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Peace and security in Africa:
DRIVERS AND IMPLICATIONS OF NORTH AFRICA'S SOUTHERN GAZE

NORTH AFRICA

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October 2019

Recent years have seen a North African 'comeback' to the continent, with many North African countries strategically expanding their presence and seizing economic opportunities in Africa, while securing strategic foreign policy goals.

This paper provides an analysis of the strategic interests and agenda of Algeria, Morocco and Egypt in the domain of peace and security on the African continent. It unpacks why Algeria is a dominant actor in the African Union (AU) while its bilateral economic footprint in the continent is limited; how Morocco deploys economic and spiritual diplomacy to secure its national and geostrategic interests; what explains Egypt's gravitation back to the continent; and what it means for peace and security in North Africa and the Horn.

Despite the diverse ways in which they pursue their interests in and signal their engagement on the continent, the paper finds that a common denominator in the approach of these three countries is the fact that they all consider their visibility at the AU level to be a means of achieving their strategic objectives. It is not yet clear what this means for the AU and its ability to keep peace in North Africa – a region that consists of the continent's largest economies and three key funders of the Union. Whether or not the AU will be able to pull competing interests of member states together to collectively shape the continent's relationship with international partners like the EU, is also to be seen.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

Acronyms

ACSRT	AU's Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism
AMU	Arab Maghreb Union
APSA	African Peace and Security Architecture
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
AUPSC	African Union Peace and Security Council
CEN-SAD	Community of Sahel-Saharan States
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
ECDPM	European Centre for Development Policy Management
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African countries
EU	European Union
GERD	Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority for Development)
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
NATO	The North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OAU	Organisation for African Unity
PSD	Peace and Security Department (of the African Union Commission)
SADR	Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic
UNSC	United Nations Security Council

Executive Summary

Before the North Africa–Sub Saharan Africa division grew deeper, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Libya and Egypt – collectively referred to as North Africa – were part and parcel of the pan-African fervour of the 1950s and 1960s and supported liberation across the continent. Though founding members of the Organization for African Unity (OAU) in 1963, Egypt later gravitated towards the Arab world, drawn in by the Arab–Israeli conflict since the 1970s, while Morocco withdrew its membership from the OAU in 1987 in response to the OAU's recognition of Western Sahara. Libya and Algeria, meanwhile, continued to play instrumental roles in the affairs of the OAU and its successor, the African Union (AU).

Recent years have seen a North African 'comeback' to the continent, with Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco all trying to expand their presence on the continent and seizing economic opportunities while securing strategic foreign policy goals in Africa. This paper provides an analysis of the strategic interests and agendas of Algeria, Morocco and Egypt in the domain of peace and security in Africa. It finds that while each of these three countries has a set of strategic drivers and agendas that explain their interest in Africa, the changing dynamics in North Africa and the Middle East in the aftermath of the Arab Spring provides a partial explanation common to all but more prominently to Egypt and Morocco.

For **Algeria**, nothing much has changed in its relationship with the continent following the Arab Spring. Algeria has always been a consistent pan-African player, notable for promoting its strong anti-imperialist, non-interventionist policies within the AU and among the continent's international partners. Algeria was instrumental in the establishment of the African Union in 2002, and continues to be a leading (and according to some a dominant) player in the Peace and Security Department of the African Union Commission. Algeria is proud of its pan-African legacy and continues to push for initiatives it believes will address pan African challenges of the 21st century. It is, for example, a forerunner in catalysing the AU's latest efforts for greater coordination between the African Union Peace and Security Council and the A3 (the three African members of the UN Security Council); securing predictable financing for African peace operations; and supporting the financial self-sufficiency of the AU.

Algeria sees the AU as an appropriate and convenient platform from which to express its revolutionary ideologies globally, and to promote its stance on regional matters such as the Saharawi cause and terrorism. At the establishment of the AU in 2002, for example, Algeria used its clout in the then OAU to ensure that terrorism would be seen as a shared transnational threat, well within the core mandate of the AU's Peace and Security Council.

To this day, counterterrorism remains one of the thematic areas where Algeria has a normative influence. Based on its experience of the 'black decade' of fighting domestic terrorism in the 1990s, Algeria pushed for the framing of terrorism as a global, transnational phenomenon that is linked to other transnational threats such as the illicit proliferation of arms, and hence an affair that requires international cooperation. While taken for granted now, this framing was not widely recognised until the 9/11 attacks. Algeria pushed for the formulation and ratification of the Africa Convention for the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism (Algiers Convention) in 1999, as well as the adoption of the accompanying protocol in 2004.

While Algeria used a mix of hard and soft approaches to deal with domestic terrorism during the black decade, it does not exercise 'hard' security responses to terrorism externally, as its armed forces are constitutionally barred from operating outside of the national borders. Recent years, however, have tested Algeria's commitment to non-intervention and sovereignty due to growing instability and fragility in North Africa and the Sahel. To address terrorism and transnational crimes in the region, Algeria launched a Joint

Military Staff Committee initiative in 2010. The initiative did not quite take off but it had ambitious plans, including establishing a 700,000-strong joint military base in collaboration with Mauritania, Niger and Mali. It has also allocated significant finances to train and equip Chad, Niger, Mali, Mauritania and Libya to support the fight against terrorism.

Algeria's 'Africa policy', however, is centred on the AU, and specifically on peace and security. While its bilateral security relationships with countries in the Sahel is growing due to the existence of shared threats, its overall economic outreach and partnership with other African countries leaves much to be desired. This stands in stark contrast to Morocco's approach to the continent, which is founded on economic diplomacy.

Since its departure from the OAU, **Morocco** deployed economic diplomacy and intensified its trade, investment and social/cultural ties with West Africa in order to find its way back into the Union. Its return to the AU in January 2017, after 34 years of absence, was likened to the 'return of the lost child' and was welcomed with a vote of 41 AU member states. Morocco's move back into the AU – despite the Union not altering its position on Western Sahara – is part of a deliberate strategy. It signifies the change in Morocco's approach to achieving a favourable African stance on Western Sahara – from its 'chaise vide' policy of abstention, to a policy of engagement under King Mohammed VI.

Broadly speaking, Morocco's new foreign policy is anchored on three mutually reinforcing objectives: positioning Morocco as Europe's gateway to Africa, establishing itself as a continental economic power, and deepening its hold on Western Sahara. These objectives explain Morocco's membership in the AU, as well as its recent efforts to expand its economic partnerships, not only with its francophone West African neighbourhood, but also with countries like Nigeria and Ethiopia.

Besides economics, however, Morocco aspires to expand its influence over peace and security in the continent, and certainly in the North Africa–Sahel region where its economic and security interests are at stake. In this regard, Morocco seems to be pursuing a distinct strategy on counterterrorism, anchored on countering radical religious narratives by training imams to promote 'moderate' Islamic teachings. Morocco is increasingly applying 'spiritual diplomacy', and exporting this model to other countries in the region.

However, Morocco's recent expression of support to the G5 Sahel – a semi-militarised force designed to counter terrorism and transnational crimes in the Sahel – deviates from Morocco's usual approach to peace and security, which has long relied on 'soft' security tools, such as peacekeeping and countering religious ideology. But Morocco is hoping to achieve political, geostrategic and economic ends by supporting G5 Sahel. It has, for example, hinted at a link between the Polisario Front and terrorist groups like ISIS in the Sahel, an allegation that Morocco can use to discredit the Polisario globally. Further, by stepping in where Algeria (which does not support the G5 Sahel) is absent, Morocco can make a name for itself as an important regional security stakeholder in the region – a role that Algeria too aspires to play unrivalled.

But **Egypt** is also vying for an assertive role in peace and security in Africa – notably in countering terrorism in North Africa – be it by managing domestic threats of terrorism or by influencing and sometimes directly intervening on security matters in Libya, with which it shares a long border. Egypt's interest in Libya revolves around its need to secure the border and curtail the influence of political Islamists and the Muslim Brotherhood in the region. As a result, Egypt has had a security-focused approach to Libya since 2014, and a strong affinity with General Haftar, who not only shares el-Sisi's distaste for political Islamists, but also promises an organised force that could at least secure Egypt's security interest along the border, if not stabilise Libya altogether.

In addition to North Africa, the Horn of Africa and the Nile basin are regions of key geostrategic interests to Egypt. In the Horn, Egypt's objectives revolve around securing its use of the Nile waters, and keeping the influence of Ethiopia – which contributes 86% of the Nile water flow and is an emerging regional swing state in the Horn – in check. Egypt's influence in the Horn has long played out through proxies, on multiple occasions. The latest example of this was Egypt's involvement in the South Sudanese peace process. Egypt kept up close relations with President Salva Kiir of South Sudan, hoping to secure its interests in a conflict with regional implications for Ethiopia and Sudan – the two countries with whom Egypt is negotiating its use of the Nile water in light of the Ethiopian Grand Renaissance Dam (GERD)

Introduction

Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Libya and Egypt, which are often referred to collectively as 'North Africa', are founding members of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). The OAU was the first African continental body, founded in 1963, to coordinate the total liberation of Africa from colonial subjugation and apartheid and to promote unity among Africa countries. At the height of the anti-colonial movement in the 1950s and 1960s, North African countries were fully engaged in the pan African fervour and showed great solidarity with – and provided support to – liberation movements across the continent.

