. For instance, the 23 October 2020 ceasefire agreement realised under the 5+5 JMC security track facilitated a conducive environment for the holding of the LPDF in Tunis under the political track. In a similar vein, the economic track, facilitated by the Economic Working Group, also made progress in December 2020 following a unified meeting of the Central Bank, a positive step towards reaching an agreement on oil revenue sharing and implementation of the economic reforms on issues such as exchange rates, unification of sovereign institutions and economic diversification (Dorda *et al* 2020d: 17). Ultimately, the guarantor of the success of the peace process is national reconciliation and a novel social contract grounded on transitional justice and social cohesion processes. The establishment of the UN Independent Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) in Libya in 23 June 2020, was a notable development in support of accountability and the rule of law. Mandated to investigate and document violations and abuses of IHRL and IHL by both state and non-state actors in Libya since the beginning of 2016, the FFM is an accountability mechanism that is central to efforts to put an end to impunity, to strengthen the criminal justice system and support transitional justice processes (ICJ 2021).

4.5. The use of sanctions as a conflict management tool

A noteworthy observation in the conflict management and resolution literature and in practice is that in various conflict situations, more than one conflict management approach is often employed resulting in varied patterns of interactions, sequencing and effects across conflict management trajectories (Greig *et al* 2019: 258). For instance, mediation is often implemented alongside coercive approaches such as sanctions, and peace operations are deployed in support of peace agreements or ceasefires. The Libyan case is illustrative of the utilisation of two

conflict management approaches namely, mediation and sanctions, with various individual and compound effects in efforts to resolve the conflict. The imposition of sanctions, including an arms embargo on Libya since 2011, has both complemented and complicated mediation in several instances, pointing to the need for deeper analysis into the dynamics of utilising UN sanctions and UN-backed mediation processes in conjunction and how to enhance complementary and overall effectiveness of both approaches (Biersteker et al. 2019:1). The logic of sanctions lies in the ability of third parties, such as the UN or regional organizations, to pressure conflict parties to get to the negotiating table by imposing costs for continuation of conflict or non-participation in talks. In contrast with military interventions, sanctions are seen as a relatively low-cost strategy to maximize pressure on warring parties while limiting costs borne by third parties (Greig *et al* 2019: 86). Furthermore, when used in a coordinated and coherent manner, sanctions may also enhance mediation efforts, push parties towards a negotiated settlement and foster compliance with a peace agreement by threatening spoilers or actors seeking to undermine an agreement (Biersteker et al. 2019:13).

The main objectives of sanctions include: (i) restricting the military behaviour of a target ; (ii) undermining the target's political regime; (iii) resolving a territorial dispute; (iv) severing access to arms and weapons; and (v) constraining a target state's support of non-state armed groups or terrorist groups (Greig *et al* 2019: 88). Although sanctions are mostly applied to pressure conflict parties towards peace, external actors can also utilise sanctions for self-interested motives such as politically-driven messaging in being seen as 'doing something' in the face of conflict that results in humanitarian crises, atrocities against civilians or increased refugee flows (Alagna 2020:2). In addition to conflict management objectives, sanctions can also be applied in support of counter-terrorism, transitional government support and civilian protection for instance the travel ban and asset freeze in 2011 targeting Gaddafi and close associates of his regime (Biersteker *et al.* 2019:16). Sanctions can be comprehensive, aimed at the broader population of a target state and can include commodity embargoes (focused on specific products such as oil), or comprehensive embargoes which entail asset freezes, suspension of loans and foreign aid and trade restrictions. On the other hand, targeted or smart sanctions are aimed at the target's political elite, as opposed to a state's civilian population, and are seen as being more effective than traditional sanctions and more humanitarian by minimizing negative impact on the general population (Drezner 2015: 758). Examples of targeted sanctions include travel bans and asset freezes against particular political elites and financial restrictions (Greig *et al* 2019: 94). A marked increase in the use of targeted sanctions

by the UN since the mid-1990s has been informed by normative developments such as the principle of individual criminal responsibility that gained traction in the 2000s as well as the design of targeted sanctions intended to maximize pressure on responsible individuals while minimizing suffering of civilians, and to minimize costs on sending states (Giumelli 2015: 1354). Even with the turn towards sanctions in the post-Cold War period, the effectiveness of targeted sanctions vis-à-vis comprehensive sanctions and the implications for principles in international law such as due process and effective remedy has been the subject of academic debate with a view to linking theory and practice (Giumelli 2015: 1354).

Pertinent to Libya, a critical analysis of sanctions and their effectiveness with respect to the objective of conflict management will be focused on three ‘distinguishable episodes within a conflict’ (Biersteker *et al.* 2019: 4) between 2011 and 2020, specifically the UN sanctions targeting Gaddafi and his associates (February 2011-October 2011); the UN-led process that led to the finalization of the LPA (2014-2015), and the UN mediation efforts as part of the 2020 Berlin process (January–December 2020). A number of pertinent questions are central to analysis of the effectiveness of sanctions, including how effective are UN sanctions in yielding compliance from targets by applying pressure? Did the UN arms embargo limit flow of arms to embargoed target? In what ways do sanctions complement mediation efforts? (Biersteker *et al.* 2019:4).

4.5.1. UNSC Resolution 1970: implementation, monitoring and enforcement of UN targeted sanctions

At the onset of the Libyan uprising in February 2011, one of the first responses of the UNSC to the crisis in Libya was the imposition of sanctions against the Gaddafi regime. Adopted on 26 February 2011, UNSC Resolution 1970 imposed an arms embargo on Libya as well as travel bans and asset freezes on Gaddafi’s family and his associates. The arms embargo was intended to prohibit the supply or transfer of lethal arms and related materiel. The travel bans were imposed on a list of 16 individuals linked to the Gaddafi regime (Annex II S/RES/1970), complemented by an asset freeze on funds, financial assets and economic resources owned by targeted individuals. The listing criteria for the sanctions were identified as human rights violations and planning or conducting attacks against civilians (S/RES/1970, par. 22). In line with UN practice in the administration and monitoring of sanctions, a Sanctions Committee was established to monitor the implementation of measures outlined under the UNSC Resolution 1970, and to regularly report suspected and reported violations of the sanctions regime. The Sanctions Committee is also responsible for the commissioning of independent

expert consultants to serve on a UN Panel of Experts which was mandated to: conduct investigations with respect to the sanctions regime in question; meet with targeted state officials; and liaise with regional stakeholders and consult with the relevant Sanctions Committee, the UN Secretariat and UN political missions in providing reports on implementation of the sanctions regime and capacity-building recommendations to assist target state in implementing measures such as arms embargo (LeBrun & Rigual 2016:11). The composition of UN Panel of Experts are determined by the set of measures applied under a particular sanctions regime and can range from experts in arms control to finance and international humanitarian experts. Experts are normally drawn from a roster maintained by the UN Secretariat and final candidates have to be approved by the relevant Sanctions Committee and the UNSC (LeBrun & Rigual 2016:13). The Panel of Experts on Libya, assisting the Sanctions Committee established pursuant to UNSC Resolution 1970, conducted investigations and submitted annual reports on the implementation of measures, incidents of non-compliance and provided recommendations to the UNSC, UN member states, the Sanctions Committee and Libya on ways of enhancing effectiveness and implementation of the arms embargo, travel bans, asset freezes and the prevention of efforts to illicitly export petroleum (UNSC 2019: Annex I).

4.5.2. Monitoring and implementation of the arms embargo on Libya

The sanctions regime and measures imposed by the UNSC on Libya have been subject to regular reviews and modifications in view of changing conflict dynamics and adaptive tactics of external and internal violators. Since the adoption of the arms embargo under Resolution 1970 (2011), there have been a series of relaxations and tightening in line with realities on the ground and recommendations put forward by the Panel of Experts. For instance, in 2011, S/RES/2009 (para. 13) introduced additional exemptions to the arms embargo to include arms and materiel for security and disarmament assistance to the NTC on condition of advanced notification to the Sanctions Committee. Resolution 2009 (2011) also removed the Libyan National Oil Corporation (NOC) and Zueitina Oil Company from the list of entities subject to the asset freeze. In Resolution 2095 (2013, para. 9-10) the UNSC eased the arms embargo with reference to ‘supply of non-lethal military equipment for humanitarian or protective forces and for capacity-building for the security sector of the Libyan transitional government.’ In 2014, the second phase of civil war between the Dawn faction (allied with the GNC) and the Operation Dignity faction (allied with Haftar) led to an increased demand for weapons by both

sides, which saw an uptick in transfers of weapons and materiel by external actors such as UAE, Turkey, Egypt, Qatar and Russia to conflict parties (UNSC 2015: 36-44).

The types of weapons supplied to conflict parties in Libya included combat aircraft such as Egyptian Mi-8 helicopters and MiG-21F jets, armoured personnel carriers from the UAE, anti-tank guided missiles and several shipments of ammunition and assault weapons (UNSC 2015 37-44). The notification procedure outlined by UNSC Resolution 2009 (2011) soon faced the problem of multiple procurement channels and lack of coordination between the Ministries of Defence and Interior which heightened the risk of diversion and misuse of notified arms transfers. Of particular concern was the transfer of weapons to militias and revolutionary brigades that had been co-opted under parallel institutions such as the Supreme Security Committee and the Libya Shield Force which led to stockpiling of weapons by armed groups across the country, feeding the cycle of violence and prolonged conflict. The confusion surrounding end-users of arms shipments also gave room for diversion of weapons deliveries to armed groups as on 16 April 2014 when an EU shipment of ammunition and weapons intended for the European Border Assistance Mission went missing at the Tripoli International Airport and ended up in the hands of the armed groups in control of the airport (UNSC 2015:35).

A major incident in March 2014 that led to tightening of the Libyan sanctions regime was the case of the Morning Glory sea vessel which was seized by American forces off the coast of Cyprus after breaking through the Libyan navy blockade. On orders of the head of the Petroleum facilities Guard, Ibrahim Jadran, the Morning Glory tanker was illegally loaded with 234,000 barrels of crude oil from the Barqa Council-controlled port of Sidra and set off for international waters in an attempt to export oil outside authority of the NOC (Stephen 2014). Following the Morning Glory incident, the UNSC adopted Resolution 2146 (2014a) which enabled the Sanctions Committee to designate vessels attempting to illicitly export crude oil from Libya and authorized member states to conduct inspections of designated vessels. However, the Panel of Experts noted that the designation mechanism outlined under Resolution 2146 remained ineffective due to lack of capacity of the Libyan transitional government. The measures to prevent illicit export of crude oil were later expanded to cover refined petroleum products (UNSC 2017).

Further modification of the arms embargo was stipulated in Resolution 2174 (UNSC 2014b, para. 5) which outlined additional designation criteria of individuals or entities who violated

provisions of Resolution 1970. Resolution 2174 also bolstered the arms embargo by requiring advance approval of the Committee for the ‘supply, sale or transfer of arms and related materiel including related ammunition and spare parts intended for training or disarmament assistance to the Libyan government’ (para. 8). The UNSC also called on states neighbouring Libya to undertake inspections in support of the arms embargo on Libya and to submit findings and reports of inspections to the Sanctions Committee (UNSC 2014b, para.9). In spite of the provisions for inspection of vessels on the high seas off Libya, which was later expanded to include inspections of outbound and inbound vessels of Libya suspected to be ‘directly or indirectly’ carrying arms in violation of the arms embargo (UNSC 2016a, para. 3), the inspections had two major shortcomings. One, in spite of the additional support of the EU naval Operation Sophia to implementation of the UN arms embargo on Libya, Operation Sophia was beset by a shortfall in naval assets which limited its mandate to supporting tasks of training the Libyan coast guard and navy and surveillance of illegal trafficking of oil exports from Libya (Tardy 2017:2). The second shortcoming of the enforcement mechanisms of the arms embargo had to do with the textual omission of the UNSC Resolutions which covered only maritime supply and non-compliance but failed to target ground-based and aerial supply routes of arms. By failing to curb the continuous trafficking of arms via land and air ports, an issue that had been flagged by the Panel of Experts since 2012, the violators of the arms embargo capitalized on this monitoring oversight to furnish Libyan conflict parties with broad range of military equipment and weapons (Kirechu 2021).

The aerial supply routes of weapons to Libyan proved particularly crucial between 2019-2020 in the wake of Haftar’s assault on Tripoli launched in April 2019 which played out mostly as an air campaign with ground support from LNA forces and foreign mercenaries. Haftar’s principal external backers, the UAE, Egypt, Russia and France, transferred weapons to the LNA using military and commercial aircraft and via land across the vast Libyan-Egyptian border. As noted by the Panel of Experts report in December 2019 (UNSC 2019:40), arms transfers to Libya, including delivery of armed drones from UAE and Turkey took advantage of the absence of an inspections regime at airports and military bases, sometimes making use of civilian aircraft as military cargo aircraft. By focusing on maritime enforcement of the arms embargo while leaving aerial and ground routes unchecked, the implementation of the arms embargo was also criticized for targeting Turkey for its regular military shipments to the GNA by sea. The selective enforcement of the maritime dimension of the arms embargo at the expense of Turkey also underlined the ineffectiveness of the EU’s naval mission,

EUNAVFORMED Irini which was launched on 31 March 2020 to support implementation of the UN arms embargo in accordance with Resolution 2292. Following the Berlin Conference which called for an end to foreign military support to conflict parties in Libya and for enhanced enforcement of the arms embargo, the EU viewed Operation Irini as a means of re-asserting its geopolitical relevance in resolving a crisis in its southern neighbourhood. However, as will be highlighted in the subsequent section, the EU's Operation Irini was impeded by division and inertia in the EU's policy towards Libya, as well as operational difficulties in controlling naval routes and lack of naval resources in support of the mission (Bertolotti 2020). As a result, the UN's flawed enforcement mechanism in curbing flows of weapons into Libya was not only criticized for its targeting of Turkey, but it also undermined the UN's credibility as an impartial mediator in peace initiatives given the leeway afforded to key violators of the arms embargo in supplying to Haftar and his forces.

The failure of the arms embargo was also highlighted by the UNSC's reticence to publicly condemn and bring to account the violators of the arms embargo, in spite of technical and circumstantial evidence that pointed to the UAE, Turkey, Egypt and Russia as consistent violators as documented by UN monitors since 2011 (Walsh 2020). This reluctance to name and shame violators is inextricably linked to the internationalization of the Libyan conflict and the jockeying by foreign powers who had provided extensive military support to the Libyan conflict parties. The lack of accountability had also seen diplomatic cover-up by P5 members such as Russia and France who shielded the UAE from public condemnation and from being singled out in UN reports about the breaches of the arms embargo. Taken together, the operational challenges, weak enforcement and politicization of the UN arms embargo on Libya has led to its labelling as a 'joke' by acting SRSG Stephanie Williams (Irish and Siebold 2020) and exposed major shortcoming in the UN's approach to enforcement of arms embargoes. The deficiencies around selective enforcement, as well as failure of accountability for violators also extends to UN arms embargoes in other conflict situations such as Somalia, DRC, CAR, Yemen and South Sudan, and calls for lesson-sharing and critical analysis of the UN's implementation of arms embargo as part of a comprehensive approach to conflict resolution (Vorrath 2020:4).

4.5.3. Sanctions in support of the political transition

In addition to stemming the flow of weapons to Libya by imposing the arms embargo, the sanctions regime over Libya was also aimed at individuals or entities 'engaging in or providing support for other acts that threaten the peace, stability or security of Libya or obstruct or

undermine the successful completion of its political transition’ (UNSC 2014b, par 4). UNSC resolution 2174 (par. 4(a)-(d)) identified the acts that threatened Libyan peace, stability or security or undermined the political transition process as: the planning and commission of violations of IHRL and IHL; attacks on critical infrastructure such as airports, seaports or Libyan state institutions and foreign missions in Libya; and recruitment of foreign mercenaries and support for international terrorist groups and individuals operating in Libya. The addition of these criteria to the UN sanctions regime in Libya in 2015 was crucial for the success of the UN mediation efforts that led to the signing of the LPA in 2015. At the time when SRSF Leon attempted to restart talks between the GNC and HoR in the hopes of generating consensus for a unity government, the draft political agreement was beset by vehement opposition by hardliners on both sides and by July 2015 the political process was on the verge of collapse. In addition to the local-level challenges to the implementation of the LPA, the political divide between international and regional actors that backed the both sides of the rival governments in Libya also undermined broad support of the internationally-recognized GNA and exacerbated fragmentation and polarization at the local level (UNSC 2016b: 11). To buttress the mediation strategy and strengthen momentum for peace talks, the UN adapted its sanctions approach by including non-cooperation in peace talks as a listing criterion. Although the threat of sanctions for actors undermining the political process may have helped advance talks towards conclusion of a political agreement, deadlock in the UNSC over listings undermined the broader effect of sanctions as a complementary tool to mediation, and may have inadvertently strengthened the resolve of hardliners such as Haftar to remain uncooperative with UN-led talks (Biersteker *et al* 2019:38).

In sum, the lack of teeth of UN sanctions on Libya to support the mediation process, including inability of the UNSC to agree on individuals or entities to be listed, resulted in a missed opportunity for the dual application of sanctions and mediation as part of a potentially effective approach to conflict resolution. The continued violation of the arms embargo by foreign powers, emboldened by internal divisions within the UNSC also points to the glaring need for coherence in the UN’s approach to the Libya conflict; constant review of the implementation of the sanctions regime in consultation with the Sanctions Committee, the Panel of Experts and UN missions on the ground; flexibility and careful consideration of the interaction between sanctions and mediation and effect on the UN’s peacemaking strategy (Biersteker *et al* 2019:28).

As the Libyan case has shown, particularly with reference to use of sanctions as a tool to deter spoilers or as a means of cutting off supply of weapons to conflict parties, the UN sanctions regime on Libya has been a failure both in terms of threat and implementation. Since the imposition of the sanctions in 2011, apart from the designations on Gaddafi and his family and associates, travel bans and asset freezes were imposed on two Eritrean nationals in June 2018 for human trafficking (UNSC 2018), as well as on the commander of the Petroleum Facilities Guard, Ibrahim Jadran, for attacks on oil ports in the Libyan oil crescent (Zaptia 2018). It is quite telling that actors such as Haftar or member states who have been implicated in violations of the arms embargo have evaded designation or even criticism as a result of the politicization of the UN sanctions regime on Libya and the disunity in the UNSC. Ultimately, the effectiveness of sanctions depends on the design of the relevant sanctions regime, the commitment and credibility of senders and target's perception of the costs of sanctions versus costs of non-compliance (Greig *et al* 2019: 98). For instance, the shielding of Haftar by his external backers in the UNSC not only strengthened his resolve for military victory and recalcitrance towards negotiations, but also exposed the poor follow-through of the UNSC on enforcement of its sanctions regime on Libya.

4.6. Conflict management by select international and regional actors: EU, US, Arab League and AU

Alongside the UN-led mediation efforts in Libya, there were various initiatives at the regional and international levels in support of a political solution to the conflict in Libya. At the regional level, Libya's neighbours convened a series of ministerial-level meetings since the signing of the 2015 LPA that reaffirmed their support for the UN-led process and voiced opposition to foreign military intervention in Libya (UNSMIL 2017). There was also a Quartet on Libya since 2016 comprised of the AU, EU, League of Arab States and the UN to ensure coordination of efforts and promote a complementary international and regional approach to advance the political process and to support the Libyan political transition (UNSMIL 2017a). The AU High-Level Committee on Libya made up of the Presidents of the Congo Republic (Chair), South Africa, Chad, Algeria and Egypt was also engaged in the search for a political solution to the Libyan conflict. The AU put forward a proposal that included a Roadmap for Libya, an Inter-Libyan dialogue bringing together all the conflict parties and Libyan national reconciliation conference (PSC 2017). The multiplication of mediation initiatives complemented the UN-led

process at times and in other moments complicated the UN's lead role and added to the complexity of peacemaking given the proliferation of interlocutors and dialogues. For example, Egypt hosted several rounds of talks from December 2016 which brought together Libyan military officers to discuss command structures in a unified army. Apart from the bias in favour of Haftar in Egyptian-led talks, the initiative by Egypt ran parallel to the UNSMIL's efforts to initiate a security dialogue track that sought to engage with armed groups to discuss SSR and DDR initiatives as key components of the UN-led peace process (Lacher 2018b:5).

4.6.1. The EU's policy towards Libya: prioritization of quick-fix solutions and the politics of containment

The EU's response to the Libyan conflict was mostly characterised by lack of cohesion, underpinned by inertia and division among EU member states who have pursued competing interests and goals in Libya. Since the end of the NATO-led operation in 2011, the most active EU member states in Libya – France, UK, Germany and Italy, were split between those who called for greater involvement in post-intervention Libya including possible deployment of civil-military missions within the framework of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP); and those who preferred a limited role centred on targeted development assistance and capacity-building (Fabbrini 2014:186). Given the nature of foreign policy as the domain of member states in the EU post-Lisbon institutional and decision-making framework, the diplomatic and political engagement of EU member states in Libya since 2011 has pointed to three main policy drivers. The focal points of EU foreign policy have been migration, counter-terrorism and geopolitics, drawing from the preferences of individual member states and public sentiments of domestic constituents. Although development assistance and capacity-building in sectors such as security, local governance and public service delivery were offered as part of the EU's crisis management package, the bulk of resources were geared towards securitized approaches to migration, border control and management and quick-impact projects for development and stabilization (Loschi *et al* 2018:16).

From a different viewpoint, the lack of a cohesive EU policy towards Libya in the post-2011 period is reflective of the structural dilemmas and tensions at the heart of EU decision-making with regard to defence and security policies (Fabbrini 2014:188) and the challenges of collective decision-making pertinent to the EU's political and diplomatic engagement in Libya. In fact, the Libyan crisis presented the first litmus-test for the EU's new foreign policy following the Lisbon Treaty which entered into effect in 2009 and entailed a major overhaul of

the EU's foreign and security policy. In brief, the Lisbon Treaty reforms included: (i) the formalization of a dual decision-making regime (supranational regarding single market policies and intergovernmental regarding foreign and security policies); (ii) redefined decision-making and coordination role for the European Council and the European Parliament; (iii) formalization of a dual role for the High Representative of the European External Action Service (EEAS) to coordinate and implement EU foreign policy in liaison with the European Commission (Smith 2020:239; Fabbrini 2014:177). In other words, the Lisbon Treaty maintained the intergovernmental logic in the EU foreign and security policies embodied in the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) while reaffirming the principles of unanimity and voluntary coordination in decision-making (Morillas 2019:33). The CFSP is the guiding framework for the EU's foreign and security policies (excluding the Commission's areas of EU external action) and member states are obliged to support the CFSP and refrain from actions that are contrary to its interests and goals (Article 24 Treaty of the EU). The European Council operationalizes the CFSP through decisions defining the EU position on a range of geographical and thematic issues, as well as through operational actions namely the appointment of EU Special Representatives and the deployment of crisis management operations within the CSDP framework (Keukeleire & Delreux 2014:161). Hence, the CSDP is a sub-policy of the CFSP which provided the EU with civilian, police and military instruments to deploy crisis prevention, crisis management and post-conflict missions. The CSDP military operations and civilian missions are limited to conflict prevention, peacekeeping and strengthening international security drawing on civilian and military assets provided by member states. As part of the EU's comprehensive approach to crisis management, the CSDP outlines the type of military tasks and functions that the EU can undertake which include: humanitarian and rescue tasks; conflict prevention and peacekeeping tasks; military advice and assistance tasks; joint disarmament operations and peacemaking and post-conflict stabilization tasks (EEAS 2020a).

The intergovernmental character of the EU's approach to foreign and security policies has often underlined the structural and institutional dilemmas of collective action (Fabbrini 2014:188). Furthermore, the requirement of unanimity in intergovernmental foreign and security decision-making, coupled with divergent preferences of member states has limited the role of the EU as an effective geopolitical actor with regard to crises in its neighbourhood such as Libya. The tension between unilateral national interests and European interests has led to inertia and marginalization of a European role and capacity to shape events on the ground. For instance,

in the immediate aftermath of Gaddafi's ouster, the inability of the EU to frame a cohesive approach towards Libya particularly with regard to deployment of a CSDP civilian-military mission led to the side-lining of the EU by more assertive international and regional actors such as Turkey, Russia and the UAE (Kausch 2020).

The pattern of CSDP missions corresponding to structural foreign policy issues such as security sector reform, rule of law or capacity-building assistance also highlights the expectation-capacity gap of the EU response measures in Libya among local beneficiaries, international partners and European audiences. In practice, the predominant focus on containment of migration flows to Europe and combatting violent extremism has taken precedence over longer-term strategic objectives such as SSR, DDR and statebuilding, essentially signalling a shift in priorities 'from conflict transformation to containment' (Loschi *et al* 2018:3). The preference for quick-fix solutions and quick-impact development projects is evident in the array of activities that formed the EU's crisis response and crisis management approach to post-revolutionary Libya. The EU's activities in Libya have included CSDP missions such as EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia (2015-2020), EUBAM Libya, EUNAVFOR MED Operation Iriini (2020-2021), the EU Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF) and humanitarian assistance delivered through the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations Directorate General (ECHO).

