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# The Role of External Actors in the Arab Spring

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## Abstract

This study critically analyzes the multifaceted roles played by foreign entities in the Arab Spring, illuminating the intricate interplay between external actors and historic political upheavals. The investigation meticulously examines the engagement of foreign actors, revealing the complexities and contradictions inherent in their involvement. While the Arab Spring initially emerged as a grassroots movement, it became intertwined with geopolitical motives, laying bare inconsistencies in external support. The intervention in the Libyan case serves as a poignant example of the repercussions of unchecked involvement, highlighting the importance of adhering to international norms and comprehensive post-conflict planning. Russia's role in the Syrian war illustrates the prevalence of power politics over human rights considerations. The post-Arab Spring period in Egypt and Tunisia exposes the vulnerability of democratic transitions, emphasizing the imperative of sustained institution-building. Recommendations for future engagements advocate for the prioritization of self-determination, multilateral collaboration, and long-term strategies. The Arab Spring experience underscores the compelling need for principled foreign interventions.

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## Introduction

The Arab Spring (2010-2017) appeared to be a spontaneous surge of grassroots action motivated by long-standing

grievances against repressive governments, economic issues, and a desire for political change. However, the swift involvement of foreign actors in the unfolding events has cast doubt on the genuineness of their objectives (Arcos & Palacios, 2018). While these foreign players presented themselves as proponents of democratic ideals and human rights, their actions often contradicted their stated intentions. This split between rhetoric and action creates a significant contradiction that underscores the essence of their commitment.

The United States and the European Union (2010-2011) exemplify the paradox of their participation in the Arab Spring by projecting an image of democratic unity while concurrently providing a form of assistance that was often selective, instrumental, and aligned with short-term strategic interests (Bremberg, 2018). The alignment of these actors with specific administrations for immediate advantages raises significant doubts about their dedication to broader democratic objectives. The resulting lack of trust among affected communities underscores the pressing need to reconsider foreign policy approaches that consistently prioritize equitable support for democratic aspirations across the region.

Furthermore, the perils of uncontrolled external involvement are evident in Libya (2011). The NATO-led military intervention in Libya, purportedly aimed at safeguarding civilians, not only fell short of achieving its stated objectives but also destabilized the country, immersing it in a prolonged state of turmoil (Powell, 2012). The consequences of this action underscore the significance of adhering to international legal norms and comprehensive post-conflict planning to prevent unforeseen and adverse consequences.

Russia's involvement (2015) in the Syrian war emphasizes the intricate interplay between geopolitical interests and considerations for human rights (Schmidt, 2019). The focus on power politics and proxy conflicts over the welfare of the population affected by these disruptions underscores the intricate interplay between geopolitical interests and authentic considerations for human rights and democratic governance. Encouraging international discourse and cooperation emerges as a feasible countermeasure, underscoring the capacity of multilateral approaches to mitigate the influence of self-interested external actors.

The vulnerability of nascent democratic systems in Egypt (2011) and Tunisia (2010-2011) underscores the crucial need for continuous and extended aid (Kashina, 2022). This fragility underscores the crucial requirement for continuous and extended aid in building institutions, fostering civil society development, and establishing transparent governance mechanisms. The importance of shifting from outcome-focused strategies to sustained capacity-building endeavors is evident in the aftermath of the Arab Spring (Grinin & Korotayev, 2022).

Based on these critical observations, the subsequent study concludes with recommendations aimed at shaping more positive external role in future political upheavals. These ideas argue for a strategy based on self-determination, multilateral cooperation, and long-term strategic planning. External players can play a more effective and ethical role in supporting democratic movements by emphasizing the genuine desires of impacted communities (Bayat, 2013). Incorporating the lessons learned from the Arab Spring into international interventions is essential for creating a more stable and just global environment (Barmin, 2022).

## Literature Review

The literature on the Arab Spring (2010-2017) and the engagement of external actors offers a comprehensive understanding of the intricate dynamics shaping the region's political landscape. Previous studies have explored the EU's involvement in the Arab Spring, with (Börzel et al. 2015) highlighting the limited impact of both the EU and foreign actors on these events. (Ekiz, 2018) provides a more in-depth analysis of the EU and its member states, investigating their roles, contributions, and implications for the Arab Spring.