Over time, however, the divide between North Africa and the rest of the continent, often designated Sub-Saharan Africa, widened. Egypt gravitated towards the Arab world, drawn in by the Arab-Israeli conflict, while Morocco withdrew its membership of the OAU in 1987 in response to the OAU's recognition of Western Sahara – which Morocco claims is part of its territory. Conversely, however, Libya and Algeria continued to play notable roles in the successor to the OAU – the African Union (AU).

Despite the North Africa–Sub Saharan divide and the limited role of countries like Egypt and Tunisia in the affairs of the African Union, as a region North Africa has always held a concentration of the AU's biggest financial contributors. Before the fall of Muammar Gaddafi in 2011, Libya, Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria and South Africa contributed 15% each to the AU's budget.[1] With Morocco joining the AU in 2017, Egypt, Algeria and Morocco now each contribute 9.6% of the total AU budget, as do Nigeria, and South Africa.[2]

Recent years have seen a North African 'comeback' to the continent, with Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco trying to expand their presence in the continent and seizing economic opportunities while securing strategic foreign policy goals. Egypt and Morocco have also shown an interest in increasing their visibility and revitalising their role in the African Union. Both Morocco and Tunisia have taken steps to enhance their economic engagement in West Africa. Tunisia has had observer status in the Economic Community of West African countries (ECOWAS) since 2017 and joined the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) in 2018.[3] Morocco applied for membership of ECOWAS in 2018, although its request was not accepted.[4] It re-joined the African Union in 2017, despite the AU's recognition of Western Sahara – a territory Morocco considers an integral part of its kingdom – as a Union member. Egypt is looking to consolidate its influence in Africa and in the African Union and secured the chairmanship of the Union in 2019, for the first time. Algeria, meanwhile, has always had a strong presence at the African Union, particularly on matters of peace and security.

Against this backdrop of North Africa re-engaging with the rest of the continent, this paper provides an analysis of the strategic interests and agenda of three North African countries – Algeria, Morocco and Egypt – in the domain of peace and security. It discusses how and why each of these three countries engages with peace and security and draws potential implications for regional and continental peace and security dynamics.

The paper is organised in three main sections. The first section briefly highlights the importance of the Arab Spring for peace and security in North Africa, in order to contextualise the discussion around the changing nature of North Africa's gaze south. The second section provides analysis on the strategic, thematic and geographical interests of each country and discusses the distinct approaches each employs to secure its

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[1]   Allison 2011
[2]   African Union 2018a
[3]   De Groof et al 2019: 12
[4]   De Groof et al 2019: 8

economic and geostrategic interests in the African continent. In the third and final section, the paper outlines the implications that the engagement of these three countries' has for regional economic and security integration across Africa.

The paper is one in a series published by the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) looking at North Africa, as a region and in terms of EU–Africa relations. It complements another publication that looked at driving factors behind Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia's policy shift towards Sub-Saharan Africa.[5] Other publications in this series covered North Africa's 'double pursuit' vis-à-vis Europe and Africa, and the interests and positions of North African countries towards a continent-to continent, EU–Africa partnership beyond the Cotonou agreement which expired in 2020.[6]

1. The Arab Spring and changing peace and security dynamics in North Africa

The peace and security implications of the Arab Spring are of great significance, not only to North Africa, but to the African continent as a whole. Up until the Arab Spring in 2011, North Africa was a relatively stable region in Africa. Human development (levels of poverty, education and health) had progressively improved, though governments in Egypt and Tunisia struggled to maintain a large public sector amidst a growing population, while continuing to subsidise basic goods that had been key to the social contract between people and the government.[7] State presence and penetration in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya was quite palpable, and ensured 'security' in these countries. But that came at the cost of civil liberties and brutal suppression of opposition.

By 2013, the North African region had seen profound changes. The protests that started in Tunisia in 2010, had taken root in Egypt and Libya. President Mubarak of Egypt was ousted after 30 years in power, giving way to democratic elections in 2012 that saw the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood to power, only to be taken out by the military in 2013. In Tunisia, President Ben Ali fled to Saudi Arabia, giving way for a bumpy but promising transition to electoral democracy. In Libya, popular protests that started in 2010 turned into a bloody civil war and saw a proliferation of armed groups, which has spilled over to destabilise North Africa and the Sahel. To this day, the legality, proportionality and necessity of NATO's intervention in March 2011, to enforce a 'no fly zone', is questioned. NATO (particularly France and the United States), and the African Union – which at that time was negotiating a dignified exit for President Gaddafi – could not see eye to eye on the matter. North Africa's current destabilisation is largely attributed to the Libyan crisis and increasingly tied to the rise of armed groups and jihadis in the Sahel.[8]

For the African Union (AU), stabilising North Africa through the provisions of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) poses a particular challenge as there is no functional regional organisation it can work with. The Arab Maghreb Union, of which Algeria, Morocco, Libya and Mauritania are members, can barely carry out its basic functions, let alone overcome the political and economic dynamics among its members to facilitate regional stability.[9] It is particularly strangled by the tensions between Morocco and Algeria, which, in an attempt to maintain regional hegemony, undermine each other's initiatives. In the

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[5]   Abderrahim and Aggad 2018: 16
[6]   De Groof et al 2019
[7]   Winckler 2013; Devarajan 2015
[8]   Djallil Lounnas 2018; Larémont 2015
[9]   Abderrahmane 2012; Boukhars 2018.

absence of one regional organisation, however, countries like Algeria, Morocco and Egypt initiate new or boost existing bi- or multilateral economic and security cooperation mechanisms among each other and with other countries in the Sahel and West Africa – rendering the AU a distant observer.

2. Strategic interests and drivers

The Arab Spring has brought about profound changes in the countries that experienced it and in North Africa as a whole. As will be seen later in this section, the North African gravitational shift towards Africa or Sub-Saharan Africa – certainly in the case of Egypt and to some extent Morocco – has partly to do with changing regional dynamics in post-Arab Spring North Africa and the Middle East. The following section sketches out the strategic interests and peace and security agendas of Algeria, Egypt and Morocco, to explain why Egypt and Morocco are re-engaging with the continent and why Algeria has always had a strong presence. It outlines their main thematic and geographic areas of interest and discusses the distinct ways in which each pursues its agendas in the continent.

Although not entirely confined to it, the point of departure for this analysis is the roles and engagements of these three countries in the African Union, and how their actions at the AU level relate to their strategic interests in Africa more broadly. The following sections relating to each country are organised differently, but each ultimately deals with the drivers behind their engagement in Africa, how their engagement manifests itself and what implications it has for regional or continental peace and security.

2.1. Algeria

The Algerian liberation war and victory over France in 1964 is one of the hard-fought liberation struggles in Africa. Its significance was felt beyond Algeria and fuelled liberation movements in other parts of the continent. Driven by anti-imperialist ideologies of the time and its own experience of French colonisation, Algeria provided military training, financial support and even citizenship to leaders of liberation movements, including the African National Congress of South Africa, the Mozambique Liberation Front and the Peoples Liberation Army of Namibia.[10] Equally, it became a refuge for freedom fighters and pan-African thought leaders. In the 1960s Algiers was considered the 'Mecca of revolutionaries' where emerging pan-African elites would study. Indeed, support to the complete liberation of the continent and the set-up of the OAU/AU as a continental coordinating mechanism was and remains is central to Algeria's foreign policy.[11]

In the current discussion on 'North Africa's gaze to the south', what sets Algeria apart from Egypt and Morocco is that it has consistently played an active role in Africa, particularly at the level of the AU. Algeria prides itself on its sustained (political) solidarity with Africa and African unity. Algeria's political outlook on Africa does not make a distinction between the traditional categories 'North Africa' and 'Sub-Saharan Africa'. As a high-level Algerian diplomat noted, "there's only one Africa and we are Africans".[12] This sense of 'belongingness' to Africa – even if it doesn't deeply resonate with the wider society – is different from the approach of Egypt, which has had a stronger affinity with the Middle East since the 1970s. It is also set apart from that of Morocco, which sees itself as a distinct actor, "with its roots in Africa, and its branches in Europe" as King Hassan II once described it.[13] Morocco   applied for membership of the European

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[10]   Zoubir 2013
[11]   Zoubir 2015: 57
[12]   Interview with a senior Algerian diplomat.
[13]   Pelham 2000

Community in 1987.[14] In many ways, but no less in rhetoric, Algeria draws its legitimacy in driving the peace and security agenda of the African Union from its continued presence in the cause.[15]

A lot can be said about Algeria's thematic and geostrategic interests in, and approaches to, peace and security in Africa. The first point to make is that Algeria's solidarity, peace and security engagement with the continent has been sustained over decades, but is much more visible at the level of the AU than on bilateral terms with individual countries. Secondly, thematically, counterterrorism is a topic that is close to Algeria's domestic politics, and one that it champions at the AU. Thirdly, the principle of non-intervention – a legacy of the war of independence – remains sacrosanct to its foreign policy despite the challenges at its doorstep due to insecurity in North Africa and the Sahel. The next section discusses each of these three points.