The 2015 migrant crisis turned out to be a major catalyst for EU action in response to the Libyan crisis after years of internal division and debate over an EU military presence in Libya in the aftermath of the NATO-led intervention. In many ways, the limited European engagement in Libya was both as a result of rejection of foreign boots on the ground by the transitional authorities in Libya, as well as the resonance of a light footprint approach among international actors. However, as the failure of the political transition became evident in the drift towards civil war in 2014, Libya's positioning as a key transit hub for migrants elevated it on the list of European security priorities. Political and popular pressure for the EU to do something in the face of the migrant crisis in the Mediterranean resulted in the launch of the EU's Operation Sophia in May 2015. Operation Sophia's core mandate was 'to disrupt the business model of smuggling and human trafficking in the southern central Mediterranean and prevent further loss of lives at sea' (EEAS 2020b). The mandate was implemented in four phases which included information gathering and patrolling to detect migration networks; search, seizure and diversion of suspected vessels on the high seas and in the territorial waters of Libya; and taking measures against a vessel. In June 2016, the mandate was adjusted to add

two supporting tasks- capacity-building and training of the Libyan coast guard and contributing to the implementation of the UN arms embargo on Libya in accordance with UNSC Resolution 2292 (2016) (Council of the EU 2016). The mandate was amended once again in July 2017 (Council of the EU 2017) to include surveillance activities and information gathering on illegal trafficking of oil exports from Libya in line with UNSC Resolutions 2146 (2014) and 2362 (2017). A number of operational challenges undermined the operationalization of Operation Sophia's mandate including, non-consent from Libyan authorities with regard to operations in territorial waters and the lack of coercive capacity to counter adaptive tactics of smugglers hence unintentionally becoming a pull factor by appearing as a safer route (Tardy 2017:4). The flaws in the inspection mechanisms of the UN sanctions regime also limited the deterrent function of the Operation and constrained it to mostly surveillance and information-gathering tasks (Loschi *et al* 2018:5). The political tensions within the EU also came into full view with the withdrawal of search and rescue (SAR) activities from Operation Sophia's mandate in light of public outcry against SAR which were deemed as a pull factor (Alagna 2020:4). The lessened European interest in SAR activities and humanitarian aspects point to the politics of emergency at the core of the EU's approach to migration and the securitization logic underpinning the EU's interventionist response to the crisis that was unfolding in Libya.

Closely aligned to the framing of the migrant crisis as an emergency, the EU's crisis response in Libya also focused on border management through the establishment of the EU Border Assistance Mission in Libya (EUBAM) on 22 May 2013. EUBAM's mandate entailed supporting Libyan authorities in developing border management and security through training, advising and mentoring in areas such as intra and inter-agency cooperation, risk management methods and customs best practices, among others (EEAS 2020c). The 2017 Strategic Review of EUBAM (EEAS 2017) not only underlined the correlation between 'SSR assistance, stabilization and border control and management' but also expanded EUBAM's mandate to include support to SSR and strengthening the rule of law. The biggest challenge to EU-sponsored SSR stemmed from the hybridity of Libya's security sector and the institutional fragmentation which had complicated the integration of security sector actors and made DDR programs difficult to implement (Badi 2020a: 7). The institutional and security realities on the ground also hampered EUBAM's capacity to match local needs with externally-imposed guidelines which impacted overall effectiveness and outcomes in practice (Loschi *et al* 2018:11).

The EU also adopted a development-centric approach in tandem with the securitized approach to migration and border control, evidenced by the establishment of the EU Emergency Trust Fund (EUTF) in November 2015 ‘to address the root causes of instability, forced displacement in Africa and irregular migration and to contribute to better migration management’ (EC 2020a). The EUTF focused on three regions of Africa – the Sahel and Lake Chad; the Horn of Africa and North Africa, covering 26 countries. As part of its North Africa programmatic focus, the EUTF allocated a total of €455 million for 13 projects in Libya between 2015 and 2020 targeting voluntary humanitarian repatriation for migrants, humanitarian evacuation, community stabilization through improved access to basic services, education and training, programmes for youth and capacity-building for border management. Notably, the bulk of funding (52%) was directed at projects for protection and assistance to migrants, refugees and host communities (EC 2020b). The projects were implemented in cooperation with Libyan municipalities as well as international partners such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM), United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), among others. The prioritization of Libya in the EUTF North Africa window highlighted the increased importance of the EUTF as a pivotal tool of EU action in Libya, translating to higher amounts of resource allocation compared to other crisis response tools. Arguably, the oversized focus on migration was indicative of the extent to which ‘Europeans had been arrested by the migrant crisis’ and how ‘everything became about migration and the projects being implemented in Libya had to have a migration spin on it’ (Author’s interview with Megerisi, 2020). Moreover, the strategy of structuring development projects and community stabilization projects via migration-centric projects may be a ‘double-edged sword’ that may foster competition and opportunism among local actors in the context of contested legitimacy, weak social cohesion and power struggles between the centre and periphery (Loschi *et al* 2018:17).

Through the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operation (ECHO) Directorate General, the EU provided humanitarian assistance to Libya, totalling to € 75.3 million since 2011 aimed at victims of war including vulnerable groups such as migrants, refugees and IDPs. EU humanitarian support has been provided in the form of cash assistance, provision of emergency healthcare, psychosocial support and education (EC 2020c). EU humanitarian assistance has been implemented in partnership with UN agencies, the ICRC and international aid agencies. A major criticism of the EU’s humanitarian assistance programme through ECHO has been the accuracy of the needs assessment constrained by lack of access and the

complications for local ownership and effective monitoring and evaluation (Loschi *et al* 2018:20).

Overall, between 2014 and 2020, European engagement in Libya was dominated by activities of individual member states with the EU being limited to ‘lending administrative weight’ to collective policy positions such as combatting migration or implementing quick impact development projects aimed at fostering stabilization (Megerisi 2020d:32). Pertinent to other international actors such as the UN, the EU’s policy positions have also contributed to ‘signal boosting’ UN resolutions on issues such as imposition of sanctions or in support of UN-led mediation initiatives such as the Skhirat process that led to the signing of the LPA (Megerisi 2020d:32). The international pressure to finalize the LPA also marked the ‘last moment of Western consensus politics on Libya’ given the intensified pursuit of individual interests by European states particularly Italy and France who found themselves on opposing sides of the GNA-LNA/ east-west divide in Libya. France’s support to Haftar despite publicly declared support to the GNA and Macron’s unilateral mediation efforts to bring Haftar and Sarraj for talks collided with SRSF Salamé’s action plan and forced the EU and other international stakeholders to embrace an acquiescence with regard to engaging Haftar as a legitimate Libyan interlocutor. Put differently, the French unilateral move to accommodate Haftar in talks not only presented European counterparts with a *fait accompli*, but also undermined the UN’s mediation strategy by pressing for elections within a short timeframe, running the risk of hardening the resolve of belligerents to continue fighting (Daragahi and Trew 2020).

In the wake of Haftar’s advance on Tripoli in 2019 and the GNA’s plea for military reinforcement from its international backers, Turkey’s decisive entry into the fray and its military backing to the GNA, underpinned by a maritime demarcation deal, jolted the EU into action. Germany’s hosting of the Berlin conference in 2020 was seen as means of ‘bringing Europe back into the game’ and promoting rules-based multilateralism in the face of competing forums by Turkey and Russia (Kausch 2020). While some commentators saw the Berlin Process as a turning point for European foreign policy in Libya, as seen with the launch of EU naval Operation Irini to support implementation of the UN arms embargo in Libya (Herszenhorn *et al* 2020), the centrifugal forces of competing member state interests fed the politicization of Operation Irini whose role in maritime enforcement was seen as targeting Turkey, which was engaged in geopolitical competition with Cyprus and Greece over the gas-rich east Mediterranean. Overall, the EU’s tunnel vision with regard to Libya, focused on migration and counterterrorism ultimately led to its side-lining as a relevant geopolitical actor

with the ability to follow through on collective action. It is this reactive policy that has fostered a symbolic EU policy towards Libya that is mostly short-sighted and inward-looking.

4.6.2. The US' policy and engagement in Libya: from 'no ownership' to 'active neutrality'

The US' policy towards Libya in the aftermath of the NATO-led intervention drew on the 'leading from behind' policy that had informed the US' contribution to the 'coalition of the willing' that implemented the no-fly zone over Libya authorised by UNSC Resolution 1973 (Smith 2011). The pivotal role of the US in Operation Odyssey which began on 19 March 2011 (and also included the UK and France) comprised mostly of air support with eventual transition of command to NATO's Operation Unified Protector on 31 March 2011 (NATO 2011b). As the NTC commenced the transitional period following the revolutionaries' victory over the Gaddafi regime, the US scaled down engagement in Libya opting to relegate post-intervention stabilization and transition support to the Europeans and Libyan authorities. In addition to the US' broader disengagement from the MENA region, Libya was peripheral in terms of US interests which meant minimal resources were invested in the region. The US' diplomatic absence left room for more assertive geopolitical actors like Russia and Turkey and also revealed Washington's acquiescence and unwillingness to dissuade its allies in the Middle East from meddling in the Libyan conflict (Wehrey 2020a:9). Premised on the policy of 'no ownership' that had gained traction under the Obama administration, between 2011 and 2014 the US embassy in Libya provided support to the fledgling Libyan civil society and backed municipal and legislative elections.

As civil war erupted in 2014, ISIS capitalized on the security vacuum and moved to gain a foothold in Sirte. The looming terrorist threat jolted Western powers into action evidenced by the pressure on the SRSG to finalize the LPA that would see the GNA set up in Tripoli. For Western powers, a unity government in Tripoli was of paramount importance as they needed a local partner to implement counterterrorism measures as well as stemming the migrant flow via Libya (ICG 2016:8). In 2016, the US lent military support in the form of airpower to the Misratan-led GNA operation against ISIS which successfully ousted the terrorists from Sirte (Pargeter 2017:12). As the ISIS threat faded from 2017, the foreign balance of power shifted as Haftar's foreign backers doubled down on their military and financial support with a view to bolstering the LNA's political clout and leverage over the beleaguered GNA in Tripoli. Buoyed by his military successes in eastern and southern Libya, Haftar's surprise advance on

Tripoli in 2019 was met with quiet approval from his sponsors, and even saw a phone call from President Trump who gave Haftar the green light for his counterterrorism efforts (Wehrey 2020a:26). The divisions within the UNSC were also on display as the US, France and Russia blocked a UK-sponsored draft resolution that called for a ceasefire in Libya and for Haftar to end his offensive to seize Tripoli (Nichols 2019).

The internationalization of the conflict including dominant use of combat drones and massive deliveries of weapons into Libya in violation of the UN arms embargo were glaring signs of the West turning a blind eye to Libya (Megerisi 2020e) and opting to ‘give war a chance’ in leading up to a military stalemate (Lacher 2021:10). The turning point came in 2020 with the deployment of Turkish military support to the GNA counteroffensive against Haftar’s LNA, eventually leading to a military balance of power and a ceasefire in August 2020. America’s reticence was evident throughout this period – not only did Washington fail to take a tougher line in getting its Middle East allies to stop meddling in Libya, but it also stopped short of calling out Abu Dhabi for its flagrant violation of the arms embargo on Libya.

The absence of a clear US policy towards Libya under the Trump administration resulted in knee-jerk and contradictory signals, with Trump’s overtures to the UAE and Turkey on one hand while the US State Department maintained that a policy of ‘active neutrality’ would inform its engagement with Libya’s conflict parties (Al Arabiya 2020). Signs of a policy shift became evident in July 2020 when the US Treasury imposed sanctions on Russian Wagner Group owner, Yevgeniy Prigozhin, whose mercenaries were active in Libya (TRT World 2020). The US also threatened Haftar with sanctions following his seizure of eastern Libya oil ports resulting in months-long blockade on oil production (Al Araby 2020). On 19 November 2020, the US House of Representatives passed the Libya Stabilization Act (H.R.4644) aimed at supporting the political transition in Libya through sanctions and provision of economic assistance. The Bill, which had been introduced by Rep. Ted Deutch and Rep. Joe Wilson, provided for the US President to impose sanctions on individuals and entities supporting deployment of foreign mercenaries in Libya or violating the arms embargo. The Bill also allowed the provision of humanitarian aid to Libya by the US Agency for International Development and tasked the US State Department to support efforts to strengthen Libya’s democratic governance by providing assistance to civil society, Libya’s financial and governing institutions and electoral body (Libyan American Alliance 2020). In sum, US policy towards Libya (2011-2020) has been characterised by what former US assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern Affairs, Jeffrey Feltman, has termed ‘a Libya allergy’ which resulted in

a series of missed opportunities for high-profile diplomatic leadership in support of conflict resolution (Lynch 2021).

4.6.3. The Quartet on Libya

To enhance coordination among regional and international stakeholders, a Quartet group was formed in 2017 which consisted of the AU, EU, UN and the League of Arab States (LAS) (UNSMIL 2017b). The Quartet reiterated support for the UN-led process under the framework of the LPA and endorsed the UN Action Plan put forward by SRSG Salamé (UNSMIL 2018).

Like the AU, the LAS has come under criticism for serving as nothing more than a talk shop with regard to the marginal role it has played in response to the Libyan conflict. The LAS support for the imposition of a no-fly zone over Libya in 2011 has been seen as an open door to the foreign interference that became entrenched in the course of conflict in Libya. Divisions among LAS member states have also eroded consensus with regard to policy on Libya, resulting in ‘loosely-worded’ resolutions with little traction. For instance, LAS Resolution 8523 passed on 23 June 2020, which called for an end to illegitimate foreign interventions in Libya, was seen as a rubberstamp for the Cairo Initiative which was markedly pro-Haftar and was immediately rejected by the GNA (Fetouri 2020).

The proliferation of mediation initiatives and competing forums added to the complexity of peacemaking in Libya and demonstrated the importance of a coordinated and cohesive conflict resolution strategy by the international community. The renewed momentum of the UN-facilitated Libyan dialogue in 2020, premised on the Berlin Process, was seen as a boost for multi-track diplomacy. However, the complexity of the political process also ‘revealed the extent to which talks are driven by international power play as opposed to a desire for a lasting political outcome’ (Hamdi 2020). The convergence of Turkey’s, Russia’s and Egypt’s interests following the stalemate and ceasefire in 2020 could also be taken as a sign that foreign powers were moving to secure their long-term interests in Libya, at the expense of Libyan agency and popular legitimacy of local actors (Hamdi 2020).

4.7. The Stabilization Facility for Libya: fostering local stability through quick-impact projects

Complementary to the focal areas under UNSMIL’s mandate, the UNDP established the Stabilization Facility for Libya (SFL) as a multi-donor instrument to support the Government of National Accord in delivering ‘quick wins to the population at the local level’ (UN News 2016). The SFL aims to assist the GNA to build legitimacy among the Libyan population by

rehabilitating public infrastructure such as hospitals and schools; boosting the capacity of municipalities and the engagement between the local and national governments; and enhancing local conflict management processes. The SFL is governed by a Project Board jointly chaired by the Libyan Prime Minister's Representative and UNDP Resident Representative. It is funded by 14 donors namely, Canada, Denmark, EU, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, the UK, US and the Government of Libya (UNDP 2017:1). As of December 2019, the SFL had raised \$88 million and had completed 179 of its 374 projects across Benghazi, Ubari, Sebha, Sirte, Bani Walid, Tripoli, Kikla, Ghat and Tawergha. The projects included restoration of power grids and water and sewage networks, repairs of schools and universities, rehabilitation of hospitals and clinics, and supporting local conflict management and social cohesion processes through partnerships with local community groups and supporting inclusive community consultation workshops (UNDP 2019:23). By supporting the legitimacy of the GNA through creating 'a positive loop between communities, local government and national government,' the SFL model entailed both a bottom-up approach to enhance capacity of national governance structures to meet needs of the population and to strengthen local stability (Wood and Wilson 2019: 15).

For the SFL, stabilization is overly political and entailed:

a specific form of assistance in fragile conflicts with the primary objective of conflict settlement that enables sufficient stability to help an area return to civilian life following a period of violence. (Wood and Wilson 2019:13).

Therefore, stabilization activities were aimed at buttressing 'peace' realized through military victory or a negotiated political agreement. In this sense, stabilization is focused on three interrelated goals: (i) enhancing the legitimacy of a national political authority, (ii) 'reinforcing local stability' through measures that enable government to function such as provision of basic services and enhancing human security; and (iii) 'building confidence across conflict divides in support of political deals and conflict management' (Wood and Wilson 2019:13). In the Libyan context, the SFL had the political objective of supporting the GNA which had been established after the signing of the LPA. By responding to the structural problems and exigencies of the Libyan population through provision of services and reconstruction of critical infrastructure, the SFL would help enhance the public perception of the GNA in two key aspects: 'fairness' (that it is serving interests of all Libyans) and 'performance' (that it has the ability to respond to needs at national and local level) (Wood and Wilson 2019:14). An added

advantage of the SFL's model of participatory project selection and implementation in partnership with municipalities and local community groups was the potential of 'strengthening positive relationships between local and central government by demonstrating in practice their reliance on each other for public legitimacy' (Wood & Wilson 2019:15).

The focus on local authorities and municipalities has turned out to be the strong point of the SFL approach, especially in light of the limited political capital of the GNA and its operational challenges in the form of shrinking revenue and prolonged power struggle with the parallel government in eastern Libya. The context of armed conflict also presented a security challenge as the persistent violence fostered polarization at the municipal level and exacerbated existing cleavages among communities. The conflict also forced the UNDP to adjust its programming in order to continue delivering vital services to communities by conducting 'resets' with local and international project partners (UNDP 2019: 6). In lieu of rump Tripoli-based line ministries, the local authorities have proven to be more relevant for communities and have thus become the focal point for international assistance. There are also a number of state-owned enterprises that have continued to function across the east-west conflict divide in Libya, namely, the Central Bank, the Constitutional Committee, the General Electricity Company of Libya (GECOL), the National Oil Corporation (NOC), the Libyan Investments Authority (LIA) and the Libyan Post Telecommunications and Information Technology Company (LPTIC) (Wood & Wilson 2019:17). The emphasis on the local authorities (elected municipal councils or local structures) was also predicated on the cohesion and capacity of the 'local political and security arrangement' that underpin them which vary across localities with either strong arrangements (for instance Tobruk, Jufra, Misrata) or weak ones as in Sebha, Benghazi or Bani Walid (Wood & Wilson 2019:18).

In the context of the volatile security and political environment of the Libyan conflict, the model advanced by the SFL has also underlined a number of critical lessons for international donors and peacebuilding actors working in conflict-affected spaces. For instance, a key lesson identified by the UNDP has been the imperative for facilitation and extensive preparation for conducting local dialogue and conflict management initiatives. Furthermore, the practical application of the model of stabilization adopted by the SFL is different from the conceptualization by the UNDP which leans more towards the 'clear, hold and build' approach, whereas the SFL model looks to strengthen the legitimacy of the GNA while equally focus on enhancing local governance and 'delivering local stability in places of extreme need' (Wood & Wilson 2019:20; UNDP 2019:61). An additional reflection is the need for a broader

stabilization strategy focused on ‘municipally developed solutions that are transferable rather than context specific’ and that would allow for a ‘model of effective local governance to develop organically while enhancing stability at the local level’ (Megerisi 2018b: 20). The stabilization strategy adopted by international actors should also seek to address economic issues such as liquidity, inflation and smuggling, thus calling for a more integrated approach across the political, security and economic tracks (Megerisi 2018b: 19). Overall, the SFL has had an impressive record of implementation and impact in spite of the contextual and political challenges. Its model of stabilization also holds pivotal lessons for the viability and functionality of strategic use of pooled funds to bolster sustainable peace at the local level as a way of enhancing political dialogue in close alignment with the UNSMIL-led mediation process (Wood & Wilson 2019:22).

4.8. Application of the process-tracing method: key steps

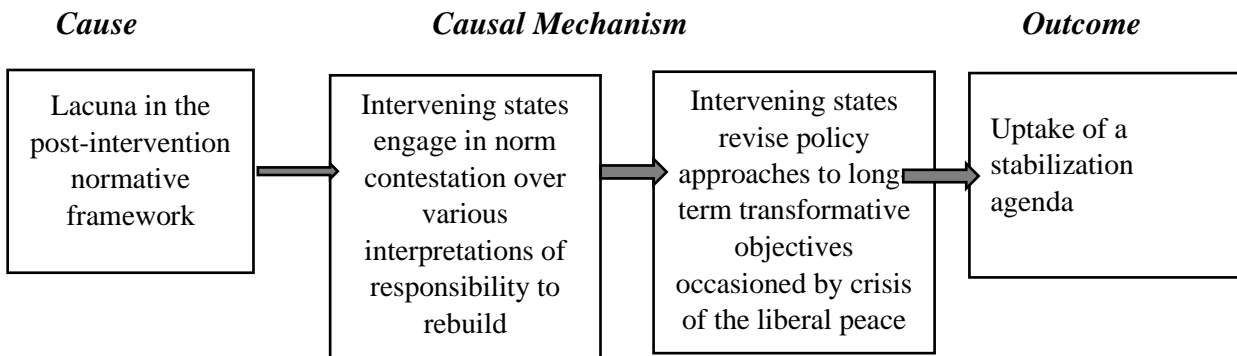
At the core of the process-tracing method used in this study (see Chapter 1, section 1.5.3) is making within-case inferences about causal mechanisms of an identified case by examining ‘diagnostic pieces of evidence’ (Checkel 2008:363). Following an outline provided by Beach and Pedersen (2019: 9), process-tracing proceeds as a series of steps, specifically:

- (i) *Step 1*: conceptualization of a causal mechanism between X and Y based on existing theorization and the context within which the hypothesized mechanism operates;
- (ii) *Step 2*: analysis of the observable empirical manifestations of the theorized mechanism and depiction of the parts of the causal mechanism in terms of linking a cause and outcome;
- (iii) *Step 3*: collection of within-case evidence to make causal inferences whether the hypothesized mechanism was present in the case and whether it functioned as predicted

Moreover, process tracing makes an important contribution to case study research by uncovering and evaluating the link between factors by focusing on both the causal ‘what’ and the causal ‘how’ (Vennesson 2008: 233). Hence, ‘process tracing is a fundamental element of empirical case study research because it provides a way to evaluate empirically the reasons that actors give for their actions and behaviour’ (Jervis 2006: 645). Hence, in the case of post-intervention Libya, the security vacuum and spiralling conflict after the 2011 intervention is causally linked to the prioritization of stabilization in the policy discourse and modes of

engagement of international actors. The causal mechanism can be conceptualized as follows:
 Cause → CM → Outcome

Figure 2: Process and causal mechanism



The causal mechanism that links the cause (lacuna in the post-intervention normative framework) to the outcome (uptake of stabilization) can be depicted in two parts: (i) de-emphasis of the rebuilding pillar within the R2P framework, and (ii) the radical critique of the liberal peace model that has heralded the turn to local and pragmatic approaches to peacebuilding. Pertinent to the legal, normative and conceptual dimensions of the ‘post’ that cuts across the concepts of the responsibility to rebuild, *jus post bellum* and peacebuilding, the artificial disconnection and under-theorizing of these concepts have exacerbated the lacuna in the post-intervention framework leading to the uptake of the stabilization agenda. Unpacking the causal mechanism in two parts (Figure 2) and in terms of ‘entities’ (nouns) engaging in ‘activities’ (verbs) exposes the causal claim to ‘logical scrutiny’ (Beach 2017:6) and offers a richer account of the causal links integrated in a ‘a broader framework with more consistent overall logic’ (Vennesson 2008:233).

The context for the operationalization of the causal mechanism is the political and normative backdrop of the 2011 NATO-led intervention in Libya and the subsequent blowback on R2P with regard to the problematic linkages with foreign-imposed regime change and mission creep in the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1973. Closely linked to this is the crisis of the liberal peace model highlighted by the failings in Iraq and Afghanistan and the effect on would-be interveners whose policies and decisions may have been framed by intervention fatigue and inclination towards light-footprint approach, and changes in the geopolitical dynamics across the MENA region, among other considerations.

Following the conceptualization of the causal theory and its unpacking as a causal mechanism, the next step is to operationalize it into a set of ‘case specific predictions’ about what evidence we should expect to find if the hypothesis is valid. There are four of types of evidence pertinent to process tracing, namely pattern, sequence, trace and account. Pattern evidence refers to ‘predictions of statistical patterns in the evidence.’ Sequence evidence has to do with the ‘temporal and spatial chronology of events predicted by a hypothesized causal mechanism,’ trace evidence is ‘evidence whose mere existence provides proof that a part of a hypothesized mechanism exists,’ for instance minutes of meetings or records of deliberations. Finally, account evidence can be drawn from interviews with participants or witnesses (Beach & Pedersen 2013: 100).

Table 3 shows how the causal mechanism can be operationalized in terms of developing predicted empirical observables (adapted from Beach & Pedersen 2013:112).