(Bremberg, 2018) examines the EU's reaction, highlighting the practice of foreign policy during crises. Del Sarto (2016) also investigates how normative components impact the EU's policy, diving into its interactions with borders and the Arab Spring. While Ergun (Ergun, 2018) broadens the scope by examining the engagement and relations of the United States, Russia, ISIS, and the PYD/YPG with violent non-state entities in the context of the Syrian civil conflict,

The geopolitical dimensions of the Syrian war are examined by Phillips (Phillips. 2019) through an assessment of international and regional processes. (Schmidt, 2019) adds by examining the regional security complex in the Middle East and its influence on the Syrian civil war. (Megerisi, 2020) explores geostrategic elements inside the civil conflict in Libya, whereas (Barmin, 2022) gives insights into Libya's revolutionary terrain (2011).

(Grinin & Korotayev, 2022) analyze the theoretical underpinnings of the Arab Spring, delving into its causes, circumstances, and driving factors. (Kuznetsov, 2022) focuses on Tunisia's Jasmine Revolution (2010-2011) as a trigger for the larger Arab Spring revolutions (2010-2017). (Haseeb 2012) previously analyzed and reevaluated the Arab Spring's repercussions and implications.

(Doyle, 2016) adds to the literature by delving into the politics of global humanitarianism and the duty to protect, particularly in the aftermath of Libya. (Maolood Sabea'a, 2015) explores the United States' stance throughout Egypt's political transition, underscoring the responsibilities of external players in internal transformations.

This literature study highlights the diverse roles and effects of foreign players on the Arab Spring (2010-2017), ranging from normative influence to geopolitical dynamics and reactions. The diversity of viewpoints broadens our understanding of the complex link between foreign entities and the historic events that transpired during the Arab Spring.

## II. The Paradox of Professed Values and Actions

The Arab Spring, marked by its fervent aspiration for democracy and human rights throughout the Middle East and North Africa, seemed to present foreign stakeholders with an opportune moment to endorse these universal principles. However, a contradiction arises when these external players, such as the United States, the European Union, and Russia, position themselves as champions of democratic norms, while their actions unveil a contrasting reality. This paradox lies at the core of the intricate involvement of external actors in the Arab Spring, and its exploration underscores the complexities and inconsistencies inherent in their engagement (Börzel et al., 2015).

Externally, these players endeavored to portray themselves as advocates of democratic reform, invoking human rights

and democratic values as driving factors for their involvement. This intentional alignment with the pro-democracy sentiment of the Arab Spring bestowed an appearance of legitimacy upon their actions. However, the contrast between the professed ideals and the tangible support extended by these players exposes a concerning divide (Arcos & Palacios, 2018). Despite the rhetoric of democratic solidarity, their actions often lean toward a selective and utilitarian form of engagement.

The gap between the professed ideals of democracy and human rights and the concrete assistance provided constitutes a significant aspect of this puzzle. For instance, the United States (2010) and the European Union (2011) were seemingly prepared to endorse the democratic aspirations of the uprisings (Bremberg, 2018). Nevertheless, their backing often seemed rooted in geopolitical considerations and the preservation of regional stability, resulting in practical collaborations with authoritarian regimes. This discerning aid generated a rift between the discourse and actions of foreign actors, giving rise to apprehensions about the genuineness of their dedication to broader democratic goals.

The selective and utilitarian nature of external involvement also symbolizes this dichotomy. The tendency to back specific actors or groups aligned with their interests, rather than supporting democratic movements in their entirety, unveils the instrumental perspective that guided their engagement (Bremberg, 2018). Consequently, the aspirations for universal democracy within the Arab Spring were contorted to align with the immediate aims of these foreign stakeholders. The strategic calculation underpinning this approach introduces intricacies that cast doubt on the authenticity of their support and the coherence of their principles (Grinin & Korotayev, 2022).

This contradiction holds implications for the legitimacy and authenticity of external actors' involvement in the Arab Spring (Börzel et al., 2015). The discrepancy between their stated principles and their actions fosters a sense of distrust among the populations they purport to support. This discord eroded the credibility of external interventions and cast uncertainty on their influence in shaping the outcomes of the uprisings. Moreover, the perception of self-serving agendas tarnished these actors' reputations on the global stage, impeding their ability to foster genuine democratic reform.

The professed principles and actions of external players during the Arab Spring illustrate the intricacies and ambiguities of their engagement. Portraying these actors as champions of democracy and human rights, while simultaneously offering selective and utilitarian support, gives rise to substantial doubts about the genuineness of their involvement (Bayat, 2013). The repercussions of this paradox encompass issues of credibility and authenticity, influencing the efficacy of their interventions and shaping the perceptions of the affected populations. Unraveling this contradiction is essential not only for grasping the intricacies of the Arab Spring's dynamics but also for shaping future strategies aimed at assisting democratic movements in the region and beyond.