2.1.1. Algeria's Africa policy

Algeria is one of the five top-tier financial contributors to the AU's budget and exerts considerable influence (some call it dominance) on the peace and security affairs of the Union. For instance, the position of the Peace and Security Department of the African Union Commission (AUC), which is a political appointment, has been occupied by an Algerian since the establishment of the AUC in 2002. The first peace and security commissioner, Said Djinnit, had an instrumental role in the design and operationalisation of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), which is the primary framework for managing peace and security in the continent. His replacement, Ambassador Ramtane Lamamra, was another Algerian diplomat who currently serves as the African Union High Representative for Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020. The current AU commissioner for peace and security, Ismail Chergui, is also an Algerian national who has been in the position since 2013.

Algeria's footprint in the continent, is however, more visible at the AU level than in bilateral terms.[16] Its 'Africa policy', so to say, focuses on the Union, and even then on matters of peace and security, leaving much to be desired in terms of bilateral and multilateral economic and security partnerships.[17] The reason behind Algeria's investment in the African Union is linked to its anti-imperialist revolutionary ideologies, and regional interests vis-à-vis the issue of Western Sahara. Algeria sees the AU as an appropriate and convenient platform to express its revolutionary ideologies globally, while legitimising its "authoritarian development policies domestically".[18] This particularly applied to Algeria's stance on terrorism following its own experience in the 'black decade' of the 1990s, where the then newly established African Union (established in 2002) with a role in peace and security promised an opportune ground to popularise its take on terrorism regionally and internationally. This logic explains why Algeria has played a pivotal role in setting up the African Union's peace and security architecture and has held the commissioner position in the AUC's Peace and Security Department since its inception.

AU reform and the financial sustainability of peacekeeping
Algeria's stance on autonomy and self-sufficiency and its sensitivity to external interventions were made clear on various occasions with relation to Algeria's role in the AU. It has been supportive of the ongoing institutional reform and fully onboard with strengthening the financial self-sufficiency of the AU, including for some aspects of peacekeeping activities. It is currently a member of the Committee of Finance Ministers (F15), set up to oversee the financial reform of the AU to enhance the self-sustenance of the organisation. Though supportive of the Kaberuka proposal to levy an import levy of 0.2% on selected items as a means

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[14] European Parliament 1998
[15] Interviews with observers, analysts and diplomats in Addis Ababa. November 2018; Zoubir 2015
[16] Abderrahim and Aggad 2018: 16
[17] Abderrahim and Aggad 2018
[18] Zoubir 2015: 55

to raise funds for the functions of the AU, it is one of the countries that asked for 'flexibilisation' of the strategy as it pays its membership dues in full and on time without applying the 0.2% levy.[19]

Algeria is also a forerunner in pushing for the AU's ongoing efforts to amplify African representation and present a united voice at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). The AU has taken significant and visible steps to ensure there is a coordinated response between the AU Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) and the UNSC to conflicts in the African continent. While coordination has been a concept long discussed, what transpired at the UNSC when passing Resolution 1973 on Libya in 2011, made coordination particularly salient. In 2011, the three non-permanent African countries (A3) in the UNPSC at that time – Gabon, Nigeria and South Africa – voted in favour of UNSC Resolution 1973 authorising a NATO enforced no-fly zone, contravening an AUPSC resolution to avoid a forceful intervention of any kind.[20] Algeria has been a forerunner in pushing the AUPSC–A3 coordination effort and has hosted four of the six High Level Seminars on Peace and Security in Africa (2013–2016) so far, where outgoing and incoming AU member states of the UNSC interface.

2.1.2. Counterterrorism

In terms of priority areas, Algeria is notably active in the normative discourse of counterterrorism at the AU level, a priority that is increasingly shared by Egypt. It is the host of the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism and is known to lead and host events on this theme (consultation meetings, PSC open sessions and on so on).

Algeria's role in regional and continental counterterrorism can be largely attributed to the country's 'black decade' experience with terrorist attacks in the late 1980s and the 1990s. This era, often called the 'national tragedy', started when the government cancelled the 1991 elections after preliminary results revealed victory for popular Islamist groups (particularly the Islamic Salvation Front).[21] The Algerian government, under the leadership of the security and intelligence apparatus, started a crackdown on what it claimed were hardline Islamist groups – some of which were by then armed and staging attacks, not only on government establishments but also on civilians. The government responded with unyielding, heavy-handed counterterrorism measures with the objective of 'eradicating' armed groups.[22] During 1994–1997, at the height of the tragedy, the counterterrorism strategy was framed as 'making fear change sides',[23] which was telling of the unconceding measures the government took.

Algeria matched its crack down on terrorists, with 'soft' approaches by providing amnesty and material support to those who gave up arms, and promoting 'home grown', moderate types of Islamic teachings and alleviating the economic and social exclusion of segments of the population[24]. Its attempt to counter radical and 'imported' Islamic teachings extended beyond its own borders and into the Sahel. It has also tried to convene regional platforms to bring together Islamic religious teachers and preachers from Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania and Niger to counter religious extremism through alternative religious teachings[25].

By the time the 'black decade' ended, a death toll of approximately 200,000 people, around 7,000 disappearances and $20 million in material damage had been recorded[26] in addition to a sense of national

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[19] Interview in Addis Ababa, November 2018.
[20] Williams and Boutellis 2014: 261
[21] Beardsley 2011
[22] Janssen and Hendriks 2017
[23] Janssen and Hendriks 2017
[24] Iratani 2017: 7; Beardsley 2011.
[25] Iratani 2017: 7; Beardsley 2011: 22
[26] Iratani 2017: 7; Beardsley, 2011.

trauma. Algeria has carved an image for itself as a country at the forefront of counterterrorism and became a US strategic partner for the global war on terror in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.[27]

Being historically and constitutionally averse to interference in state matters, Algeria does not quite exercise its hard security responses to terrorism outside its own borders. However Algeria has certainly influenced the normative policy frameworks and institutional set-up of the AU vis-à-vis terrorism. For example, at the establishment of the AU and the AU Peace and Security Council in 2002, Algeria used its influence in the then OAU to ensure that countering terrorism as a shared threat, would be one of the core business items of the PSC.[28]

Further, Algeria pushed for the formulation and ratification of the Africa Convention for the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism (Algiers Convention) in 1999, as well as the adoption of the accompanying protocol in 2004.[29] Algeria's drive towards this convention goes hand in hand with its framing of terrorism as a 'global phenomenon', calling for cross border collaboration, pushing against the payment of ransom to terrorists[30] establishing the linkages between terrorism and transnational crimes such as illicit proliferation arms, money laundering and drug trafficking[31]. These linkages are successfully cemented in the AU's Dakar Declaration adopted in 2004.[32] While these provisions may seem mundane now, they could not be taken for granted prior to and immediately after 9/11. The Algiers convention of 1999 and the Dakar Declaration of 2004 currently serve as key normative documentation of the AU's position on terrorism and counterterrorism, and are largely a result of Algeria's agenda setting on the topic.

At the bilateral and regional levels, Algeria's most notable recent initiatives on counterterrorism include a stillborn attempt in 2010 to establish a Joint Military Staff Committee (CEMOC) together with Mauritania, Niger and Mali, which included a plan to establish a 700,000 strong joint military base in Algeria.[33] In 2017, Algeria dispensed $100 million to Chad, Niger, Mali, Mauritania and Libya to support their technical and logistical capabilities in the fight against terrorism.[34]

2.1.3.   The principles of non-intervention and inviolability of borders

One of the driving principles behind Algeria's actions or inactions, and its strategy of engagement in the domain of peace and security, has to do with its commitment to the principle of non-intervention. To date, Algeria's anti-imperialist sentiments and its emphasis on sovereignty and territorial integrity run high in its foreign policy. Historically, in the 1960s when the discussion on post-colonial borders and the nature of post-colonial Africa was a divisive agenda in the OAU, Algeria was an unequivocal proponent of the principle of the inviolability of colonial borders.[35] It supported independence from colonial powers but refrained from sympathizing with separatist movements that emerged in post-colonial Africa (e.g. the Biafrans in Nigeria in 1967–1970, the Shaba/Katangas in 1978 and more recently the Tuareg in Mali in 2012).[36]

Algeria's stance on inviolability of colonial borders is informed by its revolutionary ideology but also its own historical memory. During 1957–62 France tried to cordon off the Sahara from Algiers in order to maintain

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[27] Boukhars 2013
[28] Zoubir 2015: 64-65
[29] Institute for Security Studies 2018
[30] Zoubir 2015: 64-65
[31] Zoubir 2015: 64
[32] Mareesha 2017
[33] Roussellier 2017
[34] Huffpost 2017
[35] Lounnas and Messari 2018: 6
[36] Iratani 2017

its access to the resources post colonization.[37] Algeria still suspects that France would support calls for self-determination by ethnic minorities in Algeria if presented with the opportunity, and continues to assert at home the indivisibility of its territory and advocate for the inviolability of colonial borders abroad.[38] Further, Algeria had a border dispute with its neighbour Morocco in the 1960s, whereby Morocco contested the French colonial borders between Algeria and Morocco and claimed territories such as Bachar and Tindruf. The standoff was eventually settled, with Morocco conceding its claim to the territories.[39] This historical event left a mark on Algeria's foreign policy.

The implication of Algeria's commitment to these principles is particularly relevant for at least two reasons: one, the way in which it frames the issue of Western Sahara, and two, how it is currently dealing with terrorism, illicit trade and the broader instability of the Sahel-North Africa region.

