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Dissertation title: "The League of Arab States as a Regional Organization and a Component of the Middle Eastern Security Architecture. Determinants of Institutional Efficacy in Addressing Regional Security Challenges – The Syrian War as a Case Study"

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The dynamics of international security in the 21st century are marked by the progressive interdependence of global and regional processes. The Middle East occupies a distinctive position within these relations a region defined by a high degree of structural instability driven, among other factors, by armed conflicts, confessional and political crises, terrorism, and the aftermath of revolutionary upheavals, most notably the Arab Spring. Despite a relatively low level of formal integration compared to the European system, Middle Eastern states continue to develop multilateral cooperation mechanisms through regional frameworks.

In both the theory and practice of international relations, the relationship between universalism and regionalism in security governance remains of paramount importance. Normative evolution has consolidated the role of regional arrangements in the peaceful settlement of disputes and in reinforcing the global collective security system. Within this context, the League of Arab States, established in 1945, stands as a pivotal regional institution in the Arab world.

This dissertation examines the institutional mechanisms, political conditions, and tangible capacities of the LAS to respond to crises in its immediate neighborhood, with particular emphasis on its effectiveness during the Syrian conflict. Investigating the role of the LAS is warranted by the complexity of post-2011 crises, which challenged the sovereignty and territorial integrity of several Arab states (Syria, Libya, Yemen, Iraq) while blurring the boundary between internal and international security dimensions. Selecting the Syrian conflict as a case study allows for a rigorous examination of the determinants of the organization's

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effectiveness amid the involvement of external powers, proxy warfare, and divisions among League members.

From a theoretical standpoint (incorporating pluralist and institutionalist approaches), international organizations are viewed as autonomous actors in international relations, yet their agency remains directly constrained by the political will of sovereign member states. Assessing the effectiveness of the LAS is inherently complex, as diplomatic or mediatory intervention alone cannot guarantee conflict resolution when it clashes with the particularistic interests of regional and global actors.

The central research problem is formulated through the question: Did the League of Arab States prove to be an organization of high effectiveness in resolving regional conflicts, as exemplified by the war in Syria? To provide a comprehensive analysis, the study addresses several specific research questions:

1. How are peace, security, and related threats and challenges conceptualized at the beginning of the 21st century?
2. What are the nature and functions of international and regional organizations, and what is their role in advancing peace and security, particularly regarding the LAS?
3. Does the LAS function primarily as a platform for dialogue and cooperation, or does it serve as an instrument for advancing the individual interests of its member states?

In response to this research problem, the primary hypothesis posits that *the war in Syria between 2011 and 2024 revealed the limited effectiveness of the League of Arab States in resolving regional conflicts in the Middle East, despite its sustained engagement in seeking a resolution*. The organization's effectiveness was evaluated against five criteria: gradualism, adequacy, feasibility, consistency, and timeliness of the measures employed.

To this end, the study conducted:

1. An analysis of LAS resolutions stipulating relevant measures regarding the conflict (tracing the decision-making process and identifying factors shaping their substantive provisions).
2. An analysis of the implementation of the objectives and actions set out in LAS resolutions (tracing the implementation process and identifying variables driving changes within it).

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3. An evaluation of the effectiveness of LAS actions based on:

- a) Timeliness – whether the LAS responded at a juncture when crisis de-escalation was still viable;
- b) Gradualism – whether the organization exhausted all diplomatic and institutional instruments at its disposal;
- c) Adequacy – whether the measures adopted were appropriately calibrated to the situation to maximize the likelihood of resolution;
- d) Feasibility – whether the LAS possessed sufficient operational capacity and backing from both the conflict parties and its broader membership to achieve success;
- e) Consistency – whether the LAS sustained its efforts until a comprehensive resolution was attained.

The core chronological framework of the study spans 2011–2024, capturing a complete, structurally closed decision-making cycle and institutional trajectory of the League. In 2011, following the mass protests of the Arab Spring and the outbreak of the crisis in Syria, the LAS initiated formal measures including suspending Syria's membership, imposing economic sanctions, and deploying an observer mission. The collapse of the Al-Assad regime in late 2024 marked the conclusion of this civil war era.

The methodological framework relies on content analysis of Arabic-language primary sources, the legal-institutional method to analyze the structure of the LAS, the systems method to examine formal interactions among Arab states within the organization, statistical analysis to evaluate LAS effectiveness in the Syrian context, and retrospective reconstruction to outline Middle Eastern political history. The theoretical foundation draws primarily on realism, supplemented by liberalism and constructivism. The source material comprises official documents, resolutions, and declarations of the Council of the League of Arab States, alongside extensive scholarly literature in Polish, English, and Arabic.

The research confirmed the hypothesis, demonstrating the limited effectiveness of the LAS despite its high political activity. This outcome stemmed not only from the predominance of particularistic interests among regional and international actors, but also from a structural shortage of robust enforcement mechanisms and operational tools capable of compelling de-escalation and meaningfully safeguarding Middle Eastern security.