### III. Balancing Short-Term Strategic Gains and Long-Term Democratic Aspirations

The participation of external actors in the Arab Spring marked a crucial juncture where short-term strategic gains clashed with the movement's enduring democratic objectives (Arcos & Palacios, 2018). Stakeholders like the United States (2010), the European Union (2011), and Russia (2015), who strategically aligned themselves with different administrations

and groups, brought to the fore the intricate interplay between immediate interests and the overarching aim of long-term democracy (Bremberg, 2018). This equilibrium, or rather lack thereof, holds implications for the broader democratic trajectory of the region, underscoring the necessity of readjusting foreign policy to offer sustained and tangible assistance for democratic transitions.

The alignment of external actors with particular regimes for immediate strategic advantages generated a clash between geopolitical interests and the democratic objectives symbolized by the Arab Spring (Grinin & Korotayev, 2022). The convergence of interests often led to practical partnerships with governments whose actions ran counter to the aspirations of the uprisings. While this strategic alignment might yield transient stability, it jeopardizes the fundamental democratic processes that external parties ostensibly support.

The interaction between short-term advantages and long-term democratic objectives presented external actors with both a moral and strategic dilemma. While aligning with governments might offer immediate gains, it often comes at the expense of the populace's authentic democratic aspirations (Mathlouthi, 2021). The narrowed emphasis on short-term stability often overshadowed the broader objective of fostering accountable governance, human rights, and political pluralism—essentials of enduring democracies (Del Sarto, 2016).

The fundamental risk of this approach lies in its potential to undermine the broader process of democratization (Zandee et al., 2016). External actors inadvertently fortified authoritarian regimes by favoring short-term stability above the enduring growth of democratic values and institutions. Such assistance could bolster authoritarian tendencies, hinder the progress of democratic institutions, and erode the trust and influence of local communities. When manipulated for immediate gains, the Arab Spring's vision of democratic reform is at risk of fading into disillusionment and discontent.

Foreign policy needs to be realigned to reconcile short-term strategic interests with the enduring democratic objectives of the Arab Spring (2010-2017). The insights gained from these uprisings underscore the significance of consistent and equitable backing for democratic movements (Schmidt, 2019). Instead of primarily concentrating on governments, external actors should give precedence to the broader objectives of democratic change and institution-building (Bayat, 2013). This realignment demands a nuanced understanding of evolving political landscapes, a departure from short-term gains, and a dedication to the sustained process of democratic transformation (Doyle, 2016).

The conflict between short-term strategic advantages and long-term democratic aspirations poses a significant challenge in the engagement of external actors during the Arab Spring. Forming strategic partnerships with particular regimes runs the risk of eroding the very principles of democracy and human rights that these players purport to endorse. The repercussions of this discrepancy extend to the broader democratic process and stability of the region. By readjusting foreign policy with an emphasis on sustained commitment to democratic transitions, it is possible to rectify this disparity and contribute to a more genuine and enduring democratic transformation (Maolood Sabea'a, 2015).

#### IV. Unintended Consequences of Unilateral Actions: The Libyan Case

The Arab Spring introduced a phase of upheaval and transformation, wherein external stakeholders held considerable

sway over the outcomes of the protests (Barmin, 2022). The Libyan situation stood out as one of the most striking instances highlighting the unforeseen consequences of unilateral actions. The NATO-led military intervention in Libya in 2011, ostensibly initiated to safeguard civilians and promote stability, acted as a stark reminder of the hazards associated with unchecked external interference. This instance not only underscores the complexities of foreign involvement but also underscores the importance of adhering to international legal norms and the crucial insights to be gleaned for future interventions (Petersson, 2023).

The NATO-led military intervention (2011) in Libya was justified on the grounds of safeguarding civilians and preventing a humanitarian catastrophe. External entities justified their involvement as a morally justified reaction to the unfolding crisis. Nevertheless, the declared objectives of safeguarding people were quickly eclipsed by unanticipated repercussions that reverberated across the region (Petersson, 2023). The military campaign not only exacerbated internal divisions but also culminated in the fragmentation of the country and the prolongation of a state of turmoil.