After the border conflict between Algeria and Morocco, Morocco later claimed Western Sahara on the withdrawal of the Spanish in 1976. Algeria condemned this move and labelled it an annexation and a "betrayal of the principle of self-determination".[40] Morocco, for its part, sees Western Sahara as a territory it legitimately 'recovered' after colonization[41] and considers Algeria's support to the Polisario – a front fighting for the independence of Western Sahara – as an attempt to cut out Morocco from the Sahel and the rest of the continent, in order to ascertain its own regional dominance.[42]

At the AU level, Algeria's principle of non-intervention means it is likely to vote against coercive measures to enforce stability in an AU member state. Algeria would also be aversive to supporting collective measures to oust African leaders who commit grave human rights violations or attempt to overstay their electoral term. When, in 2011, the AU was divided on the fate of Libya's leader Muammar Gaddafi, and the Arab League supported a UN-sanctioned no-fly zone, Algeria and Syria rejected it.[43] Within the AU, Algeria favoured a mediated solution to the conflict[44] and rejected NATO's intervention to oust him.[45] Observers note that Algeria's consistent take on non-intervention and reverence for sovereignty has earned it some respect from African leaders, although the appeal and convenience of this approach to autocratic leaders is evident.[46]

Regionally, however, the current state of its neighbourhood threatens to challenge Algeria's principle of non-intervention and respect for sovereignty. Terrorism lingers at Algeria's doorstep. The political crisis in Libya and the proliferation of armed groups has further exacerbated the fragility of the Sahel region and has heightened the smuggling of humans and illicit goods in the area. Groups such as Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, and Ansar Eddine, Al-Mulathamun Battalion, and the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa operate in the Sahelian belt and are said to have ties with other terrorist organisations elsewhere in Africa (Boko Haram in the Great Lakes and Al Shabab in East Africa).[47]

Algeria's response to the security challenges of the region has been to strengthen its internal security apparatus, seal off its borders and facilitate political solutions to a highly securitised and internationalised

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[37] Harchaoui 2018
[38] Harchaoui 2018: 5
[39] Heggoy 1970
[40] Lefèvre 2016
[41] Lefèvre 2016
[42] Lounnas and Messari 2018
[43] Cody 2011
[44] Taylor 2018
[45] De Waal 2013: 373–374
[46] Diplomats and analysts interviewed in Addis Ababa, Nov. 2018.
[47] Iratani 2017: 16

conflict in Mali and in Libya. Algeria set up a cooperation mechanism with neighbouring countries in 2014[48] and pushes for a consultative political process in Libya without the intervention of external actors and risk to Libya's unity and territorial integrity.[49]

On the matter of Libya, Algeria takes a different approach from other stakeholders – particularly Egypt. For Algeria, the end goal is to see a stable Libya that "is not overly indebted to Egypt", lest Egypt use such an opportunity to drive they security dynamics of the Sahel and North Africa, regions that Algeria considers to be its sphere of influence.[50] Egypt, on the other hand, wants a stable Libya that is not dominated by Islamist political forces, and believes General Haftar, who leads the Libyan National Army and controls the eastern part of Libya, is capable of delivering its wish.[51] Algeria, however, does not approve of this approach and fears that Haftar's intention to eliminate all actors on the spectrum of political Islam by labelling them terrorists is unlikely to yield peace or maintain the territorial indivisibility of Libya.[52]

2.1.4. Summary

Overall, Algeria is proud of its continuous engagement with Africa and the African Union. While it sees the rising interest of other North African countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, it considers its legitimacy matched by Egypt and Morocco, which have recently revamped their engagement with Sub-Saharan Africa and come into the spotlight at the AU.[53]

Algeria's footprint in the continent is, however, more visible at the AU level than in bilateral terms.[54] Algeria sees the AU as an appropriate and convenient platform to express its revolutionary ideologies globally.[55] However, some argue that its preoccupation with internal matters during the 'black decade', the failure of CEMOC, its attempt to sideline or block initiatives it perceives to be backed by regional foes (such as Morocco) or external actors (for example France), its ineffective economic policy abroad and its shaky economic and political circumstances at home, have put a dent in Algeria's regional and continental influence.[56] Unlike its rival Morocco, Algeria is yet to realise its potential in forging economic relationships with and seizing trade and investment opportunities in the rest of the continent.

Further, the current political change in Algeria – led by popular protests that have been taking place since February 2019 – if successful, could help resolve some of the internal political and economic obstacles that damaged Algeria's security and economic partnership with the rest of the continent. If, when and how that will be achieved, as well as whether the geopolitical reality of the region will have shifted by the time Algeria stabilises and is able to reassert itself, are yet to be seen.

2.2.   Morocco

Morocco's comeback to the AU in January 2017, after 34 years of absence, was likened to the return of the lost child and its request to accede to the AU was welcomed with the vote of 41of 54 AU member states. With Morocco as its member once again, the AU is now a 'full house': all countries in the continent are members. Albeit in the distant past, it must be remembered that Morocco was one of the founding

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[48]   Reuters 2016
[49]   www.libyaherald.com/2016/12/18/hafter-follows-ageela-saleh-to-algiers-as-algerians-pursue-new-libya-peace-
        initiative/.
[50]   Taylor 2018
[51]   Dentice 2017; interviews in Addis Ababa Nov. 2018.
[52]   Harchaoui 2018: 6
[53]   Interview with diplomats and observers in Addis Ababa, Nov 2018.
[54]   Abderrahim and Aggad 2018: 16
[55]   Zoubir 2015
[56]   Boukhars 2019: 242–249

members of the OAU alongside Algeria and Egypt. Further, since its withdrawal from the OAU in 1987, over the membership of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (Western Sahara), Morocco maintained its relationship with Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) – particularly West Africa – through bilateral ties.

At face value, an overview of Morocco's footprint in SSA gives the impression that the country is more interested in economic opportunities than in driving political and security interests. But a closer look reveals that it sees economic diplomacy as both a means and an end to securing Morocco's strategic interests vis-à-vis Western Sahara, Europe and a rising ambition to become a regional economic hegemon. That being the bigger overarching driver of Morocco's Africa policy and its return to the African Union, this section analyses three issues: 1. How and why re-joining the AU relates to its strategic objectives, 2. The 'balance sheet' of Morocco's return to the AU and its foreign policy achievements and 3. The implications of its 'comeback' on peace and security in North Africa and the Sahel. In discussing these three issues, this section analyses the strategies and approaches Morocco used to come back to AU, and also to achieve strategic regional interests in North Africa.

2.2.1. Why Morocco joined the AU

Since leaving the OAU, and given Algeria's support to the Saharawi cause, Morocco feared being 'encircled' by Algeria and Spain – so much so that it saw 'alignment' with francophone Africa as an absolute necessity.[57] To attenuate this fear, Morocco deployed economic diplomacy and intensified its trade, investment and social/cultural ties with West Africa.

It is clear how securing economic opportunities in West Africa, strengthening ties in the region and striking key deals relate to Morocco's strategic interests, namely regional hegemony in North Africa-Sahel (pitting it against Algeria, which vies for the same role) and securing support for its claim on Western Sahara. What is not straightforward is why Morocco would re-join a continental organisation that considers Western Sahara 'Africa's last colony'[58] and recognises the right to self-determination of the Western Saharan people.

Morocco's economic engagement with Africa and its membership of the AU are two interrelated strategies deployed to achieve its new policy towards Africa. Morocco is shifting from its approach under King Hassan II of forging economic partnership on an 'ad hoc basis', with the aim of getting support for its interests in Western Sahara,[59] to a more coherent foreign policy, under King Mohammed VI, anchored on three mutually reinforcing objectives: positioning Morocco as Europe's gateway to Africa, establishing itself as a continental economic power and deepening its hold on Western Sahara[60].

Morocco learnt that its absence from the AU, while enabling it to apply pressure from the outside, failed in achieving its objectives vis-à-vis Western Sahara. King Mohammed VI believed that returning to the AU would be a better strategy to achieve the aforementioned three foreign policy objectives.[61] With this in mind, it put economic diplomacy (and as will be seen later in the paper – 'spiritual diplomacy') at the service of foreign policy in the years preceding its return to the AU in 2017.[62]

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[57]   Boukhars 2019
[58]   Rawhani 2018: 19
[59]   El Katiri 2015: 9–12
[60]   Bassit 2019
[61]   Bassit, 2019
[62]   Messari 2018; Rawhani 2018: 3

Maximising the return of economic diplomacy

Even before joining the African Union, Morocco was already the second biggest investor in Sub-Saharan Africa, after South Africa.[63] Around 85% of its foreign direct investment is said to go to Sub-Saharan Africa.[64] Morocco had economic ties – largely private-sector driven – with various francophone West African countries in the areas of extractive resources and agricultural raw materials, even before it applied for membership in the West African trade and political organisation, the Economic Community of Western African States (ECOWAS), in 2017 or requested to join the AU in 2016,[65] .

Lately, Morocco has also expanded its geographical horizon from francophone West Africa to reach out to countries such as Nigeria and Ethiopia. For instance, it secured a $3.7 billion deal with Ethiopia for the construction of a major fertiliser plant large enough to secure Ethiopia's self-sufficiency in the production of fertilisers[66]. The plant will rely on phosphate imports from Morocco, which are largely extracted from the Western Sahara.[67] There is, however, no indication thus far suggesting that Ethiopia, which recognises the Sharawi Republic in Western Sahara, has changed its position.