Table 3: conceptualization and operationalization of the causal mechanism

<i>Conceptualization of each part of the causal mechanism</i>	<i>Predicted evidence within case</i>	<i>Type of evidence used to measure prediction</i>
1. De-emphasis on the responsibility to rebuild: Normative actors engage in bargaining in the ideational constitution of the R2P norm resulting in jettisoning of the rebuilding tenet in policy documents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expect to see intervening states disengage from residual responsibility to rebuild Libya in the aftermath of the 2011 intervention • Expect to see fallout within international community after heavily critiqued intervention • Expect to see divisions within the UNSC, especially among the P5 members on proposed actions pertinent to interventionism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measured using sequence evidence (timing of events) and trace evidence (omission of rebuilding in text of Resolution 1973, UNSC deliberations on the situation in Libya 2011-2020)
2. Radical critique of the liberal peace model has led to the turn to the local and pragmatic approaches (i) Intervening states adopt a more statist understanding of the rebuilding phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expect to see limited engagement by international actors and policy approaches are confined to outsized focus on security threats • Expect to see Libya gaining priority in international policy agenda after 2015 in the wake of the migrant crisis and the threat of ISIS • Expect to see international community prioritize a light footprint approach to guide UNSMIL concept of operations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measured using trace evidence (policy documents of various regional and international actors engaged in conflict resolution in Libya); and account evidence (interviews with experts on Libya and Libyans in diaspora)

(ii) Peacebuilding actors and conflict managers emphasize local ownership and inclusivity in mediation efforts and peacebuilding initiatives,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expect to see international actors' preference for quick-impact projects with short term horizons that are also aimed at enhancing legitimacy of internationally recognized national political authority or unity government. • Expect to see international organizations such as the UN and donor governments prioritize local ownership of capacity-building projects in areas such as public service delivery, rehabilitation of facilities like schools and hospitals. • Expect to see UN-led mediation emphasize inclusivity in peace talks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measured using trace evidence (policy documents and official statements from UNSMIL, reports of the SRSG and reviews of UN missions and programmes) • Measured using account evidence (interviews with experts on Libya and Libyans in diaspora)
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4.9. Conclusion

As this chapter has argued, the various responses by regional and international actors in conflict management and resolution in Libya have illustrated the complexity and challenges pertinent to navigating the evolving dynamics of a multi-faceted and prolonged internationalized civil war. The limits of the standard international treatment regime for ending civil wars, predicated on a top-down liberal peace model, were also brought to the fore in the case of post-2011 Libya in view of the contextual, geopolitical and normative factors that called for a peace process that was attuned to the Libyan context. The strengths and weaknesses of the UN-facilitated 2015 Skhirat process and the 2020 Berlin process were weighed vis-à-vis the plethora of mediation forums initiated by various regional and international interlocutors in pursuit of a political solution to the conflict. A critical analysis of the dual application of mediation and sanctions by the UN in the case of the Libya also provided crucial insights about the interaction between various conflict management approaches and their compound effect on the broader objective of conflict resolution.

By examining engagement of regional and international actors such as the UN, EU, AU and foreign powers with a range of interests in Libya, this chapter sought to evaluate empirically the motives and actions of actors (causal process observations) and their linkage to the hypothesized uptake of the stabilization agenda as an outcome of the cause (lacuna in the post-intervention normative framework). Accordingly, this chapter constituted the second step in

process tracing, that is, analysis of the empirical evidence in the form of focused empirical tests of the two-part causal mechanism by observing whether predicted case specific implications of its existence are found in the case of post-intervention Libya. As the final step of process tracing method, the next chapter will evaluate the evidence for the uptake of the stabilization agenda as an outcome of the lack of a comprehensive, normative defence of a post-intervention strategy. Pertinent questions in this regard include whether stabilization has emerged as the overriding logic underpinning responses of regional and international stakeholders to the conflict in Libya and how stabilization has been conceptualized and implemented by local and international stakeholders in the Libyan context.

CHAPTER 5: THE STABILIZATION AGENDA IN POST-INTERVENTION LIBYA: THE NEW INTERVENTIONIST SECURITY PARADIGM?

5.1. Introduction

The aftermath of the 2011 intervention in Libya has brought to the fore a number of issues and debates central to the politics and practices of liberal intervention and state building. Drawing on the lessons of interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq, that exposed the limits of top-down, externally-imposed approaches to state building and the democracy promotion agenda, the intervention context in Libya was characterised mostly by limited international engagement and de-emphasis on international rebuilding responsibilities. The broad preference for a light-footprint approach by the UN that informed the deployment of UNSMIL in 2011 also has to be viewed in light of pivotal normative and political shifts that shaped the preferences and practices of both local and international stakeholders. These include, the disillusionment with large-scale, costly interventions; and the failure to realize, ambitious transformative goals underpinned by the liberal peace paradigm and the turn towards stabilization as the prominent intervention in security paradigm in the post 9/11 period. The ascendancy of stabilization is also telling in the context of the persistent focus on failing or weak states as a major international security challenge that necessitates specific responses, with implications for international norms, such as sovereignty, non-intervention, human rights and use of force. The relationship between weak or failing states and international security, subject to political construction and agendas by powerful actors, has also been evident in the response by Western powers to the migrant crisis and the threat of ISIS in 2015, in Libya, which galvanized security-centric approaches such as border control and counterterrorism.

This chapter zeroes in on the turn to stabilization context within the justificatory framework of pragmatic containment and the logic of securitization. The growing prominence of stabilization not only taps into the broader discourse and debates about intervention, but also has far-reaching implications for peacebuilding across international, regional and local sites.

5.2. Stabilization as a multivalent concept

Despite the widespread reference to stabilization by various international organizations and states, the concept has remained vague and conceptually ambiguous in both meaning and operationalization. The uptake of stabilization in academic and policy circles has played out against a normative and political backdrop characterized by shifts and transformations that have shaped the international peace and security landscape. One pivotal transformation that

has impacted international security discourses and practices is the transformation to a ‘post-Westphalian’ world in the 21st century, reflective of normative changes with regard to the norms of sovereignty and non-interference (Newman 2009:423). The blurring of the distinction between the domestic and the international as well as the redefinition of sovereignty as responsibility in line with the emerging norm of Responsibility to Protect (R2P) are illustrative of the post-Cold War changes in the nature and responses to armed conflict and civil war. Borne out of the debates around humanitarian intervention in the 1990s and the clarion call to prevent mass atrocities such as what happened in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, R2P was advanced in the context of increased prominence of solidarist norms and the human security discourse, which informed the international community's broad consensus for action to prevent or halt mass atrocities. Hence, R2P is reflective of cosmopolitan ethics and tidal change at the core of a new politics of protection and a post-Westphalian conception of international security, that was less state-centric in tone and direction (Bellamy & Williams 2004:4).

The second critical juncture was 9/11 which underscored the focus on failed states as the foremost international security challenge marking or re-upping of state-centric security agenda premised on securitization approaches to statebuilding and peacebuilding. The post- 9/11 context also reinforced the prioritization of the security-development nexus and increased resources aimed at ‘securing development’ and the securitization of the international peacebuilding agenda (Tschirgi 2013:208). From the early 2000s, the Global War on Terror (GWOt) undergirded by the overarching focus on state fragility and failure, provided the impetus for pragmatic interventionism reframed as stabilization to address the pathologies of failed or conflict-prone states (Moe & Geis 2020:402). The GWOt was the manifestation of ‘normative turbulence’ which in turn led to ‘norm downsizing’ in the international order whereby the human rights and democratisation norms have been downsized under a ‘security first’ logic to intervention strategies (Moe & Geis 2020:392). Parallel to the changes in the normative context with regard to intervention practices, the failures of the interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq highlighted the shortcomings of the liberal peace model, and called for a re-evaluation of long-term, costly international engagement in fragile states. Consequently, ambitious transformative agendas have been side-lined in favour of lower benchmarks and standards evinced by terms such as ‘good enough governance’ (Grindle 2004) or ‘stable governance’ (USIP 2009:6), coupled with focus of external intervenors on local political context as ‘best-fit approaches’ (World Bank 2011).

A pragmatic approach to peacebuilding, centred on ‘working with and through local processes’ (Chandler 2017:17), is part of the multifaceted critique of the liberal peace paradigm that has questioned its rationalist and universalist underpinnings. Taken together, both the crisis of liberal interventionism and the resurgence of a state-centric security agenda after 9/11, set the tone for the ascendancy of stabilization as ‘the central guiding rationale behind international interventions and as a platform for rethinking engagement in fragile settings’ (Muggah 2014a:3). Consequently, stabilization has become a buzzword in foreign policy, security and development circles, although the concept is subject to different conceptions and interpretations. The ambiguous and multivalent nature of stabilization has resulted in a myriad of interpretations, for instance, diplomats and civil servants may view stabilization as a strategic objective and entailing coordination of defence, diplomatic and development competencies, whereas military and development practitioners may utilize stabilization to denote ‘a set of discrete activities entailing everything from lethal operations to the provision of targeted aid’ (Muggah 2014a:3). The definitional and conceptual ambiguity also extends to formulation of various doctrines on stability by major powers and international organizations with implications for its real world application. For instance, the UK Ministry of Defence Joint Doctrine frames stabilization as a ‘combination of integrated civilian and military actions with a political objective in enabling structural stability’ (SU 2014:1), in contrast to the NATO doctrine which connects stabilization with reconstruction, and the US doctrine that perceives stabilization as a subset of counterinsurgency (COIN) (Belloni & Moro 2020:4).

The history of the concept of stabilization draws back to the mid-1990s following the establishment of the NATO-led Stabilization Force for Bosnia and Herzegovina, working closely with UN-led civilian operation, the UN Civilian Office in Bosnia-Herzegovina, (Tschirgi 2013:200). The integration of civil and military approaches to intervention in fragile contexts as tried out in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and later in Kosovo in 1999 laid the groundwork for the broader embrace of stabilization by Western policymakers and the UN as a means of securing the international order from threats and conflicts emanating from weak and failed states ravaged by conflict (Mac Ginty 2012:24). In the UN, the appeal of stabilization against the backdrop of NATO-led military engagement in the Balkans and US-led interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq informed the shift towards stabilization in a number of peacekeeping operations. Subsequently, stabilization has featured in the names of four UN missions, namely the Stabilization Mission in Haiti (2004); the Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo, MONUSCO (2010); the Multidimensional Integrated

Stabilization Mission in Mali MINUSMA (2013) and the Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, MINUSCA (2014). It should be noted, however, that the reference to the term stabilization in UN missions has been clouded by a lack of doctrinal clarity and ‘cognitive dissonance’ within the UN system with regard to conceptualization and operationalization (Curran & Hunt 2020: 54). According to Muggah (2014b), the traction of stabilization in the UN system is a result of both ‘internal and institutional pressures including pursuit of integrated missions’ and response to broader trends in the international peace and security sphere such as the securitization of fragility, crime and extremism viewed against the security-development nexus.

According to Karlsrud (2018:2), the uptake of stabilization in the UN context, particularly the diffusion of the concept in the design, mandate and implementations of UN peacekeeping missions, is mostly attributed to the need for the UN to remain relevant in an evolving international security arena. In step with the lowering of ambitions under the framework of liberal interventionism, the UN has shifted ‘the operational and conceptual paradigms’ of its peacekeeping operations from liberal peacebuilding to protection of civilians linked to the growing strategic focus on stabilization and counterterrorism policy (Karlsrud 2018:2). The resonance of stabilization in the UN can also be traced to various ways in which the concept has been referenced and interpreted in the UNSC since 2000, revealing a substantial increase in the frequency of the use of stabilization UNSC open meetings and documents between 2001 and 2014 (Curran & Holtom 2015:14). The ‘uploading’ of stabilization to UN peacekeeping, that is, ‘the process of policy transfer, uptake and implementation of stabilization into UN practice’ (Curran & Hunt 2020:48), is reflective of the growing linkage of UN peacekeeping operations with short-term stabilization and counterterrorism tasks with limited scope (Karlsrud 2018:4). An analysis of the UN's largest stabilization missions, MONUSCO and MINUSMA, reveals the reconfiguration of mandates to allow for the use of robust force to contain aggressors and spoilers in the midst of conflict, protecting civilians and governments and supporting the restoration of state authority drawing on a ‘clear, hold and build’ approach tested in stabilization contexts in Afghanistan and Iraq (Curran & Hunt 2020:56).

Despite the increased reference to stabilization in UNSC meetings and policy documents, the concept has remained undefined and subject to a broad range of interpretations (UN 2015:30). The lack of clarity has not only fueled debate within the UN about the use of force and militarization of UN peacekeeping (Andersen 2018), but has also resulted in ‘conceptual confusion, conflation of peacebuilding means and stabilization ends and limitation of

sustainable, inclusive forms of peacebuilding’ (Curran & Hunt 2020:60). In addition to the tensions between the UN’s turn stabilization in its peace operations and its peacebuilding agenda, there are also normative and institutional implications for the stabilization trend in the UN context. For instance, the focus on strengthening the authority of host governments and supporting authorities to contain aggressors may be perceived as partial by some stakeholders, which may serve to undermine the broader legitimacy of the UN in segments of excluded actors labelled as spoilers (Curran & Hunt 2020:58). Additionally, the stabilization logic underpinning UN peacekeeping operations has on-the-ground implications for peacekeepers, local populations and civilian authorities with respect to the robust turn and the ‘unintended consequences’ of the use of force (Hunt 2016:115). Such unintended consequences cut across several dimensions, including: jeopardizing civilians, targeting of UN personnel by armed actors who perceive the UN as biased and partial; the foreclosure of humanitarian space resulting from the partial and politicized use of force associated with robust peacekeeping’ (Hunt 2016:117); and compromising the UN’s role in monitoring and reporting on human rights, given that the stabilization logic implies an operational relationship between the UN and host governments which may at times be complicit in human rights violations (Hunt 2016: 122). The dilemmas and conceptual confusion surrounding stabilization in the UN context have a bearing on consensus around UN peacekeeping, resurfacing tensions between pragmatic and traditional interpretations of peacekeeping which inform mandates, design and operations of contemporary UN PKOs. The broader shifts in UN peacekeeping around the use and purpose of force, including goals of stabilization and protection of civilians, call for a re-evaluation of conceptual and doctrinal paradigms to address emerging capacity-expectation gaps and mismatches between mandates and means in ensuring continued relevance and efficiency of UN peace operations (Karlsrud 2018: 10).

5.2.1. Conceptual and operational boundaries of stability: elasticity, ambiguity, and normativity

The charged and political nature of stabilization also speaks to its broad range of interpretations and modalities of implementation. At its core, stabilization seeks to achieve the strategic goals of transforming acute or imminent violent conflict into a political arrangement that permits nonviolent conflict management (Wittkowsky & Breuer 2020:8). Stabilization is an inherently political undertaking intended to bolster the legitimacy of a political authority in a fragile context by enhancing its governing capacity (such as provision of basic services or rebuilding local and national governance structures) (Wood & Wilson 2019: 14). The focus on

a political strategy means that stabilization has privileged flexible approaches involving a wide variety of actors, sectors and integrated civilian-military approaches. Actors and institutions with experience in stabilization activities have espoused integrated, comprehensive or whole of government approaches that combine diplomatic, development and defence instruments (Gervais & van Genugten 2020:6). For instance, the UK Stabilization Unit defines stabilization as ‘one of the approaches used in situations of violent conflict which is designed to protect and promote legitimate political authority using a combination of integrated civilian and military actions to reduce violence, re-establish security and prepare for longer-term recovery by building an enabling environment for structural stability’ (Stabilisation Unit (SU) 2014:1). Similarly, the EU espouses an integrated approach to crisis management in line with the EU Global Strategy (2016) under the oversight of the PRISM (Prevention of Conflicts, Rule of Law/ Security Sector Reform, Integrated Approach, Stabilization and Mediation) under the European External Action Service (Pietz 2017:2).

In the UN context, the lack of conceptual clarification regarding stabilization has been attributed to the political nature of the concept, best left to conceptualization and interpretation by bilateral or host government stakeholders. In practice, stabilization has come to be associated with the ‘transition from large-scale peacekeeping operations in areas affected by widespread insecurity to smaller scale programs with targeted security and development packages’ (Muggah 2014b). The conceptual and doctrinal imprecision feeds the debate whether stabilization should be viewed as ‘late peacekeeping’ or ‘early peacebuilding’ with far reaching implications for unity of effort across various policy instruments working towards sustainable impact in a conflict context (Muggah 2014b). Pertinent to the UN, ‘the politics of stabilization as currently pursued limits space for initiatives that possess the potential to foster sustainable, inclusive forms of peacebuilding’ (Curran & Hunt 2020:60).

The smorgasbord of approaches and institutional models of stabilization draw on the enduring debate about ‘whether stabilization should be defined more narrowly- ‘as the management of acute crisis’ or more broadly as addressing the challenge of state fragility (Gervais 2018:12). The broad vision of stabilization favours a definition of the challenge as ‘fragility’ which lends itself to elastic conceptualization and implementation of stabilization (Rotmann 2016:4). Conversely, narrow approaches to stabilization lean towards quick-impact programming as a building block for long-term peace building and development. The immediate focus is on ‘defusing crises’ (Rotmann 2016:5) or ‘to protect the means of survival and restore basic security, promote and support a political process to reduce violence as well as prepare a

foundation for longer term stability’ (SU 2019:8). The narrow-broad dichotomy mirrors the divide between ‘hot’ and ‘cold’ forms of stabilization. ‘Hot’ stabilization refers to military-driven approaches that prioritize security imperatives such as COIN as embodied by the US engagement in Afghanistan. On the other hand, ‘cooler’ forms of stabilization espouse a fusion of both security-led and development-led stability operations and enhanced coordination between civilian and military dimensions (Curran & Holtom 2015: 4).

Divergences and ambiguity notwithstanding, a number of governments and inter-governmental institutions have formulated doctrinal and conceptual documents and institutional modalities that inform varied approaches to stabilization. For comparative purposes, this study will provide an overview of approaches to stabilization by the following stakeholders: UK, US, France, Germany, UN, NATO and EU (see Table 4). The selection of actors has been informed by variety of institutional models in terms of inter-agency structures, funding mechanisms, cross-sector priorities and degree of integration between civilian and military capabilities. Institutional models across governments include integrated models as in the UK case; decentralized and cross-departmental setups employed by Germany and France; or a fusion of the two models as in the US (Gervais 2018:7). According to Curran and Holtom (2015:3), despite the differences in approaches across various governments with developed frameworks on stabilization, there are observable commonalities amounting to what can be labeled as ‘a Western conceptualization’ characterized by emphasis on civilian-led approaches supported by military actors. Much of the appeal of stabilization to Western actors has stemmed from its packaging as a form of intervention that offers a ‘less costly and more responsible way to address the complex realities of state fragility’ (Gervais & van Genugten 2020:8).

The contested definition of stabilization has been embraced in some quarters as ‘purposeful ambiguity’, which may be utilized to advance interests of powerful actors in tandem with post 9/11 securitized approaches to challenges of state fragility, which is an equally contested concept (Zyck *et al* 2014: 15). In Mac Ginty’s view (2012:28), stabilization is essentially about control and reinforcement of the liberal order – ‘an attempt to create compliant, market-friendly any-states that do not threaten the international order.’ Tellingly, the stability discourse is not neutral in the sense that it is advanced in support of a particular type of peace and stability in sites of intervention, politically labeled as weak or failed states, or as an existential threat to internal security. Underpinning the logic of control and re-ordering is an extensive, imperialist agenda that seeks out ‘ideological moments in the justification of Western violence’ via loaded concepts such as ‘liberal peace’ or ‘the war on terror’ (Turner & Kühn 2016:5). The conceptual

ambiguity fosters not only a plurality of meanings and actors engaging in stability operations, but also to different interpretations of the ‘loci of stability’ reflected in the spatio-temporal context of operations in tune with the evolving agenda of implementers (Belloni & Moro 2020:10).

Stabilization is also deeply normative, particularly in its strategic goal of bolstering the legitimacy of a political authority which been installed either through military victory or via negotiated political process. For external actors engaged in stabilization operations, the objective is to enhance political authorities while promoting local ownership as the basis for sustainable outcomes (Wittkowsky & Brewer 2020:44). The promotion of local ownership is presented as ‘a pragmatic necessity for legitimacy and sustainability’ (von Billerbeck 2015:301), while masking the strategic and securitized agenda control, order and institutions (Mac Ginty 2012:27). Moreover, the turn to stabilization has unveiled increasing convergence between African and international actors around a reframing of ‘intervention as stabilization’ (de Oliveira & Verhoeven 2018:19) as a result of ‘norm downsizing’ and ‘pragmatic consensus’ aligned to broad strategic and normative shifts in the international order (Moe & Geis 2020:399). In multilateral peace operations, for instance, this pragmatic consensus between African and global actors has been evident in a division of labour in multilateral peace operations among the UN, EU and AU, guided by the principles of subsidiarity and comparative advantage.⁹ This ‘new’ interventionist consensus, underpinned by stabilization (de Oliveira & Verhoeven 2018: 26) is propped up by rhetoric of restoring order with operational goals such as ‘support the stabilization and strengthening of public institutions...’ (UN Peacekeeping 2021a) or ‘neutralizing armed groups’...’, or ‘restoration of state authority...’ (UN Peacekeeping 2021b). Therefore, the drivers of stabilization are derived from normative (norm downsizing); strategic (securitization) and geopolitical contexts.

5.2.2. Approaches to stabilization: a cross section of stakeholders

As permanent members of the UNSC with significant influence in policymaking pertinent to international peace and security, the UK, the US and France have been at the forefront in elevating the stabilization concept in UNSC meetings and deliberations. In addition to a number of governments who have taken steps to institutionalize their approaches to

⁹ Examples of multi-actor peace operations include the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM), the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and the Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) as part of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

stabilization, intergovernmental institutions such as the EU and NATO have also put forward conceptual documents informing their policies and operational frameworks.

(i) The United Kingdom (UK)

The UK has been a pioneer of the integrated approach in its stabilization activities. Drawing on experiences in Balkans, Sierra Leone, Iraq and Afghanistan among others, the Stabilisation Unit (SU), established in 2007, directs the UK's whole-of-government approach and coordinates inter-departmental strategy and implementation between the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and the Ministry of Defence (MoD). The SU (2014:3) defines stabilization as:

one of the approaches used in situations of violent conflict which is designed to protect and promote legitimate political authority, using a combination of integrated civilian and military actions to reduce violence, reestablish security and prepare for longer-term recovery by building an enabling environment for structural stability.

There are three central priorities of the UK's stabilization interventions: (i) to protect the means of survival by supporting delivery of essential services; (ii) supporting political processes, processes; and (iii) laying the groundwork for long term stability (SU 2019: 14). The UK prioritizes an integrated civilian-military approach, built on cross-departmental coordination, joint analysis, joint funding (the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund) and joint strategies (National Security Council meetings and strategies such as the 2011 Building Stability Overseas Strategy) (SU 2019:26). For the UK, the core objective of stabilization is political - to promote and strengthen political processes that may facilitate conflict resolution and eventual transition out of conflict. The primacy of politics also emphasizes local ownership by the host government working in close partnership with external actors (SU 2019: 23). Overall, the UK has been lauded as an international role model for a whole of government approach with well-functioning mechanisms instruments and strategy documents.

(ii) The United States (US)

Premised on a view of stabilization as an 'inherently political endeavour', the US defines stabilization as 'an integrated civilian-military process to create conditions where locally legitimate authorities and systems can peaceably manage conflict and prevent a resurgence of violence' (SAR 2018:4). The Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO) within

the US Department of State is responsible for the coordination of US government action in conflict-affected environments. The US advances a whole-of-government approach to stabilization that coordinates diplomacy, defence and development efforts in an integrated multi-pronged and multi-sectoral strategy to prevent conflict and promote stability. Drawing on its past experiences in areas such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Kosovo Nigeria and Somalia, the Department of State, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Department of Defense (DoD), led a Stabilization Assistance Review in 2018 as an updated framework to ‘optimize interagency efforts through more efficient and disciplined bureaucratic structures, processes, and engagement with international partners’ (SAR 2018:1). The revised political strategy to respond to global fragility aimed to enhance flexibility and efficiency; and to cut down costs of US engagement in conflict-affected areas, arguably linked to reduced public appetite for drawn out and quantity interventions. To this end, the Global Fragility Act (GFA) was passed in 2019 to clarify an integrated approach for conflict prevention and peacebuilding alongside stabilization. As part of implementing the GFA, the 2020 US Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability complements a wide range of framework documents, including the 2018 Stabilization Assistance Review, the 2018 National Strategy for Counterterrorism and 2019 US Strategy on Women, Peace and Security (DoS 2019: 3). A common theme in the US’ conceptual and policy documents with reference to stabilization is its perception as part of a spectrum of activities to address fragility and build resilience that also includes longer-term peace building, human rights promotion, strengthening transitional justice processes and security sector assistance (SAR 2018:1).

At an institutional level, the Department of State has the lead role in implementing the US Strategy on Stabilization including tasks such as coordinating development efforts overseen by USAID and military support provided by the DoD as guided by the 2016 Joint Chiefs of Staff Doctrine on Stability. To prevent a fragmented approach, the GFA has set up a cross-departmental, inter-agency Steering Committee and a secretariat chaired by the State Department comprising of other departments and agencies (DoS 2020:12). In sum, the integrated, civilian-military approach to stabilization by the US prioritizes sequenced and targeted efforts, in addition to an emphasis on local ownership by partners in host countries, partnerships and burden-sharing with multilateral bodies, bilateral donors and international partners (SAR 2018:17). Critical success factors for stabilization efforts include context-driven planning underpinned flexibility and adaptability, prioritization of locally-driven solutions and unity of effort in implementation of a clear and outcome-based political strategy (DoS 2020:6).

(iii) France

The French policy towards stabilization is relatively recent and gained traction in the wake of French intervention in Mali in 2013 and the launch of counterterrorism operation (Operation Barkhane). The French policy response to complex crises and fragility is premised on a comprehensive approach or 3D - diplomacy, defense and diplomacy; and a view stabilization as part of a set of activities on a crisis management continuum that spans the whole crisis cycle (MEAE 2018a:9). A Stabilization Unit, located within the Crisis and Support Centre, was created in 2014 to coordinate post-crisis programmes in conjunction with the Humanitarian Action Mission and the Preparedness and Partnerships Department (MEAE 2018b). To enhance inter-ministerial coordination, a Strategic Direction Committee was also created to align activities between the Foreign Affairs, Interior and Defence ministries (MEAE 2018a:11).