The Libyan example serves as a cautionary tale, emphasizing the importance of adhering to international legal principles when contemplating external intervention. The global community has embraced the concept of Responsibility to Protect (R2P) (Kowalski, 2023), which underscores the necessity to prevent and address mass atrocities (Megerisi, 2020). However, the intervention in Libya (2011) raises questions about the execution of this idea. The initial focus on safeguarding civilians was swiftly overshadowed by broader objectives, highlighting the challenge of implementing R2P while staying aligned with its initial purpose.

The significance of adhering to international legal principles is two-fold. Firstly, it establishes a transparent and accountable framework for external actions, curbing the tendency towards unilateral agendas that could exacerbate tensions. Secondly, it safeguards the credibility and legitimacy of foreign endeavors, mitigating the perception that they are driven by self-interest rather than genuine humanitarian concerns (Powell, 2012). The Libyan scenario underscores the necessity of meticulously following these criteria to avert unforeseen consequences and uphold the values of transparency and legitimacy.

The impact of the Libyan example has resonated across the landscape of future operations. It underscores the significance of long-term post-conflict planning that extends beyond the immediate military engagement. The aftermath of an intervention necessitates an in-depth understanding of the country's internal dynamics, cultural nuances, and political structures (Powell, 2012). Additionally, the example highlights the requirement for a multilateral strategy that encompasses diverse viewpoints, reduces the potential for unchecked unilateralism, and fosters more informed and holistic decision-making.

The Libyan situation within the context of the Arab Spring serves as a stark illustration of the unanticipated consequences stemming from unilateral foreign interventions. Although the military action was initiated with noble intentions, it rapidly descended into chaos and instability (Megerisi, 2020). This case underscores the importance of adhering to international legal principles, especially when implementing the Responsibility to Protect concept. The insights gleaned from this example hold relevance for future interventions, necessitating thorough preparation, international collaboration, and a resolute dedication to minimizing unforeseen outcomes that could exacerbate conflicts and hinder authentic democratic

ambitions.

## V. Power Politics and Proxy Conflicts: Russia's Involvement in Syria

The Arab Spring, a catalyst for change across the Middle East, created a context in which external actors could pursue their interests in a region undergoing substantial transformation (Börzel et al., 2015). Russia's involvement (2015) in the Syrian war illustrates how power politics and proxy conflicts might overshadow considerations of human rights and democratic governance (Phillips, 2019). This engagement not only impacted the trajectory of the Arab Spring but also underscored the intricate interplay between geopolitical interests and the importance of fostering international dialogue and cooperation.

Russia's strategic objectives in Syria exemplify the interplay of power politics and regional dynamics. Its actions were driven by the desire to secure its naval port in Tartus, maintain access to the Mediterranean, and foster a strategic partnership with the Assad administration (Schmidt, 2019). While Russia officially articulated concerns about stability and counterterrorism, its involvement was primarily motivated by geopolitical considerations. This prioritization of strategic gains over human rights and democratic principles underscores the inherent complexities in the intentions of external actors (Kowalski, 2023).

Russia's intervention (2015) in Syria extended its influence beyond its national borders, exerting an impact on the trajectory of the Arab Spring (2010-2017). Through its support of the Assad administration, Russia actively played a role in preserving an authoritarian regime that contradicted the aspirations of the uprisings for democratic transformation (Bayat, 2013). This involvement inadvertently reinforced the authoritarian paradigm, undermining the momentum of pro-democracy movements and prompting regional actors to reassess their objectives.

Consequently, the necessity to promote international dialogue and collaboration becomes evident. The Syrian crisis underscored the widespread consequences of external interventions driven by power politics (Zandee et al., 2016). Creating avenues for multilateral engagement, transparent negotiations, and comprehensive communication can mitigate the influence of self-interested external actors (Powell, 2012). Such discourse can serve as a platform to reconcile divergent viewpoints, tackle regional challenges, and formulate solutions that transcend immediate gains.

The Syrian war illustrates how external intervention driven solely by self-interest constrains the potential for significant transformation (Akhmedov, 2022). When geopolitical considerations outweigh ideals such as human rights and democracy, there is a danger of perpetuating conflict and obstructing genuine progress. The complex interplay between the interests of external actors and regional dynamics underscores the requirement for a more nuanced approach—one that embraces multilateralism and prioritizes the holistic welfare of the affected communities (Megerisi, 2020).