In addition to investment and economic partnerships, Morocco's engagement with SSA includes a humanitarian component.[68] For example, it complemented the continental response to the Ebola outbreak in 2014 by providing medical aid to countries affected. The Moroccan state-owned airline was one of the few that continued to fly to Ebola affected countries when other major airlines stopped their service.[69]

While Morocco frames its gravitation to the south within a discourse of south–south cooperation, its presence in Africa and membership of the African Union will certainly serve its self-assigned position as Europe's gateway to Africa.[70]

2.2.2. The balance sheet of Morocco's membership in the African Union: mixed results

Morocco's role in peace and security at the level of the AU is yet to take shape. But thematically, counterterrorism and the prevention of violent extremism, as well as migration, are priority issues for the kingdom.[71] Close observers of the AU and its affairs point out that Morocco has given a lot of weight to its membership to the AU. It has a well-staffed permanent representation to the African Union and its delegates are known to be present and active in various technical and operational deliberations of the African Union Commission in Addis Ababa.[72] Morocco also managed to secure a two-year seat in the AU PSC (2018–2020) with 36 votes of support and 16 abstentions shortly after joining the Union in January 2017.[73] While Morocco is quickly learning on the go about the complexity of conflicts in various parts of the continent, many point out that it is yet to acquire the agility needed to work with – let alone lead – the fast-paced peace and security dynamics in Africa.[74]

In the medium to long term, finding its niche in the peace and security dealings of the AU would likely bring Morocco face to face with its adversary Algeria, which already wields recognisable influence in that

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[63] Guerin 2017
[64] The Economist 2018
[65] Rawhani 2018
[66] Maasho 2016
[67] Rawhani 2018; Kasprak 2016
[68] Interview in Addis Ababa. Also see: El Katiri 2015: 6.
[69] Worland 2014
[70] El Katiri: 2015: 14
[71] Interview in Addis Ababa.
[72] Interview with observers of AU affairs in Addis Ababa, Nov. 2018.
[73] Amani Africa 2018
[74] Interviews with observers of AU affairs in Addis Ababa, November 2018.

domain. In addition to their duel for regional hegemony, Morocco and Algeria do not see eye to eye on the thorny issue of Western Sahara. It is no secret that securing its interests over Western Sahara and counteracting Algeria's regional and continental influence – not least because of the latter's support for the Saharawi cause – are objectives central to Morocco's policy towards Africa. In fact, they are also some of the driving factors behind Morocco's return to membership of the Union.

Two years since the kingdom joined the AU in 2017, and more than a year after it won a two-year seat the AUPSC in 2018, a critical question is whether its efforts to get into the AU have paid off, and whether its premise that membership in the AU would result in better outcomes vis-à-vis Western Sahara, compared to its former *chaise vide* policy, holds true.

Morocco has indeed changed its reactionary stances on the Western Sahara issue, which previously included boycotting and disrupting meetings where it was being discussed or where the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic was represented.[75] It is now invested in strengthening its presence in Africa, to achieve its long-term objectives of securing a favourable African stance on Western Sahara.[76]

But other observers of AU dynamics have mixed feelings about whether or not Morocco has succeeded in this regard. Some contend that not much has changed in how the AU sees the Western Saharan issue and that Morocco's membership in the Union actually implicitly binds it to AU's approach. They point to the participation of the Saharawi representation at the EU–Africa summit in Abidjan in 2017 as evidence that not much has changed.

Others, however, point to the outcome of the AU Assembly in July 2018 at the Nouakchott summit, where the Assembly decided to establish a troika made up of the outgoing, the current and the incoming chairpersons, as well as the chairperson of the commission, to support United Nations-led efforts on Western Sahara and report to the AU Assembly and, as necessary, to the PSC at the level of the heads of state and Assembly.[77] This decision ultimately shifts the level and scope of the discussion on Western Sahara from one that was dealt by the AU and its member states broadly and at different levels, to one that can only be raised within the framework of the Troika, and at the level of heads of states. This could be taken as a demonstration of Morocco's 'success' at countering the status quo with regards to Western Sahara. Whether or not it will succeed in getting the AU to abandon its position towards neutrality on Western Sahara in the immediate term will be seen in the years to come.

2.2.3.   Morocco and regional peace and security

Morocco's history of security cooperation in Sub-Saharan Africa, while invigorated since the Arab Spring and recent changing dynamics in North Africa, predates this period. Morocco had historically extended military support to President Mobutu Seseseko of Congo/Zaire in 1977 and as well to President Teodoro Obiang Nguema of Equatorial Guinea in 1979.[78] It has a marked legacy of participating in UN peacekeeping missions, particularly in Africa (Congo 1960, DRC 1999 and Cote D'Ivoire 2004)[79] and around 2,000 of its 2,100 military and police officers currently deployed externally are in UN peacekeeping missions in Africa, namely MONUSCO in the DRC and MINUSCA in CAR.[80]

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[75] Louw-Vaudran 2018
[76] Saddiki 2018
[77] African Union 2018b
[78] El Katiri 2015: 30
[79] El Katiri 2015
[80] As of May 2019. https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/morocco.

In the past two decades, the expansion of Morocco's economic interests and presence in West Africa has meant that it would have much to lose from political instability in the countries where it has investments. For example, the political crises in Cote D'Ivoire in 2002 and 2010 as well as the instability in CAR in 2011 have had an adverse effect on Moroccan owned banks and financial institutions with links to Morocco's ruling elite.[81]

But in addition to protecting its economic interests, Morocco intends to flex its muscles in the domain of peace and security in North Africa. Its distinctive niche in preventing violent extremism and success at exporting it to West African countries, as well as its recent announcement of support to the G5 Sahel Force, are two notable examples in this regard.

There are two interrelated regional dynamics in North Africa – partly induced by the Arab Spring – that could have propelled Morocco's regional ambitions in peace and security.

The first has to do with the fall of Muammar Gaddafi and subsequent instability in Libya, and Morocco's perception that Algeria is preoccupied with meeting internal socio-economic demands. Morocco could have concluded that the infirmity of these two otherwise prominent regional players opens up opportunities for it to gain the regional upper hand in West Africa and the Sahel.[82] This ambition should in particular be seen in the context of the age-old Algeria–Morocco tension over regional influence in the Maghreb[83] and the issue of Western Sahara.

Secondly, the proliferation of armed groups, illicit trade routes and smuggling networks in North Africa and the Sahel, in the stark absence of viable regional platforms for cooperation, have heightened Morocco's incentive to invest in regional security cooperation.[84] The Arab Maghreb Union (AMU),[85] a regional organisation founded by Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco and Mauritania in 1989 to promote regional cooperation, failed to take off due largely to the Algeria–Morocco tension. Similarly, the Arab League, of which Morocco is a member and which could have been an appropriate platform for cooperation, is divided on the Polisario and the issue of Western Sahara.[86] Still in search of an avenue to realise its regional ambition, while also competing against Algeria's CEMOC initiative, Morocco tried to revive the equally dormant Community of Sahel-Saharan States, of which 10 countries[87] (except Algeria) are members.[88]

Therefore, lack of conducive, formal, regional cooperation mechanisms could have led Morocco to look for alternative modalities of engagement. Thematically, the prevention of violent extremism is an area where Morocco has had a distinctive and widely visible engagement in West Africa. Albeit on a smaller scale than other countries, such as Egypt, Morocco has been targeted by terrorist activities, the most consequential being the attack in Casablanca in 2003 by al Qaeda affiliates. Following this attack, the kingdom developed a prevention-oriented 'comprehensive' counterterrorism strategy, distinctly focused on countering radical

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[81]   El Katiri 2015: 18
[82]   El Katiri 2015: 21
[83]   The Maghreb consists of Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia and Western Sahara.
[84]   El Katiri 2015: 21
[85]   The AMU was signed into existence by Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco and Mauritania in 1989, to achieve regional integration in the Maghreb. One of the reasons behind the failure of the organisation is the rivalry and tension between Morocco and Algeria. See Lounnas and Messari 2018 for more.
[86]   Rawhani 2018
[87]   Benin, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Chad, the Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, the Sudan, Togo and Tunisia.
[88]   El Katiri 2015: 21

religious narratives and violent extremism.[89] Morocco's shares its experience and strategy with other countries and offers training opportunities for Imams and religious scholars from around the region.

Preventing violent extremism and Morocco's "spiritual diplomacy"

Morocco's strategy to prevent violent extremism – terrorism – includes closely monitoring the activities of mosques and religious schools, training imams to promote 'moderate' Islamic teachings – to prevent what it calls the 'hijacking' of true Islamic teachings by radicals – and allowing some space for 'moderate' Islamist political parties to operate in the legal and political scene of the country.[90] Morocco exports this model of counterterrorism to other countries in the Sahel and West Africa and trains imams at the King Mohammed IV Institute For The Training of Imams and the Foundation for the Training of Muslim Scholars, which it established for these purposes in 2014 and 2015 respectively.[91] Its approach to training imams as a counterterrorism measure, and its strategy for countering violent religious extremism, is an emerging distinctive feature of Morocco's influence over counterterrorism practices in West Africa.[92] Guinea-Conakry, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Tunisia, and Libya have all approached Morocco for the same training.[93]

Morocco's 'spiritual diplomacy' of exporting its expertise in engaging with religious institutions and figures to counter violent is part and parcel of Morocco's Africa strategy and it aims to achieve three objectives: one, protection of its national security; two, compensating for the limits of viable, formal, regional security cooperation mechanisms; and three, breaking out of the shadows of Algeria and cementing its mark in the Sahel.[94]

Domestically, the success of Morocco's 'comprehensive' counterterrorism strategy, which in addition to countering violent narratives includes a programme for the reintegration of former fighters and investment in social and development services for marginalised populations, is contested.[95] Further, while its security and intelligence services continue to dismantle extremist cells in Morocco, it is yet to deal with its youth who travel abroad as foreign fighters. More than 1,500 Moroccans are said to have joined ISIS and other Jihadist armed groups in Syria and Libya.[96]

From soft to a hard approach on terrorism?