In practice, the French approach to stabilization has been mostly securitized, anchored on a counterterrorism agenda against jihadist groups as seen in the Sahel. The sustainability and long-term impact of militarized approaches at the expense of approaches aimed at addressing the structural drivers of conflict raise questions about the linkages between long-term peacebuilding and short-term stabilization activities. The focus on restoration of state authority at the centre of stabilization operations may also have unintended consequences of reconfiguring local conflict dynamics while entrenching militarism as part of globalized discourses that have shaped the logic and practices of interventions in the African security landscape (Gelot & Sandor 2019: 526).

(iv) Germany

Germany prioritizes a civilian-oriented, integrated and comprehensive approach to stabilization as informed by the 2017 Guidelines on Preventing Crises, Resolving Conflicts and Building Peace (Germany 2017). Viewed as one element of a broader set of activities aimed at conflict resolution, the objective of stabilization measures is to support political processes while laying the foundation for long-term development approaches (Germany 2017:69). The German approach embraces inter-ministerial engagement, joint action and coordination of foreign, development and security policies. In contexts where the military will be involved, the 2017 Guidelines outline the scope of duties of the military in the context of an integrated and comprehensive approach, including training of security forces, enhancing public safety, supporting crisis resolution and protection of civilians (Germany 2017:89).

Institutionally, a dedicated Directorate General for Crisis Prevention, Stabilisation, Post-Conflict Peacebuilding and Humanitarian Assistance (commonly referred to as Directorate-General S) was created within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to coordinate implementation of the comprehensive approach (Deneckere & Hauck 2018:18). For the German Federal Government, stabilization is an intermediary phase that gives way to longer-term programmes funded by the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) (Deneckere & Hauck 2018:14). As part of its peacebuilding efforts across the phases of conflict, including support for early warning and mediation, the German government prioritizes the provision of humanitarian assistance to alleviate suffering and ease acute hardship of people affected by crisis or natural disasters (Germany 2017:71). The 2017 Guidelines also have strong conceptual grounding on the primacy of politics and priority of prevention aligned to international policy frameworks such as the UN Sustainable Peace agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Buttressing the inter-ministerial guidelines is a networked approach that prioritizes partnerships with NGO's, civil society, implementing partners such as the Centre for International Peace Operations (*ZIF*), *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* (*GIZ*) and multilateral partners such as the EU, UN and AU (Germany 2017:110).

Overall, the German policy on peacebuilding and stabilization is centered on 'the primacy of civilian instruments', working with both development and defence sectors across different phases of conflict in the implementation of both short-term and long-term activities based on a coherent political strategy. Constant learning and assessment have also pointed to the imperative of additional priorities to its guidelines, goals and instruments including stronger linkage to the climate change-security nexus; global health security, including reference to addressing pandemics; and enhancement of joint analysis and risk assessment tools in collaboration with local and international partners (Germany 2021).

(v) *North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)*

The 2015 NATO Allied Joint Doctrine on the Military Contribution to Stabilization and Reconstruction links stabilization and reconstruction as part of a comprehensive approach to crisis management and foundation for sustainable peace. NATO (2015:1-1) defines stabilization as:

an approach used to mitigate crisis and promote legitimate political authority, using comprehensive civilian and military actions to reduce violence, re-establish security,

end social, economic, and political turmoil, and set the conditions for long term stability.

In a similar vein, reconstruction is ‘the process of rebuilding physical infrastructure and re-establishing governmental or societal institutions...’ (NATO 2015: 1-1). Therefore, stabilization and reconstruction (S&R) are interwoven processes that may be part of a broader mission, which may include peace support missions or COIN operations (NATO 2015: 1-2).

The role of civilian capabilities takes precedence in NATO’s S&R activities and offer guidance to military involvement except in circumstances where civilian expertise may not be able to operate due to hostile security environments or where civilian actors lack sufficient capabilities or expertise. In such cases, the military may assume a temporary lead role until the transfer of S&R oversight to civilian agencies is permissible (NATO 2015: 1-2). NATO’s comprehensive approach grounded in a civil-military coordination in S&R activities includes priorities such as : restoration of public security including establishment of law and order and the rule of law; restoration of essential services; facilitating provision of humanitarian assistance; strengthening foundation for long-term governance and economic development needs including SSR and DDR; and capacity-building for political institutions, civil and economic infrastructure (NATO 2011d: Annex 1). NATO’s S&R activities are aimed at transitioning to relevant national authorities or international partners once there is ‘sufficient stability’ that allows a return to normal activities by the local authorities and population. In this sense, stability is seen as a result of the interaction of mutually supporting elements that include human security, economic and infrastructure development; governance and rule of law supported by a political settlement; and societal relationships that bind the elements of a stable state (NATO 2015: 1-8). The coordinated transition to international actors and then to host states is envisaged as a gradual and flexible process underlain by extensive planning, joint assessments and shared understanding in order to avoid creating gaps or exacerbating dynamics of instability (NATO 2015: 3-5).

(vi) The European Union (EU)

The 2016 European Union's Global Strategy (EUGS) sets out the interests, principles and priorities at the core of the EU’s foreign and security policy in an increasingly connected, contested and complex world. Among the five priorities for the EU’s external action as outlined in the EUGS, an integrated approach to conflicts and crises has been promoted as one of the ways of operationalizing the philosophy of ‘principled pragmatism’ underpinning a cohesive,

effective and joined-up policy in response to fragility and conflicts in the EU's neighbourhood and beyond (EUGS 2016:28). The integrated approach to conflicts and crises complements the strategic priority of state and societal resilience in the EU's surrounding regions. Resilience is seen as a broad concept and condition in which states and societies are able to 'prevent, react and recover from shocks, disruptions and crises' (EEAS 2019:23).

In accordance with the strategic foreign policy shift laid out by the EUGS, the EU also adjusted its approach to an evolving peace and security landscape characterized by complex, multidimensional and transnational challenges. Consequently, an integrated approach has been seen as an enhancement of the comprehensive approach which emphasized to joined-up deployment of EU resources and shared responsibilities of EU actors and member states' capabilities to address all stages of the conflict cycle (EC 2013:2). In addition to the focus on prevention, crisis response and peacebuilding, stabilization gained prominence in the multidimensional multi-phased, multilevel and multilateral comprising integrated approach to crises (EEAS 2017b:2). For instance, in 2014, the Concept for EU-led Military Operations and Missions identifies stabilization as one of the key tasks for potential missions under the framework of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) (EEAS 2014:7). In 2015, the reviewed European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) identified stabilization as 'its main political priority' and most urgent challenge in the EU's neighbourhood. The review of the ENP was triggered by the post-2011 turmoil in the MENA region in the aftermath of the Arab Spring and the Ukraine crisis which led to elevation of security imperatives such as border security, counterterrorism and capacity-building of security sector (Bøås & Rieker 2019:12). Furthermore, a 2017 'Issue paper' suggesting parameters for an EU concept on stabilization proposed a definition of stabilization as 'a set of swift actions aimed at creating conditions supportive of a political process, helping countries and/or communities to prevent or reduce violence, and initiating efforts to address the drivers of conflicts and the consequences of a crisis' (EEAS 2017b:4).

The EU's stabilization policies and practices underscore short-term engagement; cohesive and effective operationalization of the humanitarian-security-development nexus; and the internal-external nexus as fundamental for a joined-up approach (EEAS 2019:27). Critical success factors for EU stabilization activities include flexibility, conflict-sensitivity, local ownership and inclusiveness, and fostering a non-violent political settlement backed by legitimate and inclusive governance arrangements. Moreover, the EU's stabilization toolbox, includes a range of assets and instruments such as political engagement via dialogue processes, CSDP missions

and operations; and external budgetary/financial instruments such as the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP), the Development Cooperation Instrument and the European Development Fund (EEAS 2017b:7)¹⁰.

The policy shift towards the integrated approach, coupled with the focus on stabilization was accompanied by the establishment of PRISM as a coordinating entity reporting to the Deputy Secretary General for CSDP and Crisis Response and to oversee the implementation of ‘stabilization action’ as provided for in Article 28(1) of the Treaty of Lisbon (Pietz 2017:2). The first test case of stabilization action under Article 28 (1) of the Treaty of Lisbon was launched in 2017 under the banner EU Stabilisation Action in Mopti and Ségou (EUSTAMS), comprising of ten experts and a mandate to support the rebuilding of administrative structures and helping to improve coordination between Malian authorities (Pietz 2017:3). In spite of its short deployment window (12 months), EUSTAMS was tested alongside more established CSDP missions such as EUCAP Sahel Niger, EUCAP Sahel Mali and EU Training Mission in Mali, which made up the EU’s integrated approach in the Sahel.

The security-driven impulses shaping the EU’s crisis management in stabilization situations such as Mali and Libya are also apparent in its focus on addressing the migration crisis through instruments such as the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF) premised on a securitized approach to migration and border control. The preference for stabilization-oriented approaches and short-term engagement rather than long-term solutions is seen in the EU’s CSDP missions in Libya (see Chapter 4) which were focused on migration, border management and smuggling. The emphasis on a hard security agenda, prioritizing quick-impact projects not only limits the impact of EU action in line with its declared political and normative agenda, but also its ability to uphold its stated commitment to universal values (Bøås & Rieker 2019:14). Overall, the evolution of the EU’s crisis management approach since the Lisbon Treaty reveals tendencies towards stabilization-oriented approaches in practice, driven by geopolitical and strategic imperatives and gaps between policy and practice that have fostered a lowering of foreign policy ambitions pertinent to external action (Raineri & Strazzari 2019:103).

¹⁰ The Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) was created in 2020, as a jumbo financing instrument to streamline financing for EU external instruments by merging ten external financing instruments and the European Development Fund. It has three components or pillars: geographical, thematic and rapid response (see EC 2020d).

(vii) *United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)*

Although the UN is yet to clarify its conceptualization of stabilization and its interface with concepts such as peacebuilding and peacekeeping in a policy and institutional context, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) has positioned itself as ‘a multilateral pioneer in stabilization measures’ (Wittkowsky & Breuer 2020:26). The UNDP (2019:1) defines stabilization as a:

a time bound, integrated programme of activities in areas cleared and held through military action intended to create confidence in, and provide support to an ongoing peace process internationally recognised (including through a Security Council mandate) while laying the building blocks for longer-term peacebuilding and development by delivering a peace dividend to local communities and seeking to extend legitimate political authority.

Building on recommendations of a 2017 Stocktaking Report on the UNDP’s stabilization activities in 11 countries, a new generation of stabilization programmes were launched in Iraq, Yemen, Libya and Nigeria with an emphasis restoration of basic services, rehabilitation of basic infrastructure, enhancing capacity of local authorities to meet needs of the population; and supporting local mediation conflict resolution capacities. The implementation of the programme of activities is based on phased approach ranging from ‘immediate stabilization’ focused on quick-impact projects to ‘extended stabilization’ which entails longer-term initiatives such as capacity-building of local and national governance structures and boosting the local economy via advisory services and microcredits. UNDP stabilization programmes have a short timeframe, limited to a maximum of five years with an emphasis on fast and efficient implementation, transparency, and local-level participation in planning and implementation of programmes (Wittkowsky & Breuer 2020:27).

(viii) *African Union (AU)*

The traction of a stabilization agenda in the AU is mostly perceptible in the context of peace operations under the framework of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). The complex and dynamic African security landscape characterised by asymmetric and hybrid security challenges, violent extremism and transnational criminal networks have resulted in an increased demand for short-duration, high-intensity and multi-actor peace operations with the stabilization mandate (de Coning et al. 2016:1). The AU’s deployment of peace operations

amidst ongoing violence in contexts such as Burundi, CAR, Mali and Somalia has entailed mandates such as containment of aggressors, protection of civilians and consolidation of state authority. The experience of the AU and its RECs in deploying peace operations, premised on comparative advantages, niche roles and the imperative of global-regional partnership, has led several commentators to posit that there is incipient ‘African model of peace operations’ characterised by a stabilization mandate; interpretations on the use of force divergent from UN peacekeeping doctrine; and transition to UN PKO within a partnership framework (de Coning et al 2016: 10). Examples of AU peace operations that have transitioned to UN peace operations include AFISMA which evolved into MINUSMA, AMIS transitioned into UNAMID and MISCA transitioned to MINUSCA (de Coning 2016: 131).

Despite the trend towards stabilization-oriented peace operations. Similar to the UN, the AU is yet to provide conceptual clarity regarding stabilization, coupled with lack of established conceptual or doctrinal frameworks to guide the design, mandate and operationalization of peace operations with stabilization mandates and tasks (Dersso 2016:39). For instance, the initial African Standby Force (ASF) concept formulated in 2003 envisaged its rapid deployment in a range of operations including observation and monitoring missions, intervention in cases of grave circumstances and preventive deployment to contain spread of violent conflict. The multidimensional nature of ASF makes it suitable to implement stabilization operations on condition that: (i) its doctrine is updated in step with the evolving and complex operational environment, and (ii) its rapid response capability, resources and logistics are enhanced to fulfill relevant mandates and tasks (Dersso 2016:48). Without the necessary adjustments at strategic and operational levels, African peace operations and the ASF will be massively undermined in the implementation of stabilization operations. A strong conceptual grounding is also pivotal to ensuring clear mandates and strategic fit across civilian, police and military components of a mission. Stabilization should be conceived as one tool in the interlinked conflict management continuum with a view to supporting long-term peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction and development activities.

Table 4: Comparison of approaches to stabilization

<i>Actor</i>	<i>Definition of Stabilization</i>	<i>Priorities & objectives</i>	<i>Policy frameworks & Mechanisms</i>	<i>Timeframe of activities</i>	<i>Principles</i>
UK	‘one of the approaches used in situations of violent conflict which is designed to protect and promote legitimate political authority, using a combination of integrated civilian and military actions to reduce violence reestablish security and prepare for longer-term recovery by building an enabling environment for structural stability’ (SU 2014:3).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to protect the means of survival and restore basic security, promote and support a political process to reduce violence as well as prepare a foundation for longer term stability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stabilisation Unit 2011 Building Stability Overseas Strategy’ (BSOS) 	No set period, can range from months to years depending on progress in specific contexts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrated approach Political objective of stabilization Conflict sensitivity
US	‘an integrated civilian-military process to create conditions where locally legitimate authorities and systems can peaceably manage conflict and prevent a resurgence of violence’ (SAR 2018:4).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist national and local actors in transition Strengthen civilian security in conflict-affected areas Promote post-conflict economic recovery and reforms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations 2020 US Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability 2018 Stabilization Assistance Review 	Short- term, typically 1-5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Goal-oriented, inherently political undertaking Whole-of-government approach Division of labour with local and international partners
France	No definition but seen as part of a set of activities on a crisis management continuum that spans the whole crisis cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enabling populations to benefit from peace dividends supporting States in redeploying their core functions, including sovereign functions 	Stabilisation Department	No specific period but envisaged as a short-term process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> comprehensive 3D approach interministerial coordination flexibility
Germany	No specific definition but stabilization is understood as one of approaches to violent conflict, alongside prevention and peacebuilding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fostering a secure environment by supporting political processes and legitimate political authority Promoting conditions that enable peace dividends Improve living conditions in short-term 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Directorate General for Crisis Prevention, Stabilisation, Post-Conflict Peacebuilding and Humanitarian Assistance 2017 Guidelines on Preventing Crises, 	No specific period but viewed as transitory process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interministerial cooperation Comprehensive approach Flexibility Regular assessment and linkage to long-term initiatives

			Resolving Conflicts and Building Peace		
NATO	‘an approach used to mitigate crisis and promote legitimate political authority, using comprehensive civilian and military actions to reduce violence, re-establish security, end social, economic, and political turmoil, and set the conditions for long term stability’ (NATO 2015:1-1).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing safe and secure environment • Helping to restore public security • Restoration of essential services • Enabling conditions for long-term stability, governance and development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint approach made up of civilian and military sectors • 2011 Political Guidance on ways to improve NATO’s involvement in Stabilisation and Reconstruction • 2015 Allied Joint Doctrine for the military contribution to stabilization and reconstruction. 	Short-term activity with a view to transition to national authorities or international partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civilian-led undertaking based on integrated civil-military approach • Primacy of politics • Context-driven
EU	‘a set of swift actions aimed at creating conditions supportive of a political process, helping countries and/or communities to prevent or reduce violence, and initiating efforts to address the drivers of conflicts and the consequences of a crisis’ (EEAS 2017b:4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for legitimate local authorities • Capacity-building of security sector • Support restoration of basic services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PRISM • 2016 Global Strategy • 2017 Issue paper on parameters for a concept on stabilization • Article 28 (1) of the Treaty of Lisbon 	No specific period, Stabilization seen as a bridging period with a view to long-term governance and development outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated approach • Synergy with long-term activities • Conflict sensitivity • Flexibility • Local ownership
UNDP	‘a time bound, integrated programme of activities in areas cleared and held through military action intended to create confidence in, and provide support to an ongoing peace process internationally recognised (including through a Security Council mandate) while laying the building blocks for longer-term peacebuilding and development by delivering a peace dividend to local communities and seeking to extend legitimate political authority.’ (UNDP 2019:1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quick-impact projects for restoration of basic services and rehabilitation of essential infrastructure • Strengthen physical security and access to justice • Revitalization of the local economy 	Decentralized approach in coordination with country resident representatives	Phased approach limited to a maximum of 5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on local level as focal point • Fast and efficient implementation • Partnerships with international donors

5.3. Situating stabilization in the conflict management continuum

The conceptual and definitional ambiguity of stabilization raises pertinent questions about how it interfaces with concepts such as peacebuilding, COIN and post-conflict reconstruction. The first point of divergence is the modalities of implementation. Peacebuilding tends to build from a ‘highly standardized’ template with an emphasis on liberal norms, laws and institutions (Mac Ginty 2006: 32). Inversely, stabilization emphasizes context-specificity and is tailored to the specific characteristics of target country or area (Barakat 2016:3). A second aspect of differentiation pertains to broad goals of peacebuilding. The main objectives of stabilization include creating secure environment, shoring up political authorities, supporting political settlements and restoration of essential services to local population (Muggah 2014a:4). In contrast, peacebuilding is a broader concept that is aimed addressing the structural drivers of conflict and promoting a sustainable compact of peace, including a focus on conflict prevention, conflict resolution and consolidating post-conflict recovery, reconstruction and development. Furthermore, unlike peacebuilding which has longer timeframe, stabilization is mostly perceived as a short-term or transitory activity that lays the foundation for long term engagement. Whether conceived as a means of supporting state authorities by containing aggressors or supporting the delivery of basic services and containing violence, the key focus of stabilization is security. On the other hand, the main aim of peacebuilding is good governance underpinned by promotion of democracy, human rights and the free market economy (Belloni & Moro 2020:7).

Counterinsurgency (COIN) has often been conflated with stabilization, especially military-led hot stabilization which emphasizes kinetic military operations, provision of security to local population and training of local security actors to fight insurgents. COIN and stabilization have been seen as advancing similar goals - supporting political arrangements that are the foundation for legitimate political authorities. Apart from the common goal of winning hearts and minds and the political objective of shoring up central authorities, COIN differs from stabilization in the sense that its primary objective is combatting insurgency and it is a highly militarized activity, whereas stabilization entails a multifaceted approach that incorporates development and humanitarian assistance as part of operations (Wittkowsky & Breuer 2020:17). Additionally, while COIN is targeted at re-establishing the state’s monopoly on violence and supporting the local population national authorities to fight insurgents, stabilization might work against the state if it is perceived as a source of instability (Belloni & Moro 2020:7).

Pertinent to post-conflict reconstruction, a variety of approaches that present stabilization as a both ‘mid-conflict’ and a ‘post-conflict’ activity has made it difficult to separate it from reconstruction and other concepts applicable in post-conflict contexts. The close linkages between stabilization and reconstruction, given the shared goals of ensuring delivery of basic services and laying the foundation for long term governance and development objectives, has seen them often paired together in the policy and conceptual frameworks of several stakeholders under the label of S&R (Zyck *et al* 2014:5).

The variety of interpretations and approaches to stabilizations should not be taken to mean that there are no commonalities in its basic contours across the range of institutional and operational contexts. Similarities include : (i) an understanding of stabilization as an intermediate or transitory activity that connects short-term priorities with long-term activities such as peacebuilding and development programmes (Wittkowsky & Breuer 2020: 45); (ii) the primacy of politics and the inherently political nature of stabilization in support of political processes and enabling conditions that foster the legitimacy and capacity of political authorities and local actors for nonviolent conflict management (Belloni & Moro 2020:7); (iii) the prioritization of security as a strategic goal in accordance with the security-development nexus and view of stability as a precondition for peace and democracy; (iv) preference for a comprehensive approach that integrates diplomatic, development and defence policy instruments underpinned by principles of flexibility, joint planning and context-specificity; (v) inclination towards quick-impact projects that deliver quick wins at the implementation level in support of broader strategic goals; (vi) the imperative for a clear transition strategy following stabilization efforts informed by consultation with international actors and local partners. The transition to long-term initiatives should also avoid premature disengagement and be rooted in broad vision for peacebuilding. (Barakat 2016:3).

The plurality of concepts and modalities of stabilization is closely related to the debate about metrics of success and impact in a specific context. The conceptual ambiguity and overlap of stabilization with related concepts in practice makes it difficult to draw a clear link between strategic goals and outcomes (Barakat 2016:2) The fluidity of conceptual boundaries can result in lack of clarity at the operational level with implications for long term impact and cohesion. Additionally, humanitarian and development practitioners have contended that stabilization can lead to the weaponization of foreign assistance and politicization of aid while also undermining the neutrality and impartiality of humanitarian assistance (Muggah 2014a:4). The different meanings of stability and stabilization bring to the fore a complex set of vertical and

horizontal tensions. Vertical tensions emerge due to divergences in international and local priorities. For instance, the objective of international actors might be to enhance border security and contain spill-over effects of conflicts in a specific region whereas the priorities of local actors is to restore governance capacity and delivery of basic services. Horizontal tensions arise when various ministries at the national level such as Defense, Justice or Interior get caught up in competition for resources and clout. These tensions can undermine the strategic goals of stabilization and may exacerbate conflict dynamics (Muggah 2014a:7). For Zyck *et al* (2014:29), the plurality of actors engaged in stabilization with a broad array of interests and objectives not only compounds the challenge of coordination on the ground but also fosters constant shuffling of priorities in line with exigencies at various points in time.

5.4. The ascent of stabilization in an evolving international security context: strategic, normative and geopolitical drivers

While contemporary stabilization has recently gained traction in academic and policy discourses, its conceptual underpinnings hark back to the NATO-led military operations in the Balkans and the US-led interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq in the post 9//11 period. The preoccupation with dealing with fragile contexts may have accelerated the turn to stabilization as one category of response to security challenges related to fragility; but the underlying rationale and strategic objectives are closely aligned with long-established imperial projects of order-maintenance and protection of interests of hegemonic actors in a complex and dynamic international order (Turner & Kühn 2016:7). In other words, the renewed emphasis on stability and stabilization is not a new development per se, but is reflective of an evolution in concepts of stabilization as implemented in the 1990s. Contemporary notions of stabilization are indicative of a shift in the *scope* of activities (beyond kinetic military operations to include development and diplomacy dimensions); *timing* (mid-conflict and post-conflict) and diversification of actors (government agencies, NGOs, multilateral organizations) (Zyck *et al* 2014:16).

The emergence of post-9/11, security-centric, stabilization agenda has to be contextualized in the disillusionment with the paradigmatic interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq, which failed to live up to liberal ambitions of democratization and statebuilding. From the late 2000s, the resurgence of a state-centric agenda coupled with the tensions between peacebuilding and statebuilding agenda led to prioritization of externally-driven security imperatives and waning of interest in largescale liberal interventionism. Amidst a plethora of analyses about the

shortcomings of the interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq, majority of perspectives identify a number of key issues, including: misconceptions about the local, political and historical contexts and dynamics of conflict; disconnect between strategy and politics; and tensions among coalition partners with competing objectives in response to fast-changing multidimensional challenges (Berdal 2020:88). As the failings of international engagement multiplied in Iraq and Afghanistan which morphed into costly ‘forever wars’, Western actors revised their approaches to interventions in conflict-affected states and regions. The priority shift was marked by a backtracking from the statebuilding approach which had prioritized democracy, human rights and institution-building towards pragmatic, contextualized and arguably more realistic stabilization approaches. The emphasis on stability as a precondition for peace and development not only reflected a ‘lowering of standards of success’ compared to previous engagements in conflict-affected states since the mid-1990s, but also constituted ‘a strategic response to intervention fatigue and the changing geopolitical context’ (Belloni & Costantini 2020:67).

The emergence of ISIS following the intervention in Iraq, amidst exposed security and political vacuums, spurred the elevation of a counterterrorism agenda resulting in the creation of the Global Coalition against Daesh in 2014 which included a stabilization mandate alongside its goals of severing Daesh financial supply lines and countering ISIS propaganda. On a related front, the UNDP established the Funding Facility for Stabilization (FFS) in 2015 to support restoration of services, capacity building for local authorities and rebuilding the local economy in areas liberated from ISIS control (UNDP 2021). The counterterrorism agenda displaced the COIN efforts focused on combat operations and conducted via superior air power while leaving COIN tasks and ‘the hearts and minds’ components to the local authorities. The implication is that stabilization efforts were subsumed under a counterterrorism strategy delinked from the overarching political objective (Belloni & Costantini 2020:74). The privileging of quick-impact projects aimed at restoration of essential services, infrastructure rehabilitation and support for livelihoods is coherent with the logic of stabilization in which speed and pragmatism precede governance and long-term engagement (Belloni & Costantini 2020:75). Like the US’ revised approach, the lowering of liberal ambitions also applies to EU’s approach which identified resilience as a key objective and stabilization as the most urgent challenge in its neighbourhood (EC 2015: 2; EU 2016: 26).