Russia's involvement (2015) in the Syrian war unveils the intricacies of power politics and proxy conflicts in shaping the trajectory of the Arab Spring (Phillips, 2019). Elevating strategic aims above human rights and democracy serves as a cautionary tale about the intricacies of foreign engagement. The significance of fostering international dialogue and collaboration cannot be overstated (Haseeb, 2012). A multilateral approach that considers the diverse dynamics of

conflicts is crucial to transcend self-interest and create a more stable and equitable global political landscape that honors the genuine aspirations of affected communities (Ergun, 2018).

## VI. Vulnerability of Nascent Democracies: Aftermath in Egypt and Tunisia

The Arab Spring triggered a wave of optimism as individuals throughout the Middle East and North Africa pursued democratic governance and human rights (Börzel et al., 2015). Nevertheless, the aftermath of these protests, particularly in Egypt (2011) and Tunisia (2010-2011), reveals a somber truth: the fragility of nascent democratic structures (Kashina, 2022; Yli-Kaitala, 2014). The resurgence of authoritarian inclinations subsequent to the Arab Spring underscores pressing worries regarding the influence of external stakeholders in upholding democratic transitions, underscoring the significance of continuous and enduring aid to safeguard these fledgling democracies (Megerisi, 2020).

In the months that followed the Arab Spring, the vulnerability of nascent democratic institutions became a significant issue (Kuznetsov, 2022). The initial euphoria that accompanied the downfall of authoritarian regimes often gave way to power vacuums, institutional instability, and social divisions. Owing to the absence of well-established democratic structures and the complexities of managing diverse interests, these fledgling systems were susceptible to both internal and external pressures. This fragility provided a fertile environment for the erosion of democratic norms, while disillusionment, economic challenges, and political rivalries laid the groundwork for the emergence of authoritarian tendencies (Bayat, 2013).

The role of foreign actors in sustaining democratic transitions has become crucial in shaping the trajectories of these nations (Schmidt, 2019). While external stakeholders advocated for democratic reform during the protests, the post-revolution phase introduced a new set of challenges. The involvement of external players ranged from providing financial assistance and contributing to institution-building to exerting subtle influence over political objectives. However, the intricate task of nurturing democratic institutions, ensuring transparent governance, and fostering a pluralistic society often fell short of expectations, leaving emerging democracies susceptible to setbacks (Mathlouthi, 2021).

Consistent and ongoing support has emerged as a vital aspect in mitigating the vulnerability of emerging democracies (Doyle, 2016). The engagement of external parties must extend beyond the immediate aftermath of regime transition and encompass long-term capacity-building initiatives (Ergun, 2018). The Arab Spring underscored that democratic changes require time, patience, and a comprehensive approach encompassing education, the growth of civil society, and the reinforcement of the rule of law (Grinin & Korotayev, 2022). Moreover, foreign actors should recognize the inherent agency of local communities, prioritizing their objectives over expedient solutions.

The resurgence of authoritarian inclinations underscores the necessity for external actors to uphold the ideals they endorse. The democratic principles that characterized the Arab Spring call for more than mere verbal endorsement; they necessitate an unwavering dedication to the principles of democratic governance. External stakeholders must not only advocate for democratic norms but also align their goals with the enduring welfare of transitioning nations (Del Sarto, 2016). Establishing institutions and fostering a culture of accountability is pivotal in minimizing the potential for democratic

regression.

The vulnerability of nascent democracies following the Arab Spring serves as a somber reminder of the intricacy of democratic transitions. The resurgence of authoritarian inclinations underscores the significance of external stakeholders furnishing consistent and enduring support that surpasses the initial revolutionary fervor. The lessons from Egypt and Tunisia underscore the significance of a comprehensive strategy encompassing institution-building, capacity enhancement, and meaningful engagement with local communities (Kowalski, 2023). This unified endeavor, grounded in enduring dedication, has the potential to safeguard the advancements achieved during the Arab Spring (2010-2017) and lay the groundwork for genuine democratic consolidation.

## Findings

The exploration of foreign players' involvement in the Arab Spring reveals several significant insights that illuminate the intricacies and contradictions of their roles in driving political reforms amidst periods of turmoil. These findings mirror the intricate interplay between declared goals, strategic interests, and the impacts of their activities.