Beyond its 'preventive' support and 'soft power' on counterterrorism in West Africa and the Sahel, Morocco has recently vowed to support the G5 Sahel – a regional partnership composed of forces from Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Chad – to fight terrorism and transnational crimes in the Sahel.[97] Though the nature of this 'support' is yet to be revealed, Morocco's endorsement of a force composed of a 'coalition of the willing', to engage in semi-militarised law enforcement and counterterrorism operations seems different from its past experience in promoting 'soft security' approaches, through peacekeeping, training of imams and promoting a 'moderate' religious ideology to counter violent religious extremism.

That said, a couple of explicit and implicit reasons can explain Morocco's support of the G5 Sahel Joint Force. While the threat of instability and the proliferation of armed groups in the Sahel and North Africa to its own national security is unquestionable, Morocco may have been motivated to support the G5 Sahel in order to pursue political, geostrategic and economic ends. Morocco has, for example, hinted at a link

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89   El Katiri 2015: 21
90   Masbah 2018
91   El Katiri 2015: 24; Bouknight 2019.
92   El Katiri 2015: 24
93   El Katiri 2015: 24
94   Hmimnat 2018
95   Hmimnat 2018
96   Koundouno 2018
97   The North Africa Post 2019

between the Polisario and terrorist groups such as ISIS in the Sahel.[98] If this narrative sticks – particularly in Europe, where opinions are divided over Morocco's claim to Western Sahara and its implication on EU–Morocco trade relations[99] – Morocco could discredit the Polisario and achieve its own political ends as a result.

Moreover, Morocco's support for the G5 Sahel stands in stark contrast to Algeria's nonchalance towards the Force. Despite its experience in counterterrorism and mediation (for instance in Mali) in the Sahel, Algeria is generally averse to military operations outside its territories and highly critical of Western-backed interventions; hence it is not a member of the G5 Sahel.[100] By stepping in where Algeria is absent, Morocco can make a name for itself as an important regional security stakeholder. It can demonstrate its willingness to support (militarised) security partnerships like the G5 Sahel, with which Algeria is uncomfortable. In doing so, it can challenge Algeria's security hegemony in North Africa and the Sahel – a challenge Algeria had wished to diffuse by initiating the CEMOC and not lending a hand to alternative platforms such as the G5 Sahel.[101] Lastly, Morocco also sees the economic benefits of its support to the G5 Sahel, in connection with the water and electricity management expertise that it plans to provide to countries in the Sahel.[102]

2.2.4. Summary

Overall, Morocco's economic engagement in Africa and its membership of the AU are two interrelated strategies deployed to achieve Morocco's new policy towards Africa. This policy is anchored on three mutually reinforcing objectives: positioning Morocco as Europe's gateway to Africa, establishing itself as a continental economic power and deepening its hold on Western Sahara.

While Morocco managed to secure a two-year seat at the AU PSC (2018–2020), analysis of whether or not it has succeeded in securing a favourable African stance on Western Sahara reveals mixed results. Some contend that not much has changed in how the AU sees the Western Saharan issue and that Morocco's membership in the Union actually implicitly binds it to AU's approach. At the same time, the decision of the AU Assembly in July 2018 to limit the level and scope of the discussion on Western Sahara from a matter that was dealt with by the AU and its member states broadly and at different levels, to one that can only be raised within the framework of the Troika, and at the level of heads of states, indicates otherwise.

Thematically, Morocco's role in regional peace and security is focused on preventing violent extremism. It seems to be carving out a niche in 'spiritual diplomacy' – of closely monitoring the activities of mosques and religious schools, training imams to promote 'moderate' Islamic teachings to prevent what it sees as the 'hijacking' of true Islamic teachings by radicals, and allowing space for 'moderate' Islamist political parties to operate in the legal and political scene of the country – strategies that it uses at home and exports to other countries in West Africa and the Sahel.

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[98] Lamzouwaq 2017
[99] Sidati 2016
[100] Algeria's apprehension towards foreign intervention, in its own the internal affairs or that of other countries, is very much tied to its foreign policy and engraved in its constitution, which prohibits Algerian troops from operating outside of its borders. For more see Harchaoui 2018: 1–9.
[101] Boukhars 2019; The North Africa Post 2019
[102] The North Africa Post 2019

2.3.   Egypt

During the height of liberation movements in Africa in the 1950s and 1960s, Egypt, like Algeria and Morocco, was at the heart of pan-Africanism, and a founding member of the OAU.[103] Gamal Abdel Nasser, Egypt's president from 1954 to 1970 was not only a national hero, but a pan-Arab and pan-African, who recognised Egypt's unique historical and political positions and identified the Arab, the African and the Muslim worlds as Egypt's sphere of influence.[104] Nasser's pan-Arab, and pan-African stance, together with the Egyptian victory against Britain over control of the Suez Canal under his leadership in 1956, won Nasser tremendous popularity and reverence among anti-imperial revolutionaries in Africa and beyond.[105] Egypt's attention, however, slowly gravitated towards the Arab world in the 1970s, owing in the main to the Arab–Israeli conflict.[106]

Egypt's participation in continental affairs in the OAU waned even more during the time of President Hosni Mubarak in the late 1980s and 1990s. Mubarak barely attended any AU summits after the assassination attempt he survived during a summit in Addis Ababa in 1985. Egypt, however, didn't completely abandon Africa or the African Union. It maintained many of its embassies in the continent and remained one of the main funders of the Union, and Mubarak attended external meetings such as the EU–Africa summit (2000). Further, it remained active and connected to the Horn of Africa and the Nile Basin countries, where its key geostrategic interests lie. For these reasons, Egypt's 'return to Africa' is better described as a revitalisation of its bilateral and multilateral engagements (not least through the AU). Nonetheless, the selection of President el-Sisi as the president of the AU for 2019 – a rotational role that is currently being held by Egypt for the first time – and subsequent efforts by Egypt to expand its economic and security influence in the continent, does signify a change in its approach to Africa.

The following section first discusses the drivers behind Egypt's new approach to Africa; second, analyses the nature of Egypt's re-engagement with the continent; and third, considers the implications of Egypt's assertive role in peace and security in two geographic areas – North Africa and the Horn of Africa.

2.3.1.   The drivers of Egypt's new approach to Africa

Egypt's outlook towards sub-Saharan Africa has much to do with the changing context of the post-Arab Spring Middle East, where Egypt played a key leadership role since the 1960s. With the deepening of sectarianism in the Middle East, the rise of the Gulf states as new security players and the proliferation of armed groups and jihadist movements in the region, instability in Syria and Libya, as well as its own internal instability, Egypt can no longer exercise the same influence in the Arab world that it did before the Arab Spring.

In the wake of the Arab Spring, Egypt has faced several developments. The popular protests that ousted long-serving President Hosni Mubarak in 2011 gave way to elections won by the Muslim Brotherhood with a significant majority vote. By the time the Brotherhood, led by Mohammed Morsi, took office, however, the Egyptian economy had succumbed to the adverse effects of continued protests and a declining tourism sector. Around the same time, Ethiopia announced its intentions to build a major hydroelectric dam on the Nile, threatening Egypt's hegemony over the river. Ethiopia's tactical grand revelation concerning the dam, at a time when Egypt was struggling to find its footing, was not lost on Egypt.

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[103] Mohamed Abdel-Halim 2018
[104] Kashgari 2011
[105] Boddy-Evans 2018
[106] Mohamed Abdel-Halim 2018

By the time the military removed Mohammed Morsi and took power in 2013, the incoming leader, General Abdel Fatah el-Sisi, had to deal with an ailing economy, strong opposition in Egypt and abroad from supporters of the deposed Muslim Brotherhood, a rising Islamic insurgency in the Sinai region, instability in its neighbourhood and the broader region, with brutal wars being fought in Libya and in Syria, and a hydroelectric project in Ethiopia that challenged Egypt's regional hegemony. Seen in this context, therefore, Egypt's renewed engagement with Africa was born out of the need to address these economic and political obstacles and to rise above them in order to restore the Egyptian economy, national pride and hegemony over the Nile.

Another important external factor that could have contributed to Egypt's gaze south is a changing narrative of (sub-Saharan) Africa, as a rising continent with expanding economies, a booming population and growing geostrategic importance, at a time of multi-power competition globally. Furthermore, Egypt has historically been shaped by a grand narrative of itself as the centre of human civilisation, and its economy was one of the strongest in the Arab world before the Arab Spring[107]. This context suggests that Egypt may have ambitions to line up alongside rising powers such as Turkey and India, which had been making their presence felt on the continent.