Corresponding with the shift towards stabilization as a strategic response informed by pragmatism, the changes in the geopolitical environment also contributed to the growing

interest in stabilization. Shifts in the global distribution of power and increased geopolitical competition between the US and rising powers, such as Russia and China, has put pressure on the foundations of a Western-led global order beset by crises of multilateralism and a range of systemic shocks and turbulences. Against the backdrop of US disengagement in strategic geopolitical theatres such as the MENA region and its strategic pivot to the Asia Pacific, Turkey, Russia and Iran have rushed in to fill the vacuum left by Western powers in areas such as Syria, Yemen, Iraq and Libya. Regional players such as the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Qatar have also moved to assert their strategic relevance and roles in shaping the regional order in accordance with their foreign policy interests and objectives (Gervais & van Genugten 2020:32). The aftermath of the Arab Spring, which saw Libya and Syria plunge into civil war, highlighted the geopolitical faultlines that cut across ideology, sectarianism and heightened regional rivalries and contests for dominance in the region. The evolving geopolitical context necessitated a shift in the strategic calculus of Gulf Arab states vis-à-vis systemic rivals such as Turkey and Iran. Moreover, US policy re-orientation with regard to the MENA region presented an opening for Russia and Turkey to play a more assertive role in regional security with implications for conflict dynamics as seen in Syria and Libya (Koch 2020: 32). The growing engagement of rising powers, such as Iranian influence in Iraq and Russian influence in Syria and Afghanistan, advanced interventionist policies that prioritized strategic and geopolitical considerations above objectives such as democratization or human rights promotion. The revised approach by international actors in response to fragile and conflict-affected states is accompanied by a lowering of performance standards, predicated on benchmarks such as ‘reduction of net harm to people and polities’ (Zyck & Muggah 2015:14) and ‘facilitating the agency and empowerment of local actors’ to take long term activities such as peacebuilding and recovery (Belloni & Costantini 2020:76). Drawing on lessons from the failures in Iraq and Afghanistan, evolving notions of stabilization have veered towards quick-impact projects focused on strengthening the legitimate authority of the state through capacity-building and the delivery of essential services. Moreover, stabilization seeks to differentiate between ‘international and local actors’ responsibilities and between short-term and long-term objectives’ in conflict- affected contexts (Belloni & Costantini 2020:76).

The distinction between international and local actors’ responsibilities inherent in the stabilization agenda speaks to the broader shift from ‘burden-sharing to burden-transfer’ with regard to international involvement in conflict management, especially in complex and protracted conflicts (Kobia 2020). Attributable to a range of factors including intervention

fatigue, predominant focus on fragile states and a strategic response to the crisis of the liberal peace model, the containment logic implicit in the turn to stabilization also heralds the ‘era of post-legitimization’ marked by a decline in justifications for interventions and vague rhetoric couched in the language of security and stabilization (Mac Ginty 2019:254). Overall, the turn towards stabilization as a category of response to the challenge of failed or fragile states has to be understood in the context of a convergence of strategic, geopolitical and normative shifts in an evolving international security landscape. It is important to bear in mind that while contemporary post-9/11 interpretations of stabilization can be distinguished from earlier models or versions implemented in the 1990s, there are similarities such as the focus on security as an imperative and an objective, civil-military collaboration, support for political settlements and strengthening legitimacy of political authorities (Zyck *et al* 2014: 29).

5.5. Libya as a stabilization context

Having discussed the conceptual ambiguity of stabilization, the range of interpretations and approaches by various stakeholders, and the drivers that have catalyzed its uptake, this section will focus on Libya as an instructive case in understanding stabilization as the dominant interventionist paradigm informing the rhetoric and actions of international actors engaging in conflict-affected or fragile contexts. The first sign of a predilection for stabilization-oriented approaches can be seen in the establishment of UNSMIL in September 2011 envisioned as a light footprint, civilian presence to support, transitional authorities in specific sectors such as rule of law, human rights and public security, among others (see section 4.4.2). Apart from political and pragmatic considerations that motivated a light footprint approach, the preference for a minimalist UN presence with a focus on ‘domestic ownership of the rebuilding process’ in the aftermath of the 2011 intervention also suggests a more ‘statist understanding the rebuilding phase’ (Keranen 2016:3). A statist understanding of rebuilding responsibilities prioritizes political expediency and swift exit by presupposing the governance and administrative capacities of political authorities in a society emerging out of conflict while overlooking contextual factors and exigencies. UNSMIL’s mission concept, oriented towards ‘short term crisis management mode’ (CIC 2013:104), was a reflection of local actors’ aversion to foreign boots on ground in the context of the highly charged international political environment in the aftermath of the 2011 NATO-led intervention. As the civil war became entrenched in post-Gaddafi Libya, any semblance of consensus within the international community dissipated, and along with it agreement about international engagement in post-intervention rebuilding. The debate about a residual responsibility to rebuild is as political as

it is a normative one. The poor track record of external-imposed, top-down international statebuilding interventions in contexts such as Afghanistan and Iraq tempered the expectations and willingness of international actors to commit to large-scale operations in Libya. According to one Libya expert (Author's interview with Collombier, 2020), 'Libya signalled the beginning of a new era, in which nobody was really willing to get so involved,' illustrative of the paradigm shift from Iraqi-type, costly engagement, to one in which the international community played a mostly supportive and limited role in relation to transitional authorities. Moreover, the 'overall locus of international assistance in the immediate aftermath of the intervention was on security' (Keranen 2016:13), mostly attuned to growing alarm about the resurgent ISIS threat and the need to curb the influx of migrants and refugees into Europe across the Mediterranean via Libya.

Alongside political considerations that intertwined interests and priorities of interveners, the sidelining of the responsibility to rebuild component of R2P was indicative of the normative environment that framed the overall reticence towards rebuilding. Whereas the prevention and reactive components of R2P were given pride of place in the 2005 World Summit outcome document, the responsibility to rebuild was omitted. Schnabel (2012:56) attributes this omission to its sequential link with the 'reactive' pillar of R2P which rendered it controversial. For Donovan (2018:3), the marginalization of the responsibility to rebuild occurred at a point where there was a policy shift away from statebuilding as nationbuilding towards a focus on capacity-building anchored on domestic responsibilities and the principle of local ownership. A buzzword in peacebuilding and statebuilding literature, the notion of 'local ownership' belies the implicit hierarchical and 'contractual relationship between the "internationals" and the "locals" and related implications for local agency, preferences and capacities (Richmond & Visoka 2021: 21). The jettisoning of the responsibility to rebuild in the discourse at the UN level and in the normative evolution of R2P has resulted in a gap in the moral responsibility to rebuild and 'a separation between R2P and peacebuilding' (Bellamy 2009: 279). According to Paris (2016:516), the treatment of R2P and peacebuilding as separate activities translated into the absence of a post-intervention peacebuilding strategy, a misstep that paved the way for the slow slide into civil war amidst deteriorating political environment and security vacuum.

It is telling that Libya focused the attention of the international community, especially Western capitals in 2016 when ISIS gained a foothold in Sirte, a moment that generated short-term international consensus in favor of the Libyan Political Agreement that facilitated the formation of the Tripoli-based Government of National Accord (GNA). A reading between the lines

points to strategic interest and security concerns as the primary impetuses for action by international actors who lent their weight to security-oriented initiatives such as border management, migration control, capacity-building of security sector and counterterrorism.

The sharp focus on security concerns such as terrorism and irregular migration in Libya and the resultant prioritization of pragmatic and quick-impact solutions is coherent with a stabilization agenda. While still loosely defined, correspondences with a stabilization template can be seen in policies and practices to support political settlements, the focus on restoration of basic services and deployment of EU CSDP missions such as EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia (2015-2020), EUBAM Libya, EUNAVFOR MED Operation Iriini (2020-2021). Additionally, in spite of the shortcomings of the UN-led mediation process that birthed the 2015 LPA, Gross (2020:85), maintains that the Skhirat process set the tone for a ‘UN-sponsored stabilization approach’ informed by a ‘diplomatic stabilization strategy’ which entailed consultation with regional actors (AU and LAS); inclusion of local authorities such as municipalities and tribal elders in the dialogue process; and optimization of UNSMIL as a political mission with mandate to support transition across a variety of sectors. He adds that Libya presented a case in which the potential of diplomacy to function as a means of realizing ‘consensual conception of stabilization’ was tested, especially via UNSMIL’s role and its efforts to implement an inclusive dialogue process while prioritizing security and development (Gross 2020:86). The turn of events after the signing of the LPA and the shortcomings of the peace agreement itself, such as the absence of a security track and the failure to bridge the east-west divide, attest to its failure to resolve a protracted and multidimensional conflict that was complicated by deepening foreign interference (Lacher 2018a:24). The pressure exerted by Western powers on SRSF Léon to finalize agreement can also be taken as an indication that security concerns were foremost in their list of priorities. This ‘security first’ driver aligns with the stabilization agenda, which ‘considers the stability as a precondition for the attainment of other institutional and normative objectives’ (Belloni & Costantini 2020:77).

The Berlin process, which culminated in the LPDF has been hailed as a qualified success and a course correction for the UN’s mediation strategy. Embracing a multi-track approach, the political track was complemented by a parallel economic track (the Libyan Economic Dialogue) and a security/military track (the 5+5 Joint Military Commission). The LPDF produced a roadmap that would lead to the formation of a transitional executive authority that will guide the country towards elections set for 24 December 2021. The LPDF’s convoluted processes of selecting the three-member Presidency Council were marred by allegations of

bribery and lack of representation, denting the credibility of the process in birthing a new executive authority with domestic legitimacy and buy-in (Kadlec 2020). The fragile ceasefire of October 2020 has to contend with major obstacles on road to elections, namely: (i) the lack of a constitutional framework to guide the electoral process as a referendum to endorse the draft constitution is still pending; (ii) limited progress in the security track, specifically the Herculean task of unifying the military under central command; and the withdrawal of foreign forces and, (iii) unification of the central bank (Lacher 2021a: 7). While the sustainability of the ceasefire is yet to be determined at the time of writing, the focus on ‘short-term solutions to address an urgent crisis’ backed by expediency arguments, ‘the prioritization of processes and institutions’ at the expense of structural causes and drivers of conflict; ‘the lack of serious consideration for national reconciliation’ and unaddressed issues may lead to a potential relapse into conflict (Author’s Interview with Collombier 2020).

In line with its priority shift towards stabilization, the EU’s approach to the Libyan crisis was informed by strategic policy documents and frameworks such as the 2016 Global Strategy, the updated 2015 ENP and the 2017 Issues Paper on the parameters for concept of stabilization which formed part of the EU’s integrated approach to external conflict and crises. A close examination of the mandates of CSDP missions (Operation Sophia and EUBAM Libya) in Libya reveal prioritization of security imperatives, particularly border management, containment of migration flows and support to SSR in the areas of internal security, criminal justice and counterterrorism (Loschi *et al* 2018:10). The acute focus on border control as foremost in the European security agenda can also be linked to the EU’s externalization of its borders and the handover of surveillance and detention of illegal migrants to Libyan authorities, including the ‘bankrolling of detention centres to do the job for them’ (Author’s interview with El Taraboulsi-McCarthy, 2020). Furthermore, the EU Emergency Trust Fund (EUTF) was geared towards stabilization practices via programmes designed to enhance border management, provide assistance to migrants, refugees and IDPs; and to bolster the capacity of local authorities to deliver basic services (EC 2020b). In their research on stabilization practices in Libya as part of project analyzing the EU’s crisis management approaches, Loschi *et al* (2018:23) underscore the tendencies towards quick-fix solutions and securitized approaches to migration and border management. The pursuit of short-term objectives in practice while maintaining the rhetoric of support for long term solutions such as peacebuilding and conflict transformation has resulted not only in an ‘intentions-implementation gap’ of EU policies (Bøås & Rieker 2019:14), but also in a disconnect with the needs of the local population

(Loschi *et al* 2018: 23). The gaps and flaws of the EU's crisis response in Libya, including the turn towards short-term, stabilization-oriented approaches, imperil the sustainability and effectiveness of its engagement while also raising 'reputational costs' to the EU's profile as a normative power and a geopolitical actor 'inspired by principled pragmatism' (Loschi *et al* 2018: 24).

The Stabilization Facility for Libya, launched in 2016, is a multi-donor instrument aimed at strengthening the legitimacy of the transitional political authority in Libya by facilitating the delivery of essential services; enhancing capacity of municipalities and bolstering local conflict management processes (Wood & Wilson 2019:12). At its core, the SFL's objective is political - to buttress a political settlement that has been realized through negotiations by supporting the capacity of the political authority to respond to the immediate needs of the population. This governance outcome was to be realized through quick-impact projects for the provision of basic services, essential infrastructure and local conflict management processes as the basis for local stability (Wood & Wilson 2019:3). The hallmarks of the SFL model have been its close partnership with local authorities and municipalities; and its flexible approach in navigating project implementation in the midst of conflict and limited input from an embattled government in Tripoli (Megerisi 2018:4). Overall, the emphasis of the SFL on local-level stabilization and supporting the GNA resonated with the priorities of 14 international donors who supported the stabilization strategy of quick-impact projects at the local level as a stepping stone to national-level stabilization (Wood & Wilson 2019:3).

The political vacuum and the crisis of legitimacy that became entrenched as the conflict in Libya unfolded increased the allure of the myth of the strongman as essential to guarantee stability and to fight terrorism. The faulty logic of authoritarian stability struck a chord with Haftar's foreign backers who not only saw him as a viable partner to work with in tackling terrorism and the migration crisis, but also as an interlocutor in peace talks alongside GNA Prime Minister Sarraj. Haftar's international sponsors drew on parallels with Egyptian president Abdel Fattah el Sisi, who had apparently managed to keep fragmentation and state failure at bay in post-revolution Egypt. From this perspective, the lack of clarity about what stabilization and stability means for international actors does not preclude the view of 'stability as a synonym for the strongman rule' (Author's interview with Profazio 2020).

The assertive foreign policies of the Persian Gulf countries, particularly the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, in the MENA region and their involvement in the Libya crisis suggests traction of

a stabilization agenda alongside other factors such geopolitics and economic interests. The upheavals of the 2011 Arab Springs motivated a recalibration of the foreign policies of Gulf States in favour of more prominent roles in regional leadership and increased development assistance to countries in the MENA region as well as strategic partners in sub-Saharan Africa (Isaac 2015:263). A major driver of the revised approach is risk of regional stability being undermined by mounting security challenges and political turmoil that emerged in the wake of the Arab Spring. The imperative for a stable regional order was enmeshed with two pivotal shifts in the geopolitical context that prompted more assertive stances from the Gulf monarchies, namely, the US disengagement from the MENA region and a hardening of the geopolitical rivalry with Iran, stemming from decades of enmity over sectarianism and ideological differences (Young 2016:5). At the domestic level, the increase in export revenue from oil and gas between 2003 and 2014 enabled Gulf states to increase defense spending, sourced mostly from the US and Europe. A 2018 IHS Markit report predicted that the upward trend in defense spending by GCC states was likely to remain steady over a five-year period, and was expected to reach around US \$117 billion by 2023, driven by increased military engagement in theatres such as Libya, Yemen and Syria; as well as defense plans to modernize combat equipment and aircraft.

The ambiguity of the stabilization agenda presented as strategic entry point for Gulf states to assert regional dominance, craft a regional order in line with their ideological and economic interest and to undercut Iranian and Turkish influence in the region. In Libya, this was evident in the financial and military support that was funneled to Haftar and the LNA by the UAE and Saudi Arabia. As the first Gulf state to recognize the NTC during the revolution, Qatar's financial support was channeled to Islamist political and military actors in Libya, aligned with political Islamist ideologies. Consequently, the competition between pro-Islamist external actors (Turkey, Qatar) and anti-Islamist actors (UAE, Egypt) was one of the major faultlines that shaped foreign interference in the Libyan conflict, especially at the regional level (Behr 2020:130). The ambition for regional dominance by the UAE and Saudi Arabia and the drive to shape the regional order commensurate with their respective interests and outlooks has also translated into a more proactive role to mediate the Libyan conflict. The UAE positioned itself as a pivotal interlocutor, facilitating a number of meetings in Abu Dhabi between key Libyan conflict parties and publicly declaring support for a peaceful solution - an ironic twist given the UAE's blatant violation of the arms embargo to militarily prop-up Haftar's forces.

In sum, ‘the interventionist turn’ in the foreign policies of GCC states (Young 2016:1) in the aftermath of the Arab Spring aligned with the focal point of regional stability and the view of stabilization as a means of realizing this desired end-state. Although stabilization has remained vague in conceptual and operational terms, the UAE, Qatar and Saudi Arabia have employed both soft and hard power capabilities in the Libyan conflict in terms of military support, humanitarian and development assistance via bilateral frameworks. The embrace of a stabilization agenda by GCC states has been centered on the political objective of supporting political settlements as a prerequisite for regional stability. Even though there are variations in approaches by the various Gulf actors, a common thread is that stabilization efforts have been geared towards ‘managing fragility, preservation of state institutions and forging a local balance of power’ that is compatible with their own political and regional outlooks (Behr 2020: 134). The GCC states’ stabilization engagement in Libya also displays key differences with approaches of Western actors, such as the former’s preference for bilateral means of engagement with local groups and factions; and direct influence over local power dynamics by playing to tribal, political and ideological faultlines (Behr 2020:134).

5.6. A critique of stabilization: unintended outcomes, norm downsizing and perils of pragmatism

The ascendancy of stabilization in policy and praxis has been driven by several impetuses - the traction of security-development nexus, the fragile state discourse, the crisis of the liberal peace model and the turn to ‘pragmatic interventionism’ (Moe & Geis 2020:391). The interlinkages between stabilization and the aforementioned concepts and debates draws attention to wide-ranging implications and inherent tensions of stabilization as an interventionist paradigm. According to Mac Ginty (2012:27), the conceptual and definitional vagueness of stabilization has the effect of ‘lowering the horizons of peace’ as a result of the lack of analytical precision and the subsequent creation of a ‘meta-category full of buzzwords but empty of meaning’ (Mac Ginty 2012:24). The turn towards stabilization as a containment strategy has also fostered broad detachment from a central idea of peace – ‘peace in general has become a very fluffy topic’ (Author’s interview with El Taraboulsi-McCarthy, 2020). Moreover, the limitations of the costly and lengthy interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq led to a revision of approaches by Western actors who have turned to stabilization as a less costly and more pragmatic response to the security challenges of state fragility. It is important to bear in mind that the uptake of stabilization has unfolded while multilateral organizations and Western states have maintained

their rhetoric with regard to promotion of democracy, peace and stability often framed in vague terms (Belloni & Moro 2020:9).

Muggah (2014c:246) cautions that the ascendancy of stabilization could promote the securitization of development and humanitarian aid undergirded by the continued emphasis on the security-development nexus and the configuration of stabilization as a comprehensive or whole-of-government approach comprising a broad array of factors and scope of activities. The prevalence of the securitization paradigm, especially in the aftermath of 9/11 and the interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq, has resulted in a ‘systemic, transnational and international form of securitization’ that has become embedded in a number of sectors, including the humanitarian and development sectors (Duffield 2002:89). The implications of expansive securitization are knock-on effects on the principles and access of humanitarian and development assistance, particularly in contexts where aid is used to purchase local acquiescence in service of broader stabilization objectives (Carter 2013:14). Moreover, current stabilization praxis has tended to favour short-term and quick-impact projects which are not geared towards addressing the structural drivers or root causes of conflict, focusing instead on a ‘liberal, negative, rented and victor’s peace’ (Carter 2013:14).

For Moe and Geis (2020:399), the renewed emphasis on ‘intervention as stabilization’ has resulted in norm downsizing, set against the backdrop of normative transformations in the global context, characterized by the prioritization of state-centric security and sovereignty over human rights and democratization norms. 9/11 was a critical juncture that not only elevated the ‘failed states’ narrative but also promoted ‘a security first’ global consensus that resulted in the downsizing of democratization and human rights norms, while simultaneously strengthening states in the name of stabilization (Moe & Geis 2020:401). In other words, securitization and its practices interacted with norm dynamics at a macro-scale affecting both the practices of intervention, as well as the interactions between various intervention actors in an evolving normative context. For instance, stabilization has arguably resolved the ‘normative frictions and interface conflicts’ around the use of force and interventions by promoting convergence and collaboration on and counterterrorism premised on division of labour between African and international actors in contexts such as the Sahel (Moe & Geis 2020:409). The implication is that the focus on pragmatic stabilization may promote the prioritization of state security at the expense of human security and people-centered interventions.

Although pragmatism and quick wins have been advanced as the key strengths of stabilization, the policies and practices linked to stabilization may also result in a number of unintended outcomes which may counter the strategic goals of stability. In the Libyan context where SSR and DDR efforts have failed to take hold in a fragmented and hybrid security order, the EU security sector assistance has entailed the empowering and legitimizing of local actors affiliated with local criminal networks cartels. The hybrid security order in Libya, which has seen co-optation of various militias and revolutionary brigades by state security actors has blurred the boundaries between ‘state and non-state, formal and informal and legal and illegitimate actors and activities (Raineri & Strazzari 2020:108). This has meant that EU capacity-building initiatives and training has in some cases benefitted security personnel who may have links to, or are actively involved in criminal activities such as smuggling and trafficking. The outsized focus on security imperatives such as border security and migration control has limited the conflict sensitivity and vetting process of capacity building initiatives, opening it up to dubious actors. The net effect is that internationally-sponsored stabilization measures may entrench patronage politics, criminalization and dysfunctional governance. As long as local partners implement activities that are aligned to the priorities and interests of international actors (including counterterrorism, border control and curbing irregular migration), compliance with human rights and democracy standards are often overlooked in favour of pragmatic solutions. The result is a negation of broader good intentions behind pragmatic stabilization and the facilitation of unintended consequences namely criminalization, authoritarianism and increased militarization (Raineri & Strazzari 2020:110).

5.7. Conclusion

The concept of stabilization has experienced a resurgence in the last decade, informed by the convergence of pivotal normative, geopolitical and strategic developments. Despite its traction in academic and policy circles, stabilization is an essentially contested concept, allowing for fluidity and elasticity in its conceptualization and operationalization across a variety of contexts by various stakeholders. This chapter presented wide range of interpretations of stabilization by a number of actors and key aspects of various stabilization approaches as a framework for intervening in conflict-affected and fragile settings. Libya is analyzed as a stabilization context in view of stabilization as a pragmatic category of response to state fragility and the state fragility problematique, undergirded by the security-development nexus and the advancement of the securitization paradigm in the post-9/11 context.

The ascendancy of stabilization-oriented approaches in Libya is also framed within an evolving geopolitical context in the MENA region and a normative environment increasingly characterized by a lowering of a transformative foreign policy ambitions and a jettisoning of the responsibility to rebuild. The tunneled-vision focus by international stakeholders on security imperatives, linked to geostrategic interests, informed the key elements of internationally-driven stabilization efforts in Libya, geared towards short-term engagement and quick wins that would align with a light footprint approach. The lack of a post-intervention strategy in Libya fostered a lacuna which was filled by stabilization as an approach that presented an opportunity for minimal international responsibility and a burden-transfer to local actors for reconstruction. In sum, the resurgence of a stabilization agenda in Libya has to be critically examined in light of intended and unintended outcomes, the interface with concepts such as peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction and its implications for interventionism across global-local sites of practice.

CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

6.1. Introduction

As noted in the introductory chapter, the main research question in this study was: how do the related concepts of the responsibility to rebuild and *jus post bellum* collectively constitute a systematic normative theory of post-conflict reconstruction? Relatedly, the fundamental assumption of this study is that the artificial disconnection and under-theorizing of post-conflict concepts such as the responsibility to rebuild and *jus post bellum* has exacerbated the lacuna in post-conflict reconstruction discourse. The core argument of the study was that the lack of a comprehensive, normative defence of post-conflict reconstruction framework has elevated stabilization as the dominant logic in the post-conflict reconstruction debate. Following this line of enquiry, the study critically analysed the convergences and divergences between the responsibility to rebuild and *jus post bellum* and the extent to which they inform the broader conceptual and normative debates on responsibilities, obligations and duty to rebuild post-intervention societies. Using the process tracing method, the study sought to causally link the ascendancy of stabilization in the international security landscape to a lacuna in the post-conflict normative framework. Post-intervention Libya, between 2011 and 2020, was used as a case study to empirically trace the hypothesized uptake of the stabilization agenda.

In concluding the study, this chapter will first surmise the theoretical and analytical findings from previous chapters. Following this, the chapter will link the initial research questions, sub-questions and assumptions with the actual findings of the research. Thereafter, the theoretical and methodological contributions of the study will be discussed. The chapter will then expound on challenges experienced during the course of research, concluding with recommendations for future research agenda pertinent to the key issues and themes under consideration.

6.2. Overview of the research

Chapter 1 provided an overview of the research problem, question and sub-questions at the core of this thesis, framed around relevant legal and normative questions about what happens in the aftermath of a military intervention, and the continued focus on state fragility as a persistent feature of the post-conflict landscape. The impasse of the liberal peace paradigm pointed to the precarious nature of war-peace transitions, as well as an ethically charged debate on responsibilities, obligations and duty to rebuild post-conflict societies. Accordingly, the need for deeper normative theorizing and critical interrogation about the various approaches in conflict-affected contexts led to a particular set of concepts that formed the thesis of this

research study, namely, the responsibility to rebuild, *jus post bellum*, peacebuilding and stabilization. Chapter 1 also set out the research questions, clarified the methodology and the limitations and delimitations of the study.