1. **Paradox of Professed Values and Actions:** A major finding is the contradiction between external actors' stated values, such as democracy and human rights, and the actual acts they did. Despite portraying themselves as defenders of democratic movements, their assistance was frequently selective and instrumental. This gap between speech and behavior raises concerns about the validity of their commitment to broad democratic ideas.
2. **Short-Term Strategic Gains vs. Long-Term Democratic Aspirations:** The experiences of the United States and the European Union reveal a tendency to prioritize short-term strategic advantages over the enduring democratic ambitions of the masses involved in the Arab Spring. Although aligning strategically with specific administrations may yield immediate benefits, it also jeopardizes the genuine yearning for democratic reform within these communities.
3. **Unintended Consequences of Unilateral Actions:** The Libyan situation underscores the perils of unchecked external intervention. The NATO-led military operation in 2011, intended to safeguard civilians, paradoxically destabilized the nation and prolonged chaos. This accentuates the necessity of abiding by international legal principles and the significance of comprehensive post-conflict planning to mitigate unforeseen consequences.
4. **Power Politics and Proxy Conflicts:** Russia's engagement in the Syrian war (2015) illustrates the substantial significance of power politics and proxy conflicts in shaping the trajectory of the Arab Spring. Geopolitical factors often supersede authentic considerations for human rights and democratic governance. This study highlights the intricacies of foreign actors' intentions and underscores the necessity of accounting for broader geopolitical factors.
5. **Vulnerability of Nascent Democracies:** The aftermath of the Arab Spring, as observed in Egypt and Tunisia, underscores the fragility of newly established democratic institutions. The resurgence of authoritarian inclinations accentuates the significance of continuous and enduring assistance for building institutions, fostering civil society development, and establishing transparent governance mechanisms. This long-term outlook is vital for ensuring the stability and sustainable success of democratic transitions.
6. **Recalibrating Foreign Policy for Genuine Support:** The discussion concludes with proposals for a more constructive

foreign engagement in forthcoming political upheavals. These guidelines underscore the importance of prioritizing self-determination, multilateral collaboration, and long-term planning. External actors can have a more substantial and enduring impact on aiding democratic movements by aligning their foreign policies with the genuine aspirations of affected communities and adhering to international legal principles.

In summary, a rigorous and intellectual analysis of the participation of external actors in the Arab Spring exposes an intricate interplay of intentions, actions, and consequences. This inquiry underscores the necessity for a reassessment of international approaches to engagement during periods of political turmoil. The global community can effectively navigate the challenges of supporting democratic movements while upholding the values of sovereignty, human rights, and genuine self-determination by drawing lessons from the Arab Spring.

## Discussion

The work delves into the intricate engagement of external actors in the Arab Spring (2010-2017), providing a comprehensive exploration of their impacts, motivations, and implications (Börzel et al., 2015). This critical and scholarly discourse not only reveals the multifaceted nature of their involvement but also underscores the necessity for a reconsideration of international strategies aimed at supporting democratic movements during periods of political upheaval (Arcos & Palacios, 2018).

The investigation leads to a significant conclusion about the conflicting nature of external actors' involvement (Ekiz, 2018). Despite presenting themselves as advocates for democracy and human rights, their actions often contradicted their declared principles. The selective and utilitarian manner of their support, as seen in instances involving the United States (2010) and the European Union (2011), serves as an illustration of this paradox (Bremberg, 2018). The strategic alignment with specific regimes for short-term gains raises doubts about the authenticity of their dedication to broader democratic objectives. Consequently, the essay persuasively advocates for the necessity of recalibrating foreign policy to ensure consistent and impartial backing for democratic aspirations across the region.

The case of Libya vividly illustrates the perils of unchecked external intervention (Powell, 2012). The NATO-led military campaign, ostensibly initiated to protect civilians, showcases the unanticipated outcomes of unilateral actions driven by foreign interests. The ensuing destabilization and chaos underscore the importance of adhering to international legal norms and emphasizing thorough post-conflict planning. This case serves as a cautionary narrative, underscoring the significance of exercising prudence and collaborative decision-making when contemplating involvement in internal affairs.

This discussion also focuses on Russia's involvement in the Syrian crisis (2015) (Schmidt, 2019), providing insight into the influence of power politics and proxy conflicts in shaping the trajectory of the Arab Spring. Strategic calculations and geopolitical aims often overshadowed sincere consideration for human rights and democracy, revealing the complexities of foreign parties' intentions. In response, the article proposes the enhancement of international discourse and collaboration, accentuating the potential of multilateral approaches to mitigate the impact of self-interested foreign actors.