2.3.2. The nature of Egypt's re-engagement with Africa

Presidential presence and leadership in continental affairs

Egypt's new approach to Africa was made clear when President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi embarked on several state visits to African countries shortly after taking power in 2014 (21 out of his 69 state visits up to 2017 were to African countries).[108] He participated in various African multilateral platforms, including the Africa–EU Summit in Brussels in April 2014, the Africa–US Summit in Washington in August 2014, the India–Africa Summit in October 2015, the Forum on China–Africa Cooperation in December 2015 and the Germany–Africa Summit in 2017.[109] It was a lesson learned that Mubarak's non-attendance of AU summits had cost him, and also Egypt, the political capital that heads of states are able to build during AU summits.[110] But el-Sisi also had to mend relations with the continent: Egypt had been suspended from membership of the Union in reaction to the coup that el-Sisi himself led in 2013 against the elected Mohammed Morsi.

Following its post-2014 re-engagement with Africa, Egypt played a significant role in coordination between the three African members of the UNSC (known as the A3) in New York and the AUPSC in Addis Ababa, during its non-permanent membership of the UNSC (2016–2017). Its efforts were highly appreciated by the AU, which had been trying to amplify a collective 'African voice' on matters of peace and security at the level of the UN.[111] This again provided an opportunity for Egypt to show its readiness to champion continental agendas on behalf of Africa, and perhaps propelled the selection of el-Sisi to chair the Union in 2019, a rotational role among AU member states that Egypt had never taken on.

During its presidency, Egypt has emerged as a champion for post-conflict reconstruction in Africa, and has won the bid to host the AU's Centre for Post Conflict Reconstruction. It has also taken on proactive roles in organising youth-centred initiatives, such as the Arab-African Youth Platform in March 2019, where President el-Sisi himself was in attendance.[112]

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[107] Allinson 2019
[108] Mohamed Abdel-Halim 2018
[109] Rashwan 2017
[110] Interviews in Addis Ababa with diplomats and observers of the AU.
[111] African Union 2017
[112] Egypt Today 2019a

Egypt is also behind the AU's efforts to ensure predictable and sustainable financing for AU-led peacekeeping/peace enforcement missions by raising 75% of peacekeeping costs from UN-assessed contribution.[113] Egypt has a long legacy of contributing troops to UN peacekeeping mission; in fact it is one of the top troop contributing countries in the UN and currently has around 2,000 personnel serving in nine UN missions, six of which are in Africa (UNAMID, MONUSCO, UNOCI, UNMISS, MINUSMA and MINURSO). [114]

Investment with a cause

Egypt's comeback to the continent and its pursuit of political and security interests includes a deepening of its soft powers through trade with and investment in the continent in general, and in East Africa and the Nile basin countries in particular.[115] Egyptian investments in sub-Saharan Africa are currently estimated at 10 billion US dollars, and it is seeking to increase its investment volume, as well as its economic footprint in African markets, in the years to come.[116] At a well-attended high-level forum – the Intra-Africa Investment Forum – that it organised in December 2018, Egypt promised to do more. In particular, it committed to working with the private sector, with the government facilitating access to finance and providing guarantees for Egyptian private investment in Africa.[117]

While not perhaps as diligent as Morocco in its utilisation of economic diplomacy to achieve specific foreign policy goals, Egypt isn't vague about the foreign policy objectives behind its economic engagement with sub-Saharan Africa, including through the private sector. Its geographic priority in this regard is East Africa, among the Nile riparian countries.[118] Trade between Egypt and the Nile basin countries is reported to have increased by 17.5% in the first 10 months of 2018.[119] Of Egyptian investments worth 2.7 billion US dollars in the COMESA region, Sudan and Ethiopia – the two countries where Egypt is currently negotiating the terms of use of the Nile water in connection with Ethiopia's Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) – are reported to have received more than 60%.[120] Egypt has also signed various economic cooperation agreements with South Sudan,[121] Uganda,[122] Sudan and Ethiopia[123] covering a range of issues from infrastructure development to agriculture, energy and construction.

2.3.3. Implications for regional peace and security in North Africa and the Horn of Africa

Proactive engagement in a destabilised neighbourhood

The growing threat of terrorism in the Middle East, North Africa and the Sahel, and the increasing mobility and ideological alignment of terrorist groups across these regions, have had serious implications for Egypt. An even bigger concern for Egypt is dealing with a variety of home-grown terrorist organisations and jihadist extremists, such as Ansar Beit al Maqdes, which have been increasing their visibility in Sinai and staging attacks elsewhere in Egypt since 2013.[124] Islamic State is also present in the Sinai province of Egypt and has carried out attacks in Cairo, Alexandria and Minya.[125]

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[113] Egypt Today 2018c
[114] www.cairopeacekeeping.org/en/egypt-and-peacekeeping.
[115] https://al-ain.com/article/egypt-africa-nile-basin.
[116] www.egypttoday.com/Article/3/60226/Egyptian-investments-in-Africa-reach-10-2B-Minister.
[117] Jere 2018
[118] Egyptian State Information Service 2019
[119] Mounir 2019
[120] Egypt Today 2018d
[121] Egypt Today 2018a
[122] Egypt Today 2018bt
[123] Egypt Today 2018e
[124] Ragab 2016
[125] Maguid 2017; Egypt Today 2019c; Dawoud 2018

Although the Egyptian military has boosted its counterterrorism measures in Sinai and elsewhere to manage the situation, the government has, however, been accused of using the guise of counterterrorism to crack down on journalists and opposition, particularly supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood.[126] The government, for its part, continues to draw a link between the Muslim Brotherhood, violent extremism and terrorism, and has designated the Brotherhood a terrorist organisation.[127] Egypt is currently under a state of emergency that was issued in 2017 following an attack on churches in Tata and Alexandria in that year. This state of emergency, as well as the curfew imposed in the Sinai peninsula following an attack on an army checkpoint in 2014,[128] were renewed in July 2019.[129]

Externally, Egypt is feeling the brunt of the fall of Gaddafi and the subsequent power vacuum that has been created in Libya. While keeping its more than 1,000 km border with Libya free of encroachment by armed groups, smugglers and irregular migrants has never been easy, it has proven particularly difficult now that armed groups have proliferated and multiple organised actors vie for control in Libya. In addition, the 'internationalisation' of the conflict in Libya, with multiple European and Gulf actors using proxies to secure their interests, presents another layer of challenges to Egypt, which is far more exposed to spillover effects of Libya's destabilisation, due to its geographic proximity.

As a result, Egypt's most pronounced and direct role in regional peace and security has been around the Libyan political process, with two primary aims: securing its long border with Libya from the encroachment of jihadists and illicit traders on the one hand, and countering the influence of political Islamists and the Muslim Brotherhood in the region on the other.[130] Based on these two objectives, Egypt's approach to Libya since 2014 has been security oriented, and Egypt has aligned itself with military strong-man General Haftar, who not only shares el-Sisi's distaste for political Islamists, but also promises – from the Egyptian perspective – a more organised force that could eventually at least secure Egypt's security interest along the border, if not stabilise Libya altogether.[131]

In 2017, Egypt attempted to bring the Libyan military together by mediating a security arrangement (not necessarily a political union) between the AU- and UN-recognised Government of National Accord in Tripoli, and the Libyan National Army led by General Haftar in Tobruk. With its mediation to unite the Libyan military, "Egypt not only hoped it could mediate a favourable outcome for Haftar, but that successfully reunifying the armed forces would prompt the UN to lift its ban on weapons exports to the Libyan army, which Egypt blames for stalling Haftar's progress".[132]

Egypt, although the chair of the AU in 2019, has a different position on Libya than that of the AU, which gives due legitimacy to the Government of National Accord (GNA). While Haftar's 'march to Tripoli' in 2019 to confront armed groups aligned with the GNA to take over the capital, was allegedly backed by Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and France,[133] President el-Sisi convened an AU Troika summit on Libya in April 2019. The meeting was attended by Denis Sassou Nguesso, president of the Republic of Congo and chairperson of the High-Level Committee on Libya, and members of the AU Troika (Paul Kagame, president of the Republic of Rwanda, chairperson of the AU in 2018, and Cyril Ramaphosa, president of

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126 Human Rights Watch 2018
127 Narsalla 2013
128 Deutsche Welle 2014
129 Egypt Today 2019b
130 Mahmoud 2018
131 Megerisi 2019
132 Mahmoud 2018
133 Cafiero and Karasik 2019

the Republic of South Africa who will chair the Union in 2020) and as well as the chairperson of the AU Commission, Moussa Faki.[134]

Exerting influence in the Horn of Africa

As mentioned above, Egypt's regional sphere of influence goes beyond North Africa and extends to East Africa and the Nile basin. Notably, yet unsurprisingly, this region has never lost its relevance in Egyptian foreign policy, even during the era of Egypt's gravitation to the Middle East. Its recent preoccupation with the region, however, is tied to Ethiopia's ongoing construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), which it started in 2011. The timing of the construction caught Egypt by surprise and at a vulnerable moment when it was undergoing post-Arab Spring political transition. The uncertainty of affairs at home, in contrast to the growing popularity of the GERD as a symbol of unity and a tool of nation building in Ethiopia, rang alarm bells in Cairo.