Chapter 2 mapped out the history, evolution and conceptual underpinnings of *jus post bellum*, the responsibility to rebuild and peacebuilding, approaching them as connected concepts with normative and practical implications for engagement in post-conflict contexts. Central to the debate about responsibilities, particularly the responsibility of the international community to act in the face of mass atrocities, is the emerging norm of Responsibility to Protect (R2P). The seminal 2001 report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) depicted R2P as three sets of responsibilities – the responsibility to prevent, the responsibility to react and the responsibility to rebuild, premised on ‘a moral concept of responsibility’ that entailed the remedial responsibility of the international community in situations of manifest failure (Welsh 2020:64).

A key point discussed in Chapter 2 was that R2P2005 as endorsed in the World Summit Outcome Document was markedly different from R2P2001 as outlined in the ICISS report. At the conceptual level, the broad consensus and advocacy for R2P was centered on its framing as a set of three responsibilities. However, in practice, the responsibility to rebuild was overlooked in the 2005 WSOD which dealt substantively with the responsibilities to prevent and react. According to Keranen (2016:8), the sidelining of the responsibility to rebuild at the 2005 World Summit was linked to its controversial association with the reactive pillar, based on a view of sequential links between the reaction and rebuilding pillars. The categorical omission and the responsibility to rebuild in the 2005 WSOD and its subsequent treatment as separate from the broader UN peacebuilding agenda has far-reaching implications for R2P’s normative trajectory and related agenda such as peacebuilding and atrocity prevention (Bellamy 2021:279). The jettisoning of the responsibility to rebuild over a focus on preventative obligations was also informed by shifts in the normative environment towards more statist understandings of rebuilding responsibilities that emphasize local ownership and domestic oversight of post-intervention peacebuilding and statebuilding. The omission of the rebuilding component also extended to the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission (and associated Peacebuilding Support Office and Peacebuilding Fund) at the World Summit which created further institutional and conceptual distance between R2P and peacebuilding.

As asserted, the sidelining of the rebuilding norm in favour of greater attention on a preventative, resilience-building agenda is affirmed by Chandler (2012:216), who attributes the conceptual recalibration of R2P in 2005 to shifts in international security discourses. In particular, there has been a notable shift away from a liberal interventionist framework – premised on external intervention – to a ‘post-interventionist’ framework that is centred on capacity-building, empowerment and the strengthening of vulnerable societies and states as self-securing agents. The effect of this post-interventionist framing is a re-interpretation of the meanings of responsibility on the part of external interveners who reformulated interventions in terms of strengthening capacity and facilitating agency, while distancing themselves from outcomes of such interventions (Chandler 2012:221). The focus on prevention not only relegated the responsibility to rebuild in broader policy discourses, but also entrenched the R2P-peacebuilding gap in practice and in the context of political and strategic trade-offs. Subsequently, this gap has led to a de-emphasis of rebuilding responsibilities, leading to ‘insufficient consideration, will and resources’ for post-intervention rebuilding (Bellamy 2021:281).

Libya’s relevance for questions about the responsibilities of interveners in the aftermath of the R2P-type intervention also speaks to contemporary debates about *jus post bellum* and its implications for transformative peacebuilding agenda. The principal contention of *jus post bellum* proponents is that there are ‘moral and legal considerations pertinent at the end of war or armed conflict’ (May 2012:2). A relatively young concept in the moral, legal and philosophical reasoning about war, *jus post bellum* has generated growing attention in the post-Cold war era as the changing nature of armed conflict and increase in liberal interventions has given rise to pressing questions about post-war justice, and the rights and duties of belligerents in the aftermath of war. The demand for *jus post bellum* justice has also been spurred by a shift in conceptions of justice in terms of human security and a departure from a focus on the restoration of the pre-war status quo to a more expansive scope of *jus post bellum* (Teitel 2013:337).

Despite its complex and contested relationship to *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello* (which are seen as the core of classical just war tradition), little attention was given to *jus post bellum* until recently. There are a host of reasons for neglect of *jus post bellum* in just war scholarship, including its subsumption under *jus ad bellum* considerations, and the ‘outpacing’ of just war thinking by international law pertinent to historical developments such as the establishment of the UN following the Second World War and the historical Nuremberg and Tokyo trials

(Patterson 2012b:7). Moreover, the rethink of the laws of armed conflict in tandem with the ‘humanitarian-cosmopolitical turn’ in the supranational legal regime has amplified the importance of human rights and cosmopolitan approaches and their relevance for ethics of war (Rozpedowski 2015:499). The prominence of human-security-oriented approaches in the evolving international legal regime gives rise to pertinent questions about the rationale for just interventions and the linkages between post-war justice, *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello* considerations. For instance, can a just war lead to unjust outcomes? Do humanitarian interventions imply that interveners have added post-war duties and obligations? And if so, what is the nature of those obligations? Is it moral or legal, or drawn from self-protection motives? In the contemporary context of warfare, where there is no clear end to war, what does *jus post bellum* mean? And how is it related to the ethics of exit? These are some of the questions that a critical analysis of *jus post bellum* must contend with.

A brief genealogy of just war theory pointed to its roots in Roman and Greek antiquity, drawing from works of religious thinkers, political philosophers, and just war theorists such as Cicero, Thomas Aquinas, Saint Augustine, Francisco de Vitoria, and Hugo Grotius, among others (see 2.4.1.). Classical just war thinking was premised on natural law, which emphasized the teleological character of war and the legal and moral principles regarding justification of war and the conduct of war itself. By framing the waging of war as a form of law enforcement, the conceptual contours of a *jus post bellum* began to take shape from the Medieval period, although *post bellum* principles were implied in the other two components of the just war tradition, rather than as a distinct branch of the just war tradition. After the classical period, the next important phase in the trajectory of just war thinking was the transition to the law of nations (*jus gentium*) marked by the secularization and formalization of just war theory, and its grounding on a legalist paradigm. The next two periods: the era of positivism and the period of establishment of International Relations underscored the centrality of just war theory across the *ad/in/post bellum* framework. For instance, the view of peace as ‘the normal state’ of international affairs was affirmed by the establishment of the League of Nations and the conclusion of the Kellogg Briand pact which reiterated the law enforcement character of war. Subsequently, Article 2(4) of the UN Charter not only exemplified the codification of *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*, but also highlighted the importance of *jus post bellum* in the promotion of international peace and security (Peperkamp 2017:53). The post-Cold war era has also marked a shift in approaches to *jus post bellum* and the need for clarity about its composite principles and objectives.

Jus post bellum has been the subject of a series of scholarly debates. First, the maximalist versus minimalist debate is centered around the obligations and duties of the victor at war's end. Minimalist accounts of *jus post bellum* limit the rights of the victor over the defeated enemy, tied to the vindication of just causes in prosecuting the war. In contrast, maximalists view *jus post bellum* as imposing both postwar obligations and limits on victors. For instance, Bellamy (2006:214) argues that humanitarian interventions require intervening states to assist host populations in rebuilding the country. Also in the maximalist camp, Orend (2006:160), proposes principles of *jus post bellum* such as right, vindication, compensation and indications. Moreover, he makes the case for a new Geneva Convention to further consolidate *jus post bellum* and clarify legal principles applicable in the aftermath of war (Orend 2012:175). The maximalist vs. minimalist debate brings up the notion of 'minimal decency' as a goal of postwar justice with a view to leaving the country that was the site of conflict in a minimally decent state. For Orend (2012:187), a minimally just society is safe and run by a government that has local and international legitimacy and upholds the human rights of its people. For Walzer (2012: 43) and Bellamy (2006:214), *post bellum* regime change, in the case of an intervention aimed at overthrowing a brutal and aggressive regime, must be guided by local norms and legitimacy as a blueprint given that intervening states should not impose their own version of a post-intervention regime on the people of the country in question.

In addition to the maximalist versus minimalist debate, another facet of the debate on *jus post bellum* is the issue of dependency or independency in relation to *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*. In other words, should *jus post bellum* be considered within the bipartite structure of just war theory? Or should it be a distinct and independent category? Proponents of the dependency thesis maintain that *jus post bellum* considerations should be incorporated within *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello* in light of the applicability of conditions such as right intention, reasonable chance of success, proportionality and discrimination, which cut across the pre-combat, combat and post-combat temporal delineations (Pollard 2013:100). Moreover, the blurring of the lines between war and peace in the contemporary era has meant that it is increasingly difficult to pinpoint exactly when the 'post' begins - the official end of fighting does not automatically result in the end of the overall campaign of war or withdrawal of the victorious country's troops (Stahn 2008:623). On the other hand, Bellamy (2008:623) has urged for 'the justice of the peace to be evaluated independently of the justice of the war' in applying *jus post bellum* as a 'test of legitimacy in its own right'.

Despite the overlaps between *jus post bellum* and the classic just war theory, the addition of *jus post bellum* would ‘modernize’ the just war tradition and arguably fill the ‘legal void’ with reference to post-intervention moral and legal obligations and responsibilities (Peperkamp 2017:71). Similarly, Walzer (1977:21) asserts that *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello* are ‘logically independent’ meaning that moral conditions under *jus post bellum* should also be considered as a distinct or separate set of criteria.

The third major debate about *jus post bellum* has to do with the complex question of responsibilities - the duty bearers and the scope and nature of their responsibilities. There are practical and moral limits to obligations and responsibilities which necessitate the systematic incorporation of both backward- and forward-looking considerations, namely moral responsibility, outcome responsibility, causal responsibility, benefit, capability, community and role responsibility in assigning the duty to rebuild (Peperkamp 2017:113).

The collective action problems raised by the tradeoffs between the conditions that determine the duty-bearers of post-intervention reconstruction strengthen the campaign for a broadened remit of *jus post bellum*, including the need for an institutional framework for assigning international remedial responsibility. Furthermore, the nuances, ambiguities and complexities of wars and post-war situations in the real world are major crucibles for *jus post bellum*, which has largely been framed as a nascent moral framework rather than a legal obligation codified in international law. There remains a pressing need for a dynamic and flexible *jus post bellum* that is not only attuned to the modern context of warfare, but is also complementary to other post-conflict approaches such as transitional justice, R2P, peacebuilding, international humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights law (IHRL) (Demy 2015:355).

Chapter 2 also charted the evolution of the discourse and multifaceted debates on peacebuilding. The 1990s are mostly viewed as the heyday of the liberal peacebuilding approach, underpinned by core tenets of liberal internationalism such as democratic governing systems, market-oriented economic growth and promotion of human rights. Shortly after, the limits of the standardized, externally-imposed liberal peace model became apparent in the peacekeeping failures in Somalia, Rwanda, and the Balkans; and the statebuilding and peacebuilding failures of early 2000s in Afghanistan and Iraq. As the heady optimism of the 1990s morphed into harsh criticism, liberal peacebuilding found itself at a crossroads, caught between the ‘critical voices’ who question the normative and ethical foundations of the liberal peace model and increasingly challenge its viability; and ‘problem-solvers’ who criticize the

modalities and policies of peacebuilding, rather than dismissing the enterprise itself (Campbell 2011: 90).

In a broad sense, the central problematic of the liberal peace can be understood as a questioning of the ‘way, how and by whom peacebuilding is conceptualized and conducted’ (Schneckener 2016:2). The sustained debates about peacebuilding have taken various forms, ranging from its conception as a ‘normative project and analytical tool or concept, to its depiction as ‘a distinct set of social practices’ involving various actors and levels (Schneckener 2016:3). A useful framing of the critical perspectives about the liberal peace paradigm distinguishes three major debates. The first debate revolves around the normative and ethical foundations of peacebuilding with a specific focus on its universalizing assumptions. The second debate is focused on the conceptual-analytical level, by questioning the underlying theoretical assumptions, as well as the causal links between peace and concepts such as democracy, good governance and economic liberalisation (Schneckener 2016:7). This critique follows a similar line of argument with ‘power-based critiques’ which view peacebuilding as a projection of hegemonic order in service of the interests of Western powers (Chandler 2011:176). Furthermore, The Eurocentric worldview at the core of the liberal peace paradigm has resulted in the reproduction of racial, gendered and geopolitical hierarchies that divide the Western and non-Western worlds, coupled with an ontology of otherness pegged on a dichotomy between the liberal West and the non-liberal other (Sabaratnam 2013:263).

A second perspective – ‘ideas-based’ critiques, challenge the ‘universalistic mechanistic and reductionist’ assumptions at the core of the liberal peace which foster policy that are ill suited to the complexities and dynamics of the targeted states or societies. Additionally, instead of questioning the interventionist policies and practice practices, what comes under scrutiny are the liberal aspirations that are problematized as ‘too liberal’, hence resulting to failings in practice (Chandler 2011:187). A counterpoint to this category of critique is that there is ‘an area of confluence’ between the seemingly polar critical framings of the liberal peace. The commonalities include: the liberal-non-liberal binary; the evolving conceptual discourse on peacebuilding towards critical and emancipatory approaches under labels such as ‘the pragmatic turn’, or the ‘local turn’; and the view of ‘interventionist policies as necessary’ regardless of divergent views on the contours or tenets of a post-liberal alternative (Campbell *et al.* 2011:5).

The third debate draws on empirical dimensions, zeroing in on the operations and modalities of international peacebuilders. This critique raises methodological questions about the effectiveness or impact of peacebuilding, specifically, the yardsticks or benchmarks that can be used to measure effectiveness or success. Standards could range from the minimum of a negative peace to attainment of the goals of international peacebuilding missions. The highest standard of success is the realization of a positive peace aiming at conflict transformation. However, the complexity of peacebuilding tasks and dynamics on the ground often mean that there are no clear-cut benchmarks. Instead, what emerges is a complex and often messy interplay between context-related and actor-related variables (Schneckener 2016:7). Another area of debate is the question of sequencing various modalities for peacebuilding. While some practitioners and scholars argue for a minimalist or a light-footprint approach, others contend that a maximalist or heavy-footprint approach is suited for more transformative ambitions. This strand of critique closely mirrors the debate about peacebuilding strategies with different priorities and policies such as ‘liberalisation first’, ‘institutionalization first’, ‘security first’ and ‘civil society first’ (Schneckener 2016:10).

9/11 marked a critical juncture for the evolution of peacebuilding, reinforcing securitization of the international peacebuilding agenda and the resurgence of a state-centric security agenda. The post-9/11 macrosecuritization trend unfolded alongside ‘a crisis of confidence and credibility’ (Cooper 2007:605) in the Western-led liberal peace paradigm, against the backdrop of the failings and unintended consequences of large-scale interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq. The mounting criticism of the liberal peace model has been evident in the ‘local turn’ premised on critical and emancipatory approaches drawing from a range of theoretical frameworks such as post-structuralism, post-colonialism and critical theory, among others. The ‘local’ is defined as ‘the range of locally based agencies present within a conflict and post-conflict environment, some of which are aimed at identifying and creating the necessary processes for peace’ (Mac Ginty & Richmond 2013: 769). The focus on local actors, structures and agencies is reflective of what has been put forward as ‘the post-liberal peace’ and the ‘hybrid peace’ (Richmond 2011, Mac Ginty 2011). In this regard, the local turn presents ‘alternative sites and modes of legitimacy and authority’, giving prominence to buzzwords such as ‘local ownership’ and ‘context sensitivity’ in the design and implementation of peacebuilding intervention (Mac Ginty & Richmond 2013:775). For Donais (2021:550), despite the growing emphasis on local needs, preferences and agencies; local ownership has often been used as a legitimizing rhetorical device’ to mask the hierarchies and power

differentiations between subaltern and external actors at the core of the local-international divide.

Parallel to the local turn, resilience approaches have also gained prominence in current scholarly and policy discourses on peacebuilding. The rise of resilience has been driven by recognition of uncertainty and complexity, and the need to emphasize internal capacities, adaptation in self-organization (Chandler 2015a:13). At the meta-policy level, the move towards resilience approaches in peacebuilding is reflected in the UN's sustaining peace agenda as well as the EU's pragmatic approach in implementing its external action. Resilience can contribute to peacebuilding praxis in four ways: first, resilience can help societies develop complexity and non-linearity in their social systems; enabling change, self-organization and transformation (de Coning 2018:317). Second, a systems understanding of conflict and peace interventions may promote an integrated or comprehensive programming that links both short-term and long-term approaches across security, humanitarian and development sectors (Juncos & Joseph 2020:293). An example is the EU's integrated approach to crisis and conflict which is characterised as 'multidimensional, multiphased, multilevel, and multilateral' (EEAS 2016). Third, the emphasis on local dimensions of peace and bottom-up approaches highlights the potential of resilience to enhance local agency by shoring up internal capacities and capabilities. Finally, resilience thinking promotes human-centered approaches by shifting the focal point from the institution to the individual, and from institution-building to 'capacity development'. Hence, resilience thinking has brought to the fore local agency and adaptive 'endogenous strengths' of communities and social networks (McCandless & Simpson 2015: 6). In spite of the intuitive appeal of resilience as a conceptual tool and boundary concept, the ambiguity of the concept can lead to overstretch and loss of meaning (Joseph 2016:371). Furthermore, the overlaps between resilience and evolving discourses on risk and fragility may cast it as a form of governmentality that privileges neoliberal approaches promoting responsabilization and individualism (Walker & Cooper 2011:145).

Overall, chapter 2 sought to underscore the interplay between the concepts of the responsibility to rebuild, peacebuilding, and *jus post bellum*; and their convergence on key themes such as the uptake of stabilization and pragmatic approaches to promote sustainable peace. A nuanced analysis of the trends and developments in these concepts are instructive in understanding the contemporary peace and conflict landscape, as well as shifts in intervention practices across international and local sites. The conceptual and practical developments also have normative

and practical implications that touch on the theory-praxis divide, and the tensions and dilemmas in navigating ‘the post’.

Chapter 3 focused on the conflict in Libya between 2011 and 2020, delving into the complex dynamics of the conflict, including the actors, drivers and faultlines that cut across the local-international divide. Despite the initial euphoria that came with the toppling of four-decades long Gaddafi regime, the post-revolutionary transition succumbed to power struggles and a complex array of political, military and geopolitical dynamics that plunged the fragmented country into chaos. Set against the backdrop of the Arab Spring in the MENA region, the Libyan revolution began in eastern city of Benghazi on 15 February 2011 when the arrest of a human rights activist sparked demonstrations which later spread to surrounding towns and cities. By early March 2011 the NTC had been established as the vanguard of the revolution. As the regime reacted with brute force to dismantle the uprising, the NTC moved deftly in gaining international recognition as the legitimate representative of the Libyan people and positioning itself as a prospective transitional government in the post-Gaddafi era (Pack 2013:6).

The Libyan revolution was exceptional among the Arab Spring uprisings in several aspects. First, it was the only one that went on to be the target of an international intervention authorized by UNSC Resolution 1973 which imposed a no-fly zone over the country. Second, the speed at which the military and diplomatic response took shape was remarkable - it took 31 days for the international community to intervene in Libya. Finally, Resolution 1973, which was framed by the letter and spirit of R2P, marked the first time that the UNSC had authorized the use of force without host state consent. Overall, the convergence of contextual, geostrategic and political factors worked in favor of broad consensus for the intervention, propped up by the narratives of justification and ‘politics of exceptionalism’ at the centre of debates around intervention (Cunliffe 2020:12).

The euphoria that accompanied the toppling of the tyrannical regime turned out to be illusory, as enormous challenges of governance, legitimacy and deep structural drivers unraveled the post-revolutionary transitional phase. In this thesis, the conflict analysis in Libya was mapped across four phases between 2011 and 2020, up until the point a military stalemate and fragile ceasefire was signed. The trajectory of the conflict has drawn debate and controversy from a cacophony of voices, including those who have apportioned the greatest blame to the NATO-led coalition of intervening states who failed to enact a post-intervention strategy for Libya.

For these critics of the intervention who decried the mission creep and foreign-imposed regime change agenda associated with the implementation of Operation Unified Protector, the lack of reconstruction plan for Libya was a dereliction of duty on the part of the international community, a failure which enabled the breakdown of the transition and the descent into a protracted civil war. Nonetheless, the post-2011 civil war has to be understood as the product of the complex interplay of deep-rooted causes and multi-dimensional drivers that shaped it as an internationalized conflict.

Reflective of the ideological, political and local faultlines that underpinned the revolution, the post-2011 political landscape in Libya was characterized by fragmentation and polarization. The fissures were compounded by the absence of a central authority and a political and security vacuum that entrenched vicious power struggles among political and military actors. The General National Congress (GNC), elected in July 2012, clashed with Federalist and Islamist political camps, unearthing deep-seated grievances that eventually led to a widening east-west divide and eruption of armed conflict in 2014.

Exacerbated by predation of the state by non-state armed groups and militias, the fragmentation of the political landscape was a hangover from the *Jamahiriya* system bequeathed by the Gaddafi regime. The *Jamahiriya* system was configured on personalized rule centered around a strongman, patronage networks and informal structures of power and authority. Furthermore, the rentier structure fostered neopatrimonialism and a shadow state that thrived in the absence of institutionalized state structures, lack of representation, and a brutal security apparatus tasked with ensuring regime survival (Costantini 2018:40). These dysfunctional levers carried over to post-Gaddafi Libya, interacting with local and global forces and eventually resulting in the collapse of the transition. The breakdown in political order reached crisis point in 2014, amidst rampant insecurity, growing attacks by Islamist militants and crisis of legitimacy by an embattled GNC.

Parallel to the fragmentation in the political arena, the security sector was characterized by hyperlocalism and fragmentation, fostering zero-sum calculations, militarization and a predatory war economy. A defining feature of the Libyan security sector is hybridity, which meant that formal security institutions operated alongside non-state or quasi state actors (Badi 2020a:8). The inability of the transitional authorities to exercise oversight over the security sector enabled the proliferation of militias and brigades, locked in factional battles over revolutionary legitimacy and fuelled opportunism and rent-seeking behavior among armed

groups. A particularly counterproductive strategy was co-option in which the transitional authorities deputized the revolutionary brigades and groups. The hybridized security sector has hindered attempts at security sector reform (SSR) and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR), and sustained the legislative and oversight vacuum in the security arena (Sayigh 2015:10).

The climate of institutionalized violence and competing claims to power and legitimacy among political and security actors aggravated the security vacuum that was duly exploited by jihadist groups who terrorized the populace with assassinations, shootings and car bombs. Consequently, Gaddafi-era General Khalifa Haftar launched Operation Dignity in May 2014, a military campaign targeting Islamist militias and jihadist groups. Haftar's supporters consisted of militias, tribal forces, and former army units who merged under the banner of the LNA. A counterpoint emerged in Tripoli, in the form of Operation Dawn, bringing together Islamist militias and Misratan brigades allied to the GNC. The Operation Dignity versus Operation Dawn crystallized the east-west divide, against the backdrop of 2014 parliamentary elections which resulted in two rival governments - the Tripoli-based blocs from the former GNC that refused to concede in the elections, and the newly-elected HoR operating in the eastern city of Tobruk and allied with government of Prime Minister al-Thini based in al-Bayda (Wehrey 2020a:16).

As the crisis deepened, the UN (through the Special Representative of the Secretary General, Bernardino Leon) scrambled to facilitate talks between the warring Libyan factions. After an initial round of talks that stalled in Geneva in early 2015, a political settlement was realized in December 2015 in Skhirat, Morocco. Premised on a power-sharing deal, the 2015 LPA established a nine-member Presidency Council that would preside over a Government of GNA. It also retained the HoR as the legislative body and established the High State Council as an advisory body (ICG 2016:3).

Despite the inclusion of multiple dialogue tracks as part of the process, the LPA was deemed a failure shortly after it was signed. One major shortcoming of the LPA was the minimal engagement in the security track, which meant that pivotal representatives of armed groups had negligible impact on negotiations. Second, the LPA drew on a narrow support base given the rifts within the two major factions (Lacher 2015:3). Third, the institutional setup laid out by the LPA glossed over the incompatibility of demands by both the GNC and the HoR who held reservations about military and security provisions and composition of the unity government

(ICG 2016:1). Fourth, the survival of the PC was contingent on external legitimacy, specifically international recognition by key Western governments and the UN who pressed for a rushed agreement that would install a new government in Tripoli (Lacher 2018b:23).

When the GNA, led by Prime Minister Fayez el-Sarraj, took office in Tripoli in March 2016, it soon found itself captive to centrifugal forces such as internal divisions among the PC, liquidity challenges and infiltration by the oligopoly of militias that dominated Tripoli. The failure of the LPA was the result of a series of miscalculations and assumptions in the UN-led mediation process. In addition to the time-related pressure on SRSB Leon to finalize an accord, the political process that produced the LPA was based on a flawed premise that focused on the binaries of east vs. west, while neglecting the fundamental drivers of conflict such as ideological differences between the two factions (el Gomati 2020a:2). An additional flaw of the political process that birthed the LPA was the emphasis on expediency at the expense of internal legitimacy and representativeness of negotiating parties. Moreover, the fact that the security track failed to take off meant that provisions of security arrangements lacked traction and buy-in from pivotal stakeholders (Lacher 2018a:4). Indeed, the LPA sidestepped a major sticking point – the question of oversight over armed forces outlined in Article 8 which granted the PC authority as supreme commander of the armed forces (ICG 2016:14).