The aftermath of the Arab Spring is scrutinized through the perspectives of Egypt (2011) and Tunisia (2010-2011) (Kuznetsov, 2022), showcasing the vulnerability of nascent democratic systems to disruptions and the resurgence of authoritarian inclinations. In response, the importance of continuous and unwavering backing for institution-building, fostering civil society expansion, and establishing transparent governance mechanisms is emphasized. This enduring strategy aligns with the notion of long-term capacity-building endeavors and underscores the necessity to transcend outcome-driven policies that might yield short-term gains but compromise long-term progress.

The discussion concludes by presenting recommendations for external players to play a more constructive role in forthcoming political upheavals (Megerisi, 2020). The principles of self-determination, multilateral collaboration, and long-term perspective are pivotal in these propositions. The focus on the genuine aspirations of affected communities and the adherence to international legal principles showcase a dedication to effecting substantial and enduring change.

In summary, the critical and scholarly discourse surrounding the engagement of external actors in the Arab Spring offers an in-depth exploration of their influence and consequences (Bayat, 2013). It underscores the intricacy and contradictions inherent in their participation, while also presenting practical suggestions for a more principled and effective approach. Acknowledging the lessons from the Arab Spring enables the international community to pursue better-informed and ethically sound actions in backing democratic movements, leading to a more stable and equitable global political environment.

## Conclusion

The Arab Spring's involvement by foreign entities like the US, EU, and Russia (2010-2017) has revealed contradictions in their support for democracy and human rights. Despite appearing to promote democratic ideals, their actions often exacerbated tensions and conflicts. The US and EU's support was instrumental and selective, undermining their endorsement and fostering skepticism. To rectify this, foreign policy should prioritize sustained support for democratic movements.

The Libyan crisis (2011) highlights the dangers of uncontrolled external intervention, as NATO-led military operations induced instability and turmoil. The consequences highlight the fallout of unilateral actions driven by foreign powers and lack of post-conflict preparation. Foreign actors should exercise restraint, adhere to international legal principles, and prioritize multilateral approaches when intervening in sovereign nations.

Russia's involvement (2015) in the Syrian war highlights the role of power politics and proxy conflicts in shaping the Arab Spring. Its support for the Assad administration and military activities reveals geopolitical calculations over human rights and democratic governance. Promoting international dialogue and national sovereignty could help resolve conflicts.

The Arab Spring exposed the vulnerability of democratic transitions to external actors, as seen in Egypt (2011) and Tunisia (2010-2011). To counter this, external actors must support institutions, civil society growth, and transparent governance, shifting from short-term strategies to long-term capacity-building initiatives.

The study suggests that external actors should prioritize self-determination and honor people's choices, promote multilateral frameworks and collaborative initiatives to prevent unilateral actions that could exacerbate conflicts, and guide foreign policy with a long-term perspective, focusing on socioeconomic development, effective governance, and institutional establishment in post-revolutionary nations.

The Arab Spring highlights the challenges foreign actors face in influencing political upheavals. The international community must self-evaluate, acknowledge past mistakes, and adopt more principled approaches. External actors can support democratic movements without undermining people's agency by prioritizing community aspirations, adhering to international legal principles, and fostering multilateral cooperation. The memory of the Arab Spring should recalibrate foreign interventions for long-term well-being.

The following recommendations for a constructive external role are set based on the complex engagement of external actors in the Arab Spring, requiring a balance between short-term gains and long-term transformation.

1. **Prioritizing Self-Determination and Sovereignty:** External interventions should prioritize community self-determination, respect national sovereignty, and avoid interference or predetermined solutions; ensuring authentic democratic transformation originates from the people themselves.
2. **Emphasizing Multilateral Collaboration and Dialogue:** Multilateralism is crucial for political transitions, involving diverse perspectives and experiences, reducing unilateral actions and fostering comprehensive understanding of dynamics.
3. **Encouraging Long-Term Thinking and Institution-Building:** External actors must demonstrate patience and commitment to institution-building, investing in education, civil society, and governance systems to achieve long-term democratic objectives and sustainable political reform.
4. **Striking a Balance between Short-Term Gains and Long-Term Change:** External actors must balance short-term stability with long-term democratic progress, avoiding authoritarian tendencies and promoting stability without compromising democratic governance goals.

These recommendations emphasize the importance of aligning external actors with local populations' aspirations, fostering inclusive dialogue, and promoting diversity through multilateral collaboration, balancing short-term and lasting change.

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