For decades, Egypt has cited colonial agreements signed in 1929 and 1959 – which award it 55 billion cubic meters of Nile waters, and a right to veto projects over the upper stream catchment of the Nile – to assert its (irrevocable) 'historic and acquired right' over the Nile.[135] Egypt fears that the construction of the dam will diminish its share of the Nile water, which it depends on and considers a matter of national security. It is also concerned that the dam will alter the status quo of Egyptian dominance over the discourse, and the use, of the Nile.

While Egypt has always closely monitored regional dynamics in the Horn of Africa, and aspired to offset Ethiopia's influence in the region, Egypt's extended yet direct role in the region was evident in the South Sudanese peace process of 2013–2018. As Egypt is not a member of the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD), it was unable to directly and legitimately influence the peace process led by Ethiopia under the auspices of IGAD. However, it kept up close relations with President Salva Kiir of South Sudan, with whom it signed a military cooperation agreement with the hope of undermining Ethiopia's leadership in the peace process[136] and also maintaining a potential guard against Ethiopia's activities around GERD – being built only a few kilometres away from Ethiopia's border with both Sudan and South Sudan.[137,] In addition, Egypt's actions in South Sudan were also retaliatory against Khartoum, which had aggrieved Egypt by changing its initiation positions in addition to and warming up to the GERD, in addition to old Egypt-Sudan tensions over territory (the Hala 'ib triangle) and the role of Islamists in the government.[138] These same reasons explain why Egypt gladly welcomed the Transitional Military Council (TMC) that took over in Sudan in March 2019 – ousting President Bashir following popular protests – in stark contrast to the AU's reluctance to accept the TMC as a legitimate governing body, to the point of suspending Sudan's membership until a civilian power transfer could be carried out.[139]

2.3.4. Summary

Egypt, like Algeria and Morocco was at the heart of pan-Africanism, and a founding member of the OAU before its foreign policy and economic interests slowly gravitated towards the Arab world in the 1970s due to the Arab-Israeli conflict. However, even during those years Egypt never lost sight of developments in the Horn of Africa and the Nile basin countries, where some of its other key geostrategic interests lie.

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[134] Government of the Republic of South Africa 2019
[135] Cascão 2009: 248-249
[136] Interview with observers following the IGAD-facilitated South Sudan peace process. Nov. 2018.
[137] Mesfin 2015: 7
[138] United Nations Security Council 2018: 10; Mahmoud 2019; Kodouda 2012
[139] Fabricius 2019; Almasry 2019; Jacinto 2019

Egypt's systematic presence on the African scene after 2014, characterised by presidential state visits, participation in AU meetings and platforms, and efforts to expand Egypt's economic presence across the continent, is markedly different from its previous approach. This is driven by various factors that fall into three main categories: first, changing geopolitics in the post-Arab Spring Middle East and North Africa region. Deepening sectarianism in the Middle East, the rise of Gulf states as new security players, the proliferation of armed groups and jihadist movements, and instability in Syria and Libya, all changed the status quo, and Egypt could no longer yield the kind of influence it did before the Arab Spring.

Second, internal political instability and the divide between the Muslim Brotherhood and the army, which unseated the Brotherhood to take over power, not only entailed violent confrontations but also distracted the country from external engagements. It also cast a shadow over the economy of the country, from which Egypt is yet to recover.

Third, developments around the Horn of Africa, particularly Ethiopia's announcement of its plan to build a major hydroelectric dam on the Nile and the significant progress it made towards this end, at a time when Egypt was preoccupied with internal matters, meant that Egypt needed to draw its attention back to not only the Horn of Africa but the continent at large, where it could forge alliances and garner support.

Geographically, Egypt's peace and security interests in Africa lie in North Africa – particularly vis-à-vis the issue of Libya – and in East Africa/Horn of Africa vis-à-vis the Red Sea and the Nile river. In Libya, it pursues two primary aims: securing its long border with Egypt from the encroachment of jihadists and illicit traders on the one hand, and countering the influence of political Islamists and the Muslim Brotherhood in the region on the other. In the Horn, its objectives revolve around securing its access to and use of the Nile waters, and keeping the influence of Ethiopia – which contributes 86% of the Nile water flow and is an emerging regional swing state in the Horn – in check.

3. Conclusion

Algeria, Morocco and Egypt each have unique sets of strategic drivers and agendas that explain their interest in Africa. Algeria's sustained interest in Africa – marked by its attachment to the AU – is driven by its anti-imperialist revolutionary ideologies, domestic experience with terrorism and regional interests vis-à-vis the issue of Western Sahara. It sees the AU as a convenient platform from which to promote its ideologies and stance on specific issues to a continental and global audience.

For Morocco, change in the kingdom's leadership with the reign of King Mohammed VI, and acknowledgement of the failure of its chaise vide policy of abstaining from the AU over the Western Sahara issue, are driving factors behind Morocco's renewed interest in Africa. Its engagement, pursued in various ways, is tied to three reinforcing objectives: positioning Morocco as Europe's gateway to Africa, establishing itself as a continental economic power, and deepening its hold on Western Sahara.

Egypt's recent interest in Africa, meanwhile, is driven by changing face of North Africa and the Middle East in the aftermath of the Arab Spring, domestic political instability, and developments on the Nile river, in particular Ethiopia's construction of the Renaissance Dam.

Despite the diverse ways in which they pursue their interests and signal their engagement in the continent, a common denominator in the approach of these three countries is the fact that they all consider their

visibility at the level of the AU to be a means of achieving strategic objectives. This is an approach long applied by Algeria; it is, however, new for Morocco and Egypt. The latter are now seizing the power of 'presence' in the AU through visibility at summits and continental meetings at the level of heads of state, taking up leadership roles in continental matters and championing specific African interests from multilateral platforms.

Further, while economic diplomacy is a tool both Morocco and Egypt utilise to maintain national geopolitical interests in Africa, Algeria's economic footprint in the continent is limited and the little there is seems to be without strategic design. Morocco's economic diplomacy with various African countries, particularly in West Africa, had cleared the way for its membership back into the AU in 2017 and remains a key instrument to the country's Africa policy under King Mohammed VI. While Morocco's economic interaction was formerly largely anchored in francophone West Africa, of late it has expanded its reach to non-francophone countries like Nigeria and Ethiopia. Similarly, Egypt's economic ambitions in Africa go beyond securing its national interests vis-à-vis the Nile river, but the Horn of Africa/the Nile basin is central to its economic outlook on Africa, and is currently where much of its investment is focused.

In peace and security, counterterrorism is an agenda topic salient to all three countries, but their individual approaches vary. Morocco prefers soft approaches to counterterrorism and focuses on preventing violent religious extremism. It seems to be carving out a distinct niche in 'spiritual diplomacy', whereby it trains religious leaders – its own and those from other countries in West Africa and the Sahel – to promote 'moderate' Islamic teachings to counter what it deems as the 'hijacking' of true Islamic teachings by violent extremists. It exports its 'comprehensive' approach to counterterrorism, which includes opening up space for moderate Islamists – while Algeria and Egypt are generally averse to political Islam. Both Algeria and Egypt have a heavy-handed approach to terrorism; Egypt's extends beyond its territory into targets in Libya, for example, while Algerian forces cannot operate outside of Algerian territory. Both countries, but most recently Egypt, are accused of conflating political Islam with violent extremism, and using counterterrorism as a cover to supress political dissent.

Implications for continental integration

North Africa's recent gravitation towards sub-Saharan Africa could pay positive dividends to the African integration agenda (economically and security-wise). It is particularly pertinent as the continent strides towards the goals laid out in its Agenda 2063. More specifically, the success of the African Continental Free Trade Area, and the AU reform process, requires the full attention and participation of all AU members if it is to bear fruit.

In the domain of security management, the intricacies and complexities of conflict dynamics in different regions of the continent – not least in North Africa and the Sahel – need concerted action by the AU and other regional bodies. But in the absence of a functioning regional organisation to act as a lead, and with a concentration of influential countries like Egypt, Algeria and Morocco with big economies making significant contributions to the AU budget, the role of the AU in stabilising the region will continue to be marginal.

Moreover, if tensions between Algeria and Morocco are not progressively resolved, there is a risk that the AU will become another platform where Algeria, Morocco and Egypt play out regional competitions and promote their narrow national security interests vis-à-vis key issues – over security in the Sahel region and the Saharawi cause, and for Egypt over Libya and the Horn of Africa. It also remains to be seen how Algeria manages its internal political transition, and whether things at home will affect its role in the AU or in North Africa.

While the implications of North Africa's gravitation to the south on continental peace and security and regional integration continue to unfold, Morocco's re-joining of the African Union and Egypt's refocusing of its attention back to Africa, have implications for the AU's external standing. Now that all African countries are once again members of the AU, the Union can truly represent the whole continent. As a result, the Union could, for example, engage more legitimately in partnership with global actors on behalf of the continent. This would particularly be a key consideration in the next EU–Africa partnership post 2020, where African member states could opt to collectively negotiate with the EU on a continent to continent partnership key matters such as security, instead of the current EU-ACP (African, Caribbean, Pacific) arrangement that underlines EU-Africa partnership up to 2020.

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This publication benefits from the structural support by ECDPM's institutional partners: The Netherlands, Belgium, Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Sweden, Switzerland, Denmark and Austria.

ISSN1571-7577