While the UN-backed GNA floundered, Haftar's power base grew as he moved to expand his territorial control to southwestern Libya, emboldened by steady military support from his foreign backers, mainly the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Egypt. In light of the LPA's failure to deliver the anticipated political compromises, the stalled UN-led political process opened space for intermeddling by external actors who launched competing forums for mediation. For instance, a series of talks were held in Abu Dhabi and Paris between 2017 and 2019, involving both Sarraj and Haftar, while also aiming to formulate an alternative plan to the LPA (el Gomati 2020a:6). The African Union (AU) also convened a series of summits between 2016 and 2017, which failed to secure attendance by key conflict parties such as Haftar, who disregarded the AU initiative (PSC 2017). The proliferation of unilateral mediation efforts parallel to the UN framework was a constant source of frustration for SRSB Salamé who decried the duplicitous actions of foreign powers in Libya - publicly supporting the UN-led process while contributing to the prolonging of the conflict by funneling military support to warring factions (Salamé 2018).

Following the fragile equilibrium between 2017 and 2019, a major turning point came in April 2019 when Haftar and his LNA forces launched an offensive against Tripoli, setting off the third civil war. The 2019 battle for Tripoli was a stark display of the internationalization of the conflict, especially due to the use of combat drones supplied by foreign powers shrouded by high degrees of plausible deniability and sophisticated disinformation and propaganda campaigns (Lacher 2020c). After a prolonged outreach for international assistance, the GNA's counter-offensive was beefed up by Turkish military support, leveraged on a maritime deal between Ankara and Tripoli that would secure the former's geostrategic interest in the eastern Mediterranean (Wintour 2020b). Turkey's military backing turned the tide of war in favor of the GNA-allied forces, who recaptured a number of strategic LNA strongholds and pushed Haftar's forces towards the Sirte-Jufra area, which later emerged as a red line for belligerents (Al Jazeera 2020a).

Meanwhile, on the political front, the UN attempted to breathe life into the peace process by convening the Berlin Conference of January 2020. Though severely undermined by the continued violation of the UN arms embargo by foreign powers, the main outcomes of the Berlin process were the consolidation of a multitrack approach (including political, economic and military/security tracks) that were buttressed by a follow-up process headed by an International Follow-up Committee made up of thematic working groups and a ceasefire monitoring mechanism (Germany 2020). The format of the Berlin process was a welcome step-up from Skhirat process of 2015, reaffirming the role the UN (under the auspices of UN Support Mission in Libya) as the lead actor in mediation and reiterating calls for a Libyan-led, Libyan-owned process. The Berlin process led to the LPDF in Tunis from 9 -15 November 2020, which formulated a transitional political roadmap and set elections for 24 December 2020.

Progress was also realized in the military track following a military stalemate that led to signing of a ceasefire agreement on 23 October 2020 (ICG 220b:3). In the economic track, a Russian-brokered deal between Deputy Prime Minister Maiteeq and LNA commander Haftar allowed for the resumption of oil production, while talks progressed regarding other issues such as the unification of sovereign institutions and the distribution of oil revenues (Dorda et al 2020d: 17). Despite the fragile peace that had taken hold by the end of 2020, against the backdrop of declared red lines, horse-trading and posturing in the political arena, and entrenchment of foreign powers with competing interests; the path towards elections was riven with procedural and institutional roadblocks and the persistent risk of a relapse into armed conflict.

In addition to outlining the conflict dynamics and main actors, a balanced analysis of the Libyan conflict must take into account the drivers of conflict and their impact on the intractability and trajectory of the conflict. For Lacher (2020a:2), a defining feature of the Libyan landscape is localism, which informed the embeddedness and fluid nature of political and military actors. A second driver of conflict is fragmentation, characterized by the absence of a central authority and the sustained crisis of legitimacy (Lacher 2020a:4). Third, oil featured as a conflict trap in Libya given its profile as a rentier state, which fostered distributive conflicts over control and distribution of oil revenues. Moreover, the oil economy entrenched patronage networks, which intertwined with illicit economic networks to create a hybrid political economy in which activities such as smuggling of goods and arms, extortion and corruption thrived in post-2011 Libya. According to el Gomati (2020a:3), ideology is a key driver of conflict in Libya, pitting an authoritarian political culture advanced by the LNA against a democratic culture, espoused by the GNA. The ideological clash also transcended the local level to the regional level, evidenced by the involvement of foreign powers such as the UAE and Turkey, who pursued ideological incompatible goals in Libya, compounded by geopolitical rivalries (el Gomati 2020a:18). Finally, geopolitics added to the complexity of Libyan conflict, enabling a complex web of foreign actors with a range of interests and agendas. Arguably, access to Libya's hydrocarbons featured as an enticement for engagement by foreign powers in the 2011 intervention and the armed conflict that followed, but the agglomeration of individual economic, ideological and geostrategic interests of external actors paints a more complex picture. In addition to the protraction of conflict, the internationalization of conflict muddled efforts at conflict resolution by undermining pivotal multilateral instruments such as sanctions and constraining incentives for negotiations. This was the case in Libya where foreign backers of warring factions have often dissuaded them from the negotiating table in instances where the former's interests have been threatened.

Building on Chapter 3, Chapter 4 delved into the conflict management and resolution efforts via unilateral and multilateral frameworks, and their practicability and functional value in an internationalized Libyan conflict. The internationalized nature of the 2011 Libyan revolution increased the chances that the trajectory of armed conflict and efforts at conflict management would follow a similar pattern of internationalization. As Gowan and Stedman (2018:171) have asserted, in response to the increase in new wars in contemporary security landscape, international conflict management has prioritized what can be labeled as 'the standard treatment for civil war' – a combination of mediation and the deployment of peacekeeping

forces (PKOs) to implement peace agreements. In spite of broad support and increased usage of this standard PKO-plus treatment regime in the aftermath of the Cold War, the evolution of global norms and the intractability of civil war in hard cases such as the DRC, Sudan and South Sudan have increasingly challenged the viability and long-term effectiveness of this standard treatment. Furthermore, cases such as Libya and Syria demonstrated an emerging trend in civil wars in the MENA region, specifically the complex convergence of local and global drivers which rendered the standard treatment unfeasible. Pertinent to Libya, the categorical rejection of foreign boots on the ground by transitional authorities precluded PKOs, in addition to the lack of consensus by powerful actors on the UNSC (Fearon 2017:28).

The prevailing international political climate and the context-specific features of the Libyan case informed the decision of the UN to establish the UNSMIL in September 2011, initially mandated with providing assistance to the transitional authorities in sectors such as rule of law, human rights and electoral support, among others (UNSC Resolution 2009). UNSMIL's concept of operations and mission design typified the 'light footprint' approach espoused by the UN in Libya, predicated on a limited number of staff and flexible short-term mandates. As it turned out, the failure of the transition and the eruption of civil war illustrated the limitations of UNSMIL in fulfilling its broad and ambitious mandate. To its credit, UNSMIL was instrumental in bringing the 2012 elections to fruition via its electoral support to Libyan High National Electoral Commission. However, the security sector turned out to be the insurmountable crucible for UNSMIL's viability. UNSMIL's support programs for SSR proved inadequate in the face of a fragmented security sector underpinned by competing claims of legitimacy and predation of state institutions by proliferating armed groups.

In 2014, UNSMIL's mandate was expanded to include its role as lead coordinator of international mediation efforts. UNSMIL's facilitation of the 2015 LPA and the 2020 Berlin process holds crucial lessons about the UN's mediation strategy, and the multidimensional variables that impact the success or failure of conflict resolution approaches. The trajectory of conflict management in the Libyan conflict entailed a combination of approaches namely, mediation and sanctions, aimed at two broad goals: mitigating violence and addressing issues at the core of the conflict. Moreover, the sequence, timing and interaction of individual approaches has been largely determined by the degree of alignment between the demand-side and supply-side of conflict management. The demand for conflict management is linked to the conflict characteristics (for instance, the existence of a mutually hurting stalemate) and disputant characteristics (for instance, history and relational dynamic of belligerents). Supply

of conflict management is exogenous - the capabilities and motivations of third parties such as states or IGOs get involved (Greig *et al.*, 2019:271). In this regard, the internationalized profile of the Libyan conflict is key to understanding the complexities of peace process and dilemmas faced by mediators.

The UN-brokered 2015 LPA was labeled a failure for several reasons, detailed in Chapter 4. Although the question of success or failure of mediation is a contentious and subjective matter, scholars have identified three broad indicators: (i) cessation of violence and formalization of a ceasefire, (ii) realization of a partial or comprehensive settlement, and (iii) transformation of the dynamics and relationship between the conflict parties (Greig *et al.*, 2019:178). By this account, the LPA failed to not only bring an end to the hostilities on the ground, but also in surmounting the institutional and political fragmentation that was a key driver of the conflict. Despite international support, the political process that led to the signing of the agreement was characterized by fits and starts due to a combination of design flaws and coordination problems amidst a plurality of mediation efforts by various third parties (Cherkaoui 2018).

While the multiple mediation efforts initiated by third parties, including states and regional organizations, were touted as complementary to the UN process; in practice, they undermined the UN process and contributed to the fractiousness of the conflict by engendering forum-shopping among belligerents and limiting room for manoeuvre in negotiations (Lacher 2018b:21). For instance, summits hosted by French President Macron between July 2017 and May 2018 put forward tight deadlines for elections, colliding with SRSG Salamé's action plan and entrenching the strongman narrative that elevated Haftar's role as a pivotal interlocutor on equal footing with GNA Prime Minister Sarraj (Taylor 2019). French involvement in the conflict was primarily motivated by a counterterrorism agenda that resonated with Haftar's putative campaign against jihadist groups, and the broader goal of containing the spread of violent extremist across the Sahel. Alongside European counterparts, France was also focused on stemming the flow of refugees and migrants to Europe across the Mediterranean a major impetus at the core of EU policy on Libya (EC 2017).

EU diplomacy in the Libyan conflict was marked by division and inertia, resulting in its marginalization as a key geopolitical and diplomatic actor. The most active EU states in the Libyan conflict (France, Italy and Germany) pursued divergent policies, undermining prospects of a cohesive European policy and limiting the EU's capability to play an instrumental role in a crisis in its southern neighbourhood. The focal points of EU foreign policy towards Libya

have been migration, counterterrorism and geopolitics enacted through the prism of individual interests of member states. For instance, Italy backed the GNA-allied forces in rooting out ISIS from Sirte in 2016. Additionally, Italy was instrumental in securing a deal with Libyan people smugglers and militias to detain migrants attempting to cross the Mediterranean. France prioritized its counterterrorism goals, publicly backing the GNA, while funneling military support to Haftar, alongside his Egyptian and Emirati backers (Megerisi 2020d:34). Germany adopted a measured approach towards Libya, limiting its involvement to support for the UN-led mediation initiatives to broker the 2015 LPA. Germany also played a facilitative role in hosting the Berlin Conference in 2020, driven by its commitment to multilateralism and desire to bolster the EU's crisis management approaches in Libya (Lacher 2021b:6). In the context of unilateralism by its member states, EU policy in Libya was limited to structural matters such as combatting illegal migration, and development-centric approaches through stabilization programming (Megerisi 2020d:31).

The preference for quick-fix solutions, anchored on a securitization logic, is evident EU's activities in Libya since 2015, specifically, CSDP missions such as Operation Sophia, EUBAM Libya AND Operation Irini. Development-centric solution such as the EU Trust Fund for Africa and humanitarian assistance via ECHO also underpinned by an overarching focus on the migration crisis, driven by domestic political pressure to 'do something' (Alagna 2020:2). In addition to lacking unity of effort, the EU's Libya policy has been criticized for its 'intention-implementation gap' and mismatch between policy goals of EU external action and local needs and priorities on the ground (Loschi *et al.*, 2018:23). The EU's missed opportunity in Libya stirs up critical questions about its geopolitical actorness and the context and conflict sensitivity of its crisis response approaches in an evolving context of armed conflict (Loschi *et al.*, 2018:3).

At the regional level, the AU also found itself increasingly marginalized among the flurry of mediation initiatives. Despite organizing a series of meetings between 2016 and 2017, and calls for an inclusive inter-Libyan dialogue, the AU's would-be mediation role was blighted by perception and credibility problems, especially in the eyes of the Libyan interlocutors. This negative view stemmed in part from Gaddafi's imprint across Africa and his historical relationships with a number of African statesmen (Chothia 2020).

The LAS was also criticized for serving as little more than a talk club in response to the Libyan conflict. Apart from providing regional buy-in for the UN-authorized no-fly zone over Libya

in 2011, and its inclusion later in the Quartet on Libya (consisting of the AU, EU, UN and LAS), the Arab League played a marginal role in response to the Libyan conflict, hampered by perennial disunity and rivalries among members (Fetouri 2020). Absent a regional diplomatic approach, Libya's neighbors, Tunisia and Egypt, resorted to individual initiatives and *ad hoc* arrangements such as ministerial meetings. Regional-level engagement also included the provision of good offices in support of the UN-led mediation of Libya. For instance, in support of the Berlin process launched in 2020, Morocco sponsored the Bouznika talks which convened conflict parties under the political track, while Egypt hosted the Hurgada talks which brought together military and security actors within the 5+5 JMC framework (Dorda et al., 2020b:13).

Affirming the observation that 77% of conflicts that receive conflict management experience multiple approaches which range from coercive to non-coercive instruments (Bercovitch & Fretter 2004), the international conflict management approach in Libya comprised of sanctions as well as mediation. The imposition of sanctions, including an arms embargo on Libya since 2011 both complemented and complicated mediation in several ways, underscoring the need for closer examination of the interactive effects of using multiple approaches in a conflict context.

Since the imposition of an arms embargo (ongoing at the time of writing) on Libya in February 2011 (UNSC Resolution 1970), the sanctions regime on Libya has been subject to several modifications and reviews in line with the evolving conflict dynamics and recommendations by the Panel of Experts. Despite the touted practicality of targeted sanctions to maximize pressure on conflict parties while minimizing negative humanitarian impact (Giumelli 2015: 1354); the UN arms embargo on Libya was a categorical failure, severely undermined by flagrant violations and legal loopholes that were duly exploited by Libyan factions and their international backers (Kirechu 2021). For example, the relevant UNSC resolutions focused on cutting off weapons supplies delivered via maritime routes while overlooking aerial and land routes used by Haftar's sponsors. Another major shortcoming of the sanctions regime was divisions within the UNSC over listings and avoidance of naming and shaming state parties that violated the arms embargo. France and Russia shielded the UAE from being singled out in UN reports and prevented Haftar from being listed (Kirechu 2021). The net effect of weak enforcement was an undermining of the UN's impartiality and the emboldening of local and international spoilers who were set on derailing the peace process. Furthermore, the diminished credibility of the threat of sanctions failed to effectively promote compliance with the peace agreement. Overall, the use of mediation and sanctions in Libya provides valuable lessons on

the synergies between the two instruments and the need to promote complementarity in pursuit of conflict resolution objectives. Given that the UNSC was the mandating authority, Libya was a missed opportunity for coherent and effective joint applications of UN sanctions and mediation through coordination and consultation between the UNSC, the sanctions committee, envoys and experts on sanctions and mediation (Biersteker et al., 2019:23).

Chapter 5 explored the ascendancy of stabilization in academic and policy circles, evidenced by its widespread usage by states and international organizations with varied conceptual and operational implications. The focus on stabilization is at the core of the central argument in this thesis, specifically, the uptake of a stabilization agenda in the responses of regional and international actors in Libya is causally linked to the lacuna in the post-intervention normative framework. The prominence of stabilization in interventionist discourses has to be contextualized within broader normative, geopolitical and strategic shifts that have impacted security discourses and practice. The redefinition of sovereignty as responsibility encapsulated by the emerging norm of R2P, coupled with post-Westphalian conceptions of international security gave impetus to the human security agenda and the liberal peace security culture (Kaldor & Selchow 2015:9). The hubris of liberal interventionism was punctuated by the events of 9/11, which reinforced the securitization logic in addressing the challenge of failed or fragile states. Subsequently, the failure of interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq to deliver ambitious statebuilding and peacebuilding goals contributed to international fatigue, which prompted the turn to stabilization. As the shortcoming of the liberal peace model became increasingly apparent, prompting a rethink of engagement in fragile contexts and a lowering of benchmarks, Western states reframed intervention as stabilization as a pragmatic response to instability (Muggah 2014a:2).

The resurgence of geopolitical competition in the wake of rising powers such as Russia and China also limited the ability of Western states to influence events on the ground against the backdrop of global disorder and a liberal order in crisis. At the regional level, Turkey, the UAE and Iran have moved to fill the void left by a disengaged US in conflict theaters such as Syria, Yemen, Iraq and Libya. The evolving geopolitical context and the challenge to liberal interventionism has steered Western states towards a policy of stabilization aimed at containment and management of pathologies associated with fragile or failed states (Belloni & Costantini 2020:68).

The conceptual foundations of stabilization are drawn from its application in the NATO-led operation in the Balkans in the 1990s, premised on the integration of civil and military approaches in fragile settings. Despite the lack of definition and conceptual clarity, the scope of stabilization activities expanded to include a wide array of policies and practices, including diplomacy and development policy instruments. The evolution of stabilization has also encompassed a wider variety of actors, including relief workers, diplomats and development experts (Zyck *et al* 2014:15). Under the umbrella term of stabilization, several governments and international organizations have formulated policy frameworks, guidelines and institutional models to plan and implement stabilization activities. The variation in meanings and interpretations has ranged from a view of stabilization as a strategic objective, anchored on comprehensive, integrated or whole-of-government approaches, to its conceptualization as a ‘set of discrete activities entailing everything from lethal operations to the provision of targeted aid’ (Muggah 2014a:3). Across various institutional models, approaches include decentralized, cross-department models, and integrated setups (see Table 4).

At its core, stabilization is an inherently political activity with the aim of strengthening the governing capacity and legitimacy of political authorities in conflict-affected states. The strategic goal of ‘transforming acute violent conflict into a political arrangement that permits nonviolent conflict management’, and the emphasis on legitimacy of political authorities underscore the normative framings of stabilization (Wittkowsky & Brewer 2020:8). In addition to the political agenda, the revival of stabilization following the Iraq and Afghanistan experiences corresponds with the pragmatic and resilience turns that have arguably reframed intervention in fragile settings. Seen in this way, the stabilization agenda is not novel but draws on discursive and practical continuities espoused by the state fragility agenda and the security-development nexus. When viewed alongside related concepts in the peace and security terrain, such as peacebuilding, COIN and post-conflict reconstruction, the overlaps and fluidity of conceptual boundaries make it difficult to delineate distinct outcomes while compounding the ambiguity and indeterminacy of stabilization. For instance, COIN and ‘hot stabilization’ dovetail in their objective of strengthening state capacity to deliver services and re-establishing monopoly over violence. Notably, there are key differences between the two concepts in terms of time horizons – COIN is aimed at long-term political and socio-economic re-engineering (Kilcullen 2012:140); whereas stabilization tends to be focused on quick-impact projects such as delivery of essential services or rehabilitation of critical infrastructure (Belloni & Costantini

2020:74). Additionally, COIN entails activities carried out by the military whereas stabilization draws on a broad array of actors and a multi-sector approach (Belloni & Moro 2020:8).

Pertinent to peacebuilding, the goal of conflict management and reduction of violence are commonalities with stabilization. Apart from this common aspiration, the two concepts diverge in several aspects. For instance, peacebuilding develops from a standardised format whereas stabilization is mostly context-oriented. Secondly, peacebuilding is envisaged as a long-term engagement whereas stabilization is mostly perceived as an intermediary activity that lays the groundwork for long-term interventions. Finally, the primary objective of stabilization is security, while peacebuilding is geared toward social, economic and institutional transformation (Belloni & Moro 2020:7).

Recapping the fundamental assumptions of this thesis, Libya stands as an instructive case study of the turn towards stabilization and the inclination towards a ‘security first’ and containment logic in the approaches of regional and international actors. Indeed, the focus on a statist understanding of rebuilding responsibilities, implicit in the preference for a light footprint approach and a minimalist UNSMIL, is coherent with the broader shift from ‘burden sharing to burden transfer’ by international conflict managers (Kobia 2020). It is quite telling that the attention of the international community on Libya waxed between 2014 and 2016, as ISIS and the migrant crisis stood out as existential threats to Western powers. Self-protection and the goal of containing transnational threats generated international consensus for a fleeting moment as international actors rallied behind the UN-led process to bring about a unity government that could partner with international actors on the migration control and counterterrorism. While Western states have maintained the rhetoric concerning democratization and long-term transformation, in practice, their policies and practices have been geared towards security imperatives in line with a stabilization agenda.

A prime example of priority shift towards stabilization is the Stabilization Facility for Libya (SFL), a multi-donor instrument established by the UNDP to support the GNA in delivery of essential services and rehabilitation of public infrastructure. The SFL had the political objective of shoring up the legitimacy of the GNA among the Libyan population, with the end-goal of buttressing local stability and conflict management that could be extrapolated to the national level in the long run (Wood & Wilson 2019). Despite operational challenges in the context of armed conflict, the SFL provided key lessons on enhancing local stability through coordination and partnerships with local and municipalities (Megerisi 2018b:20), as well as highlighting

potential of creating effective links between stabilization and development programming guided by conflict sensitivity and adaptability.

The EU's approach to the Libyan crisis is also coherent with the prioritization of stabilization, as outlined in strategic policy documents such as the 2016 EU Global Strategy, the 2015 ENP and the 2017 Issues paper on the parameters for the concept of stabilization. The gamut of the EU's policy instruments, whether through its CSDP missions in Libya or development programming via the EUTF are underpinned by security imperatives, particularly border management, migration control and counterterrorism (Raineri & Strazzari 2020:101).

The elastic nature of stabilization and the myriad interpretations by various actors has meant that its usage is not confined to Western policy agendas. Gulf states have embraced the stabilization agenda, parallel to assertive foreign policies and the push for regional stability in a changed geopolitical context (Behr 2020:129). The employment of both hard and soft power approaches in Libya by the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Qatar is indicative of their active roles as stabilization actors. In addition to provision of development assistance and military support to factions in the Libyan crisis, Gulf states supported conflict management efforts such as the Abu Dhabi summit that facilitated talks between Haftar and Sarraj. Though poorly defined in conceptual and strategic terms, stabilization efforts of Gulf actors in Libya have been in support of a political objective, namely, strengthening the political authority with the aim of shaping a long-term political settlement that is favorable to their individual regional outlook and visions. A crucial difference between the approach of Gulf states and that of Western actors is that the former have tended to use bilateral channels and have focused on directly influencing local power dynamics by engaging local actors whose sectarian interests, ideology and agenda align with their own. This has been the case in Libya where the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Qatar have collaborated with different political groupings and tribes, exacerbating region-wide ideological and sectarian faultlines such as the Islamists-secularists divide (Behr 2020:132).

6.3. Summative Research Findings

The main research question in this study was: how do the related concepts of the responsibility to rebuild and *jus post bellum* collectively constitute a systematic normative theory of post-conflict reconstruction? The assumptions about the under-theorized connections between the two concepts were explored by a subsidiary research question: what are the convergences and

divergences between the responsibility to rebuild and *jus post bellum*, and how should they be conceptualized in relation to peacebuilding?

By tracing the historical development, core tenets and debates applicable to R2P and just war thinking, this study highlighted the common threads between the two concepts, particularly with regard to the aftermath of conflict. Taking into account the evolving political and moral landscape, one major point of convergence between R2P and *jus post bellum* is the emphasis on human security and the common goal of sustainable peace. Second, both the responsibility to rebuild and *jus post bellum* are framed as normative concepts rather than as founding duties or obligations. The implications of their legal status and normativity are central to the philosophical and political discourses about the interplay between rights and obligations on one hand, and the ‘relationship between moral imperatives and legal norms and standards’ (Stahn 2014:107). Although developments in the normative bases of R2P and the just war framework point to traction of cosmopolitan approaches and emphasis on protection of human rights, the underlying moral or ethical imperatives have been subject to applicatory contestation. The record on post-conflict reconstruction, in cases such as the NATO-led interventions in the Balkans, or the US-led interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq, shows that ‘military intervention does not necessarily imply post-conflict responsibility’ (de Brabandere 2010:128). Chayes (2013:257), reiterates the absence of legal and robust moral norms of *jus post bellum* and the responsibility to rebuild respectively, by pointing to the self-protection and self-interest of interveners as main motivations for post-conflict reconstruction.

A third point of convergence between the responsibility to rebuild and *jus post bellum* is their grounding on the just war tradition. As outlined in the ICISS report, R2P drew on criteria in just war thinking such as right intention, just cause and right authority. Similarly, *jus post bellum* has gained ground as a crucial component of the just war tradition in keeping with the evolution of international law and ethics of war in an evolving global landscape.

In spite of commonalities, R2P and *jus post bellum* diverge in terms of scope of application and normative layers. For instance, R2P links international assistance to domestic failure of a state to meet its protection responsibilities; whereas *jus post bellum* is focused on the ending of war and takes into account both consequentialist factors and the relationship between interveners and domestic authorities (Stahn 2014:110). Moreover, some scholars contrast the ‘managerial and institutional’ focus of R2P with *jus post bellum* as an ordering framework or

a ‘guiding concept for interpretation of rights and obligations’ (Stahn 2014:108, Gallen 2014: 59).

Despite the divergences between the two concepts with varied implications for relevant stakeholders, the study concurs with the practical approach proposed by Stahn (2014:111) for the adoption of ‘a polycentric vision’ of *jus post bellum* and R2P and their relation to other fields, such as peacebuilding, SSR, and development that are also relevant to the post-conflict or transitional period. Such a polycentric approach could not only emphasize the dynamic interplay between R2P and the *ad/in/post bellum* framework, but also add legal and moral value to the interdependent and mutually-reinforcing goals pertinent to a dynamic view of the post. The complexity of the post-*bellum* period in societies also calls for a more considered and robust engagement on the complex linkages between *jus post bellum*, responsibility to rebuild and the modalities of peacebuilding, in view of developments in theory and practice.

The second subsidiary research question in the study was: Why was there a lack of a normative post-intervention framework in the aftermath of the NATO-led intervention in Libya in 2011? By highlighting the conceptual recalibration of the ideational architecture of R2P at the 2005 World summit, which in turn led to the sidelining of R2P pillar, the study showed that a key explanation for the sidelining of the responsibilities to rebuild by the international community was normative contestation surrounding the meanings of rebuilding as conceptualized by the interveners. According to Chandler (2015b: 3), the intervention in Libya represented a paradox of sorts in which the intervening actors made reference to R2P to legitimize military intervention, but at the same time were keen to distance themselves from post-intervention responsibilities for reconstruction and for outcomes.

On a related note, the discourses on post-intervention obligations did not occur in a vacuum but were embedded within wider a political and normative environment that was reflective of shifts in international intervention policies and practice. One example of the changing priorities of post-intervention priorities is the growing focus on local ownership which oriented policymakers and stakeholders across the international peacebuilding, security and development spheres towards complexity-informed, resilience-based approaches with an emphasis on capacity-building.

In the Libyan case, the study argued that emphasis on domestic ownership of rebuilding process in the aftermath of the intervention fostered a more ‘statist understanding the rebuilding phase’ (Keranen 2016:3), evinced by the light footprint approach at the core of UNSMIL’s approach

(see 5.5). Additionally, the transitional authorities in Libya categorically rejected the presence of foreign boots on the ground.

From a legal perspective, ongoing contestation about the nature of *jus post bellum*, as well as debates about the duty-bearers of rebuilding responsibilities brought to the fore the normative tensions and dilemmas surrounding thorny issues such as distribution of *jus post bellum* responsibilities, the question of which actors should bear responsibility for *jus post bellum*, and the extent and nature of this responsibility. Such contestation not only underscores the philosophical issues associated with collective action, but also the competing normative commitments and interpretations that are at the core of the range of ethical and moral imperatives for rebuilding.

The third subsidiary research grappled with the question of whether stabilization has proven adequate in providing an alternative to the lacuna in the discourse on post intervention strategies. While there is no universal definition or understanding of the concept of stabilization, the elasticity of the concept and its varied interpretations by stakeholders has been framed as ‘purposeful ambiguity’ (Zyck *et al* 2014:17), leaving room for flexibility in its design and implementation. Interestingly, the stabilization discourse has gained traction in an era when liberal interventionism is waning, partly due to intervention fatigue from the failings of the liberal peace model in paradigmatic cases; and as a result of changes in the global distribution of power and growing role played by rising powers in international peace and security (Costalli & Moro 2020:20).

Stability-driven interventionism has also been reinforced by the prioritization of state-centric security in the post 9/11 period. 9/11 was a critical juncture that not only upheld the security-development nexus at the core of the failed state thesis, but also pervaded the securitization framework in international intervention discourses and practice. The result was a pragmatic consensus around the notion of intervention as stabilization and the prevailing embrace of stabilization as a less costly and more pragmatic response to states of fragility (Moe & Geis 2020:401).

The arguments for pragmatism, as a major impetus behind stabilization, come up against a number of detractors. Stabilization denotes ‘an agenda of control that privileges notions of assimilation with international (western) standards’ (MacGinty 2012:20), giving rise to a complex set of vertical and horizontal tensions. For instance, the divergences between international and local priorities demonstrate the gap between policy objectives and

implementation in tune with local needs and exigencies (Muggah 2014a:7). A related point of contention is that stabilization could promote ‘the securitization of international conflict management’ (Wittkowsky & Brewer 2020:8).

The conceptualization of stabilization as a short-term activity or as a ‘filler between counterterrorism and counterinsurgency; between security requirements and reconstruction objectives; and between external missions and domestic responsibilities’ raises questions about its sustainability (Belloni & Costantini 2020:78). This feeds into larger debates about the metrics of success and impact across various contexts. The prioritization of quick wins and quick-impact projects and programs may have the effect of lowering performance standards and benchmarks by international actors whose view of ‘stability’ is predicated on conflict mitigation and ‘good enough governance’ (Grindle 2004). The lowering of expectations and outcomes by international actors raises questions about the long-term impact of stability operations and whether modalities of engagements are conflict-sensitive and sustainable. As Pedersen et al (2019:14) posit, the contradictions and dilemmas inherent in the stabilization discourse stir up two major reflective questions: (i) ‘Should stabilization be seen as an entry point that enables more long-term transformative international engagement ; or (ii) should stabilization be understood as an exit strategy aimed at enabling capacity of political authorities to maintain order within the territorial borders of the state?’

As the study underscored, the answers to these loaded questions lie in part with the difficult exercise of navigating the multivalent nature of stabilization as a concept. There are also practical challenges in the development of policies and guidelines for stabilization efforts in ensuring effective links between short-term imperatives of long-term activities, as well as promoting both local and international legitimacy (Pedersen *et al.* 2019:11). The integration of civilian and military approaches can also be impeded by coordination challenges as a result of capabilities gaps or incoherence at the planning and prioritization stage (Gervais & van Genugten 2020:7).

6.3.1. Theoretical contribution: intersection between normative IR theory and constructivism

This study engaged with normative questions and issues such as *jus post bellum*, the moral imperative to rebuild, the obligations and responsibilities of interveners and the arguments for and against humanitarian intervention and R2P. These concepts and issues are well within the remit of normative IR theory, which is concerned with the ethical dimension of international relations, including the role that normative ideas play in world politics, the nature of ethical conduct, and evaluating the invocation of values and moral principles with regard to practical issues and dilemmas. As Hurrell and Macdonald (2013: 57) assert, normative IR theory is concerned with first-order questions or what we ‘ought to do’, as well as second-order questions which make assessments of normative claims and arguments and what makes them ‘good’ or ‘right’ by adopting reasoning from political theory, moral philosophy and IR.

By analyzing issues and concept relating to the social dimensions of international relations, the line of enquiry in this study underscored the value of the constructivist research agenda in demonstrating empirically that norms matter, as well as providing analysis of when/where norms matter, and how/when norms change in the context of social reality and the processes of interaction (Denemark & Marlin-Bennett 2010). By way of an example, the subsidiary research question of why there was a lack of a normative post-intervention framework in the aftermath of the intervention in Libya was addressed by (i) highlighting the normative contestation concerning the responsibility to rebuild, and how the varied meaning accorded to it as an indeterminate norm, (ii) linking the afore-mentioned normative contestation to the discursive framings of relevant actors navigating the moral issue of responsibility, and (iii) contextualizing the meanings-in-use within a particular political and normative environment (see also Donovan 2021:3).

Essentially, the core of the study was an exploration of normativity pertinent to thorny issues such as *jus post bellum* and the responsibility to rebuild (which can be considered moral norms) and the extent to which these norms have relevance and applicability in the real world. As a result, the study shed light on the close interaction between normative IR theory and constructivism, including the potential benefits of such an affiliation in bridging the divide between the empirical dimensions of theory (the materialist assumptions of traditional IR theory) with the normative dimension relating to the assessment of normative positions and considerations. In this way, narrowing the gap between the ‘is’ and the ‘ought’ in IR not only

enhances research progress in speaking to issues of political action in contemporary world politics, but also adds value to IR's advancement as a discipline (Reus-Smit & Snidal 2009:691). Furthermore, the range of concepts and issues addressed by normative IR theory such as just war, distributive justice and cosmopolitan approaches to protection strengthen conceptions of IR as 'a practical discourse' to the extent that its theories are 'animated by the practical question of how we should act' (Reus-Smit & Snidal 2009:679). For instance, while the 2011 intervention in Libya was justified as collective action to forestall the commission of mass atrocities by the Gaddafi's military forces, normative theorizing opens it up to scrutiny about the ethics of action, the responsibilities of actors in the aftermath of intervention and how far these responsibilities extend (*jus post bellum*).

6.3.2. Methodological contribution: value of process tracing for within-case analysis

(i) Overview of the process tracing method

This thesis used process tracing as an analytical tool for case researchers to study norms as empirically observable social facts, as well as delve into 'questions of normative rightness' (Weber 2014:536). As indicated previously (see 1.6.2), process tracing is a within-case research method that 'identifies, validates and tests causal mechanisms within case studies in a specific, theoretically informed way' (Reilly 2012). Moreover, it is valuable for uncovering and understanding causal relationships by identifying cause-effect relationships and uncovering causal mechanisms, thus fostering a greater understanding how a certain outcome was brought about (Vennesson & Wiesner 2014: 95). Specifically, for case studies related to norm dynamics, process tracing is particularly useful in enabling researchers to 'evaluate empirically the reasons that actors give for their actions and behavior; and to investigate the relations between beliefs and behavior' (Jervis 2006).

(ii) Application of process tracing in the study

Functionally, process tracing is useful for theory-testing, theory-building or explaining-outcome case study research. This study made use of the theory-testing variant of process tracing, which entailed three key steps (see 4.8). Following an outline provided by Beach and Pedersen (2019: 9), the researcher followed a series of steps, specifically:

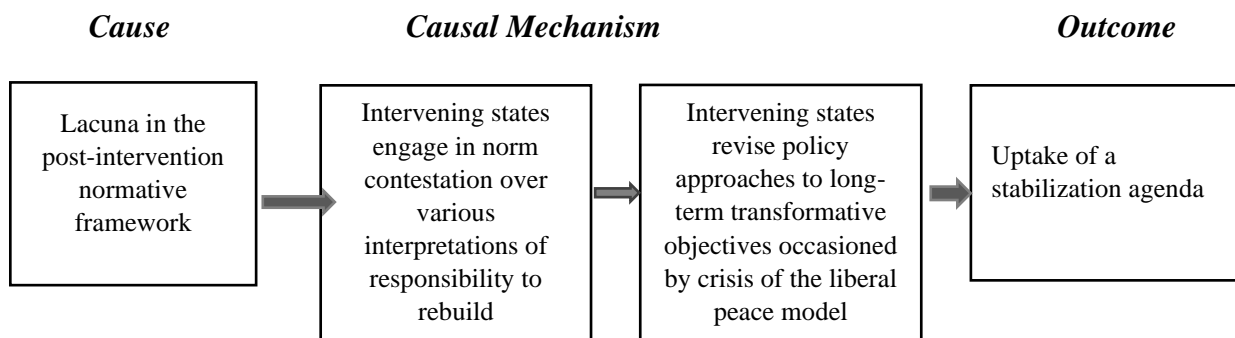
- (i) Step 1: conceptualization of a causal mechanism between X and Y based on existing theorization and the context within which the hypothesized mechanism operates;
- (ii) Step 2: analysis of the observable empirical manifestations of the theorized mechanism and depiction of the parts of the causal mechanism in terms of linking a cause and outcome;

(iii) Step 3: collection of within-case evidence to make causal inferences whether the hypothesized mechanism was present in the case and whether it functioned as predicted.

In detailing the conceptual framework of the study based on existing literature and logical reasoning, Chapter 2 made up initial, theoretical-level phase in the application of process tracing. Pertinent to the case of post-intervention Libya, the hypothesized uptake of stabilization was causally linked to the lacuna in the in the post-intervention normative and conceptual framework within the international security agenda. Specifically, the causal linkage between the cause (C) – the lacuna in the post-intervention normative framework, and the outcome (O) – the emergence of a stabilization agenda, was premised on a theoretical framework that then guided the empirical research.

The causal mechanism was depicted as follows:

Figure 2: Process and causal mechanism



The prior, theory-based expectations that underpinned the posited causal mechanism were garnered through an extensive search of existing theoretical literature to draw out potential mechanisms that link the cause and the outcome. Accordingly, a critical analysis of relevant concepts, namely the responsibility to rebuild, *jus post bellum* and peacebuilding, was used as a basis for conceptualizing the causal framework. Returning to the fundamental assumption of the study – the artificial disconnection and under-theorizing of the afore-mentioned concepts – the causal logic underpinning the causal mechanism could then be unpacked in a theoretically-informed manner, depicted as causal process observations (see Figure 2). Hence, this theoretical framing not only added structure to the development of the causal story, but also aided in sharpening the operationalization of theoretical expectations into observable manifestations. In this manner, the study was able to provide a clear picture as to how the causal processes actually unfolded.

Following the theoretical level, the next step was the empirical level of process tracing, which entailed the analysis of the observable empirical manifestations of the theorized mechanism. This phase also included the gathering of evidence, guided by the question: 'if causal mechanism (CM) exists, what observables would it leave in a case?' (see Beach 2017: 4). Resultantly, as Beach (2017:6) has suggested, the causal mechanism can be depicted in terms of *entities* (actors, organizations or structures) engaged in *activities* that effectuate the causal forces from the cause (C) to the outcome (O).

Broadly, the term evidence is used to denote the observable manifestations left by processes playing out within cases (Beach & Pedersen 2019: 4; Clarke *et al.*, 2014). Accordingly, the collection of evidence was guided by the understanding of evidence as 'any type of empirical material that has probative value in relation to determining whether the process actually took place within a case.' (Beach 2022:10)

Four types of evidence were used in the study to test whether each part of the causal mechanism worked as theorized (see Table 3). The types of evidence evaluated included sequence evidence which has to do with the timing of events relevant to the context and chronology of events relating to the causal mechanism; trace evidence (content of empirical material such policy documents and policy statements of local and international actors, speeches), and account evidence (interviews with experts on Libya and Libyans in diaspora). Table 3 (see 4.8) provided an overview of how each part of the causal mechanism was traced empirically premised on the diagnostic evidence relevant to the case under study.

Drawing on the work of Beach (2022:11) on evaluation of probative value of evidence in process tracing, the probative value of evidence used in the study was determined by asking a set of questions concerning the certainty of the expected observable (whether it had to be found), and if found, whether the researcher can trust the sources. As stated in the section on the methods used in this study (see 1.6), the researcher made use of multiple data sources that are accessible in the public domain and available for verification. The confirmatory power of the evidence used was strengthened by cross-checking various types of evidence (namely, sequence, account, trace), and using a mix of evidence-gathering procedures, including in-depth semi-structured interviews with participants (see Appendix 1) whose accounts were independent of each other.

A word on contextual conditions is also important. In this regard, the focus of Chapter 3 on post-intervention Libya, with clear conceptual and temporal delimitations, effectively clarified

the contextual conditions in which the mechanism was theorized to operate. In this case, the causal mechanism was theorized to be operating in the context of post-2011 Libya, characterised by fragmentation, hyperlocalism, proxy warfare which interacted with strategic, normative and geopolitical drivers of conflict that were at the core of the decade long-conflict that occurred during the period under study (2011-2020).

In addition to focusing on conflict analysis, Chapter 3 also examined the internationalization of Libya's revolution, including the narratives, and politics of justification and humanitarian exceptionalism that cohered with a range of political, strategic and legal factors that amalgamated to form a conducive environment for intervention in Libya (see 3.3.1 and 3.3.2). These considerations featured side-by-side with the geopolitical and geostrategic aspects of the Libyan context, including access to Libya's oil reserves, the West's efforts to curb refugee and migrant flows and countering the threat posed by armed jihadist groups such as ISIS and AQIM (see 3.3.2). Taken together, the drivers of international intervention, not only shaped the political and normative environment in which policymakers had to contend with, but they also played a key role engendering growing interest in stabilization as a strategic response to an evolving geopolitical context.

In tracing the causal process, one part of the causal mechanism was that intervening states would engage in norm contestation over various interpretations of responsibility to rebuild. The evidence for the empirical fingerprints of this causal process was drawn from the official and non-official discourses among the intervening powers in Libya that revealed how they interpreted the meanings of the rebuilding norm. It was shown that de-emphasis on the responsibility to rebuild in post-intervention in Libya was the function of two key elements: (i) the normative contestation surrounding the rebuilding norm as a part of R2P's ideational content (see 2.2); and (ii) the existing political and discursive environment that was shaped by growing disillusionment with costly and long-drawn interventions associated with the liberal peace model (see 3.3.1). Moreover, the rejection of foreign boots on the ground by the transitional authorities in Libya precluded the deployment of peacekeeping forces as part of what Gowan and Stedman (2018:172) have characterized as 'the standard treatment for civil war.'

The second part of the causal mechanism was hypothesized as a revision in the policy discourses and approaches of regional and global actors in their interventions in conflict-affected areas. If this part of the mechanism operated as predicted, what we would expect to

see is an orientation towards security-centric responses with an emphasis on stability and containment of perceived threats. It was shown that the emphasis on stability was a reflection of the lowering of expectations with regard to realisation of transformative objectives, as well as a symptom of the ‘intervention fatigue’ associated with costly and long-drawn interventions *à la* Iraq and Afghanistan. Furthermore, the inclination towards a light footprint approach, as was seen in the UNSMIL's concept of operations, was justified on the basis of promoting local (Libyan) ownership of the transition process, centred around a minimalist UN presence providing assistance in a limited areas of competence purportedly tailored to Libya's specific needs during the transition (see 4.4.2). The focus on local ownership also affirms Keranen's (2016:3) observation that the prioritization of domestic ownership of the rebuilding phase in the aftermath of the intervention was linked to a statist understanding of rebuilding responsibilities.

The traction of a stabilization agenda in post-intervention Libya was further manifest in the establishment of the SFL, a multi-donor instrument created under the aegis of the UNDP in partnership with at least a dozen international actors, including the EU, Japan and mostly Western states. The SFL epitomized the preference of international security and development actors for quick-impact project delivery, couched in the language of pragmatism, capacity-building and response to locally-informed needs. The SFL was also consistent with the view of stabilization as an inherently political endeavour with the aim of strengthening the legitimacy of a national political authority in Libya by ‘reinforcing local stability’ through measures that enable government to function such as provision of basic services, rehabilitating critical infrastructure and enhancing human security (Wood and Wilson 2019:13).

Taken together, the constituent parts of the causal mechanism and related within-case evidence detailed in the study can be taken as a productive account of process tracing – causally linking the lacuna in the post-intervention normative framework (C) to the prioritization of stabilization in the policy discourse and modes of engagement of international actors (O).

In doing so, the researcher was guided by best practices that act as crucial meta-theoretical, methodological and contextual guideposts. For instance, Bennett & Checkel (2015:23) put forward ten best practices that can be taken as ‘systematic, operational and transparent application of process tracing’. Similarly, Beach & Pedersen (2019:257) have formulated a checklist for the application of process tracing that includes guiding questions for conceptualization of the causal mechanism, case selection and evaluation of empirical material.

By applying process tracing and using post-intervention Libya as an in-depth study, the research study answers the fundamental research question as well as its subsidiary questions. The research hypothesis has been verified and validated and proven useful in meeting the broad objectives of the study.

An important question that needs to be addressed is the generalizability, or the extent to which the findings can be applied to other studies and other contexts. In qualitative studies, findings are generalized to theories rather than to populations. Specifically, in applying the case study design, this research aimed at ‘analytical generalization’ by ‘a carefully posed theoretical proposition that can take the form of a lesson-learned, working hypothesis or other principle that is believed to be applicable to other situations’ (Yin 2014:68). Based on the logic of theoretical sampling, the case study of Libya was selected for its insights and for heuristic purposes as a bounded case that attests to the particular set of concepts and hypothesized causal mechanism. The theory-testing variant of process tracing also has significant implications for the generalizability of this study, based on its inferential value in uncovering the causal process between the identified cause and outcome relevant to the selected study.

Drawing on extensive research, scholars working on process tracing (see Beach 2022; Beach and Pedersen 2019; Bennett & Checkel 2015) maintain that the scope for generalizability is partly determined by the level of abstraction attached to the theorized causal mechanism – the higher the level of abstraction (by limiting specifics and details of the causal mechanism e.g minimalist theories), the broader the scope of generalization. In view of the fact that this study advanced a systems understanding of the theorized mechanism, depicted as interlocking parts, the level of abstraction can be characterised as mid-range. This means that although some level of abstraction is maintained with respect to the contextual conditions that are case-specific, there is room for the theorized mechanism to be tested in other cases, indicative of what Bennett and Checkel (2015: 269) have termed ‘partial generalizability.’

6.4. Challenges experienced in the course of research

A substantial challenge experienced in the course of data collection was the inability to access Libya as the key site for fieldwork. The volatility and ongoing armed conflict during the time period covered by this study (2011-2020), barred the researcher from entry to Libya due to safety concerns.

A further limitation on the research process were international travel restrictions and lockdowns as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic that became a global public health emergency

in December 2019. Despite these limitations, the researcher made use of virtual platforms to conduct interviews with relevant stakeholders, namely Libyans in diaspora and experts working in sectors pertinent to the study.

6.5. Recommendations for future research

The failed SSR and DDR efforts in the hybridized and fragmented Libyan security sector have implications for design and approaches to security sector governance. The limitations of a state-centric, top-down approach call for a rethink of SSR/DDR blueprints in Libya, taking into account specific features such as hybridity, fragmentation, the political economy of armed groups and the degree of social embeddedness (Badi 2020a:91). One area for future research is the potential of an approach centred on ‘security sector stabilization’ (SSS) which looks to blend informal, interim stabilization measures and post-ceasefire security arrangements (Badi & Gallet 2021:8). SSS could lay the groundwork for long-term visions of SSR by bridging the gap between the priorities of stabilization, SSR and security provisions outlined in ceasefire agreements. Furthermore, a focus on SSS as a pragmatic and tailored approach to SSR in fragile settings could buttress the transitional process, create synergies across the political and the military/security tracks of peace agreements and forge a nexus between short-term priorities and long-term security governance (Badi & Gallet 2021:14).

The emphasis on the primacy of politics at the heart of civilian and military engagement in fragile settings is a recurrent theme across academic and practitioner discourses on security. The inherently political character of stabilization has also encouraged reflections on the need to establish links between stabilization and development programming with a focus on conflict sensitivity, flexibility, local needs assessment and coherence across security, humanitarian and political sectors. The contested nature of stabilization notwithstanding, the imperative of pairing short-term and long-term initiatives to ensure sustainable impact has elevated the stabilization-development nexus as a fundamental policy concern and subject for future research.

With reference to questions about norms, responsibilities and duties applicable in the aftermath of intervention, the findings of this study could build on common ground between constructivism and practice theory that has emerged in recent years as a key research agenda in international practice theory. One of the research objectives of this study, which was to critically investigate the utility of constituting the responsibility to rebuild and *jus post bellum* as a collective, systematic theory of post-intervention, could potentially be explored from a

practice lens by examining the relationship between norms and practices. This could be of mutual benefit in advancing dynamic research agenda in both norms research and international practice theory, in addition to producing relevant knowledge that transcends the scholar-practitioner divide.

6.6. Conclusion

Growing international focus on sustainable peace has brought to the fore salient questions around what happens in post-conflict environments. The fact that a large number of post-conflict states witness a relapse into conflict within a few years emphasizes the need for critical and holistic analysis of the concepts of peacebuilding, *jus post bellum* and the responsibility to rebuild. Although all three concepts diverge along variant conceptual, normative and policy agenda, the common thread illustrated in this study is that they all seek to promote a positive peace, centred on human security and conflict transformation. Moreover, all three concepts have been subject to power and ideas-based critiques that cut across the theory-practice divide.

Against the backdrop of normative and strategic shifts in international security, the impasse of the liberal peace has provided fertile ground for the ascendancy of stabilization, particularly as a pragmatic mode of international engagement in fragile settings. Although the intended and unintended consequences of stabilization will come to light in the years to come, its multivalent character opens it up as a boundary concept for the broad interpretation of approaches to peace and security challenges, concurrent with the pragmatic turn and the rise of resilience approaches. Finally, the study of post-2011 Libya was underscored as an instructive case about the complexities of winning peace in an internationalized and protracted conflict, as well as the need for a tailored post-intervention strategy in rapidly evolving (geo)political and security landscape.

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Appendix 1: List of interviews

Alunni, Alice. Research Fellow and Libya Expert, School of Government and International Affairs, Durham University, 20 November 2020 via Skype

Collombier, Virginie. Part-time Professor and Scientific Coordinator for the Middle East Directions Programme at the Robert Schuman Center for Advanced Studies, European University Institute. 16 October 2020 via Skype.

El Taraboulsi-McCarthy, Sherine. Libya expert and Research Fellow Overseas Development Institute, 23 November 2020 via Skype

Eljarh, Mohamed. Libyan affairs specialist, CEO of Libya Outlook, and regional manager for CRCM North Africa in Libya. 8 October 2020 via Skype

Fetouri, Mustafa. Independent Libyan academic and freelance journalist covering MENA region, 31 October 2020 via Skype.

Khalifa, Asma. Libyan activist, researcher and co-founder of the Tamazight Women's Movement (TWM). 14 December 2020 via Skype

Lacher, Wolfram. Senior Associate at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP), 5 November 2020 via Skype

Megerisi, Tarek. Policy Fellow, North Africa and Middle East programme, European Council on Foreign Relations, 24 July 2020 via Skype

Pack, Jason. Independent analyst, President and founder of Libya Analysis. 5 December 2020 via Skype

Profazio, Umberto. Maghreb Analyst at the NATO Defense College Foundation, 5 October 2020 via Skype

Wehrey, Frederic. Senior fellow in the Middle East Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. 24 November 2020 via Skype