CONTAGION OF VIOLENCE OVERSEAS: THE MEDITERRANEAN BASIN

(ŞİDDETİN DENİZAŞIRI YAYILIMI: AKDENİZ HAVZASI)

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ABSTRACT

The literature indicates that violent conflicts tend to spread across bordering countries via rebel/terrorist networks and refugees. However, this effect has not been tested for "overseas neighbours" that share the same sea basin. Focusing on the Mediterranean Basin, this study investigates the impact of civil and interstate conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) on terrorist attacks in Southern European countries. The findings of this study indicate that MENA conflicts increase violence in Southern Europe, whereas this effect does not exist in other European countries. This study contributes to the literature by establishing a theoretical and empirical link for overseas contagion effect of conflicts.

Keywords: Terrorism, immigrant, refugee, Mediterranean, Middle East, North Africa, Europe

ÖZET

Literatür, şiddetli çatışmaların sınırdaki ülkeler arasında isyancı / terörist ağlar ve mülteciler yoluyla yayılma eğiliminde olduğunu göstermektedir. Buna rağmen, bu etki aynı havzayı paylaşan "deniz aşırı komşular" için test edilmemiştir. Akdeniz Havzasına odaklanan bu çalışma, Ortadoğu ve Kuzey Afrika'daki (MENA) sivil ve devletlerarası çatışmaların, Güney Avrupa ülkelerindeki terörist saldırılar üzerindeki etkilerini araştırıyor. Bu çalışmanın bulguları Ortadoğu ve Kuzey Afrika'daki çatışmalarının Güney Avrupa'daki şiddeti arttırdığını gösteriyor ancak bu etki diğer Avrupa ülkelerinde bulunmamaktadır. Bu çalışma, çatışmaların denizaşırı sirayet etkisinin bağlantısını hem teorik hem de ampirik bir bağ kurarak literatüre katkıda bulunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Terrörizm, göçmen, mülteci, Akdeniz, Orta Doğu, Kuzey Afrika, Avrupa

1. INTRODUCTION

The unprecedented refugee and irregular immigrant flows in the Mediterranean Basin in the mid-2010s have posed serious challenges for receiving countries. While the implications of this influx on the labour market and political arena are discussed in other studies, this article focuses on the security aspect.

Several studies have indicated that violent conflicts are contagious across borders: civil and interstate conflicts tend to spread across bordering countries via rebel/terrorist networks and refugees (E.g. Gleditsch and Ruggeri, 2010; Cederman, Hug, and Krebs, 2010).This effect is more significant when neighbours share the same ethnic and cultural groups (Salehyan and Gleditsch, 2006). Based on these premises, this article raises the questions whether the contagion of violence affects countries sharing the same sea basin or whether the contagion theory could also be applied to understanding violent situations in overseas neighbours. Answering this question is important for both theoretical and practical reasons. If overseas neighbours are as vulnerable as land neighbours to the spread of violence, scholars would broaden the understanding and application of a theoretical concept. In addition, it would also tell policymakers that being separated by a basin, such as the Mediterranean, does not insulate a country from the adverse effects of civil and interstate wars abroad, thus, might lead international institutions (E.g. North Atlantic Treaty Organization –NATO; Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe -OSCE) to review their mandates.

Furthermore, Dalgaard-Nielsen (2010) has noted that, while several studies question why young Europeans are involved in terrorism, only a few have provided empirical evidence for this phenomenon. This study aims to fill in this gap in the literature by proposing a new theoretical insight about overseas contagion of violence and providing an empirical analysis for this the argument.

This article first defines key concepts and provides their theoretical backgrounds, which are followed by the method and operationalization of variables. The quantitative analysis investigates the impact of civil and interstate wars in Middle Eastern and North African countries with a Mediterranean border (Med-MENA, hereafter) on violent incidents between Muslim immigrants-refugees and native populations in three Southern European countries: France, Italy and Spain. For comparison, nine other European countries without a Mediterranean shore are included in the analysis. The statistical analyses and discussion of results are followed by our conclusion and policy recommendations.

2. REFUGEES & IMMIGRANTS

The 1951 Refugee Convention is a fundamental document as in Article 1a and 2 it defines refugee as,

> *"person who is outside his or her country of nationality or habitual residence; has a well-founded fear of being persecuted because of his or her race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion; and is unable or unwilling to avail him— or herself of the protection of that country, or to return there, for fear of persecution" (The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951), Article 1a, 2)*

While the concept of refugee has found an internationally accepted definition, the term immigrant has several variants due to different national regulations. This article defines

immigrant in a broader sense as "a person who comes to live permanently in a foreign country." (Oxford English Dictionary, 2017).

At the outset of the "Arab Spring," the Middle East was already considered to be the biggest receiver and producer of immigrants in the world, generating 39 percent of the world's total emigration (Fargues, 2009). Immigrants from the MENA have come to Europe for a variety of reasons, such as finding better job opportunities and escaping civil wars. In general, there are basically three options for immigrants to choose: (1) assimilate; (2) build hybrid identities; (3) resist the dominant culture. After staying long times in host countries, many immigrants have started to construct dual identities combining their home country culture with European residency (Turvey, 2013). It is also very common that immigrants get more closed with the immigrant society as they feel isolated from the natives. For example; in France, some of the first and second-generation immigrants from Maghreb Arabs, although have not been raised religiously, feel extremely isolated in the society so that they sought friendships in local mosques (Sageman, 2004).

Security can be understood in two categories: societal security refers to intimidations directed towards the cultural identity of a society, and state security refers to the military, political, economic, and environmental threats to sovereignty (Ibrahim, 2005; Waever, 1993). Gabrielli has argued that security risks and mechanisms of border control sustain the securitization dynamic (Gabrielli, 2014). Accordingly, the securitization discourse produces security dilemma (Bigo, 2002), through which public fear of immigration provokes and reproduces the fear further so that immigration is continuously perceived as a threat (Buonfino, 2004). In parallel, Fox and Akbaba have demonstrated that certain counter-terrorism policies may provide terrorist organizations with a fertile ground for new recruitment (Fox and Akbaba, 2015). Ibrahim has added that traditions are seen as a system of security and justice for communities (Ibrahim, 2005). A society may perceive the arrival of new immigrants as a threat to existing traditions and to the security of the nation.

When talking about security problems, not only hard security issues that concern protection from physical use of force, but also soft security ones, such as water scarcity, food scarcity, and job security, are affected by immigration. For example Akgündüz, Van den Berg and Hassink, as well as Berti, have shown that refugee inflows from Syria have increased food prices to a large extent, and housing prices to a lesser extent, in regions hosting them in Turkey (Akgündüz, Berg and Hassink, 2015; Berti, 2015). The literature shows that not only in Europe but also in other regions host societies are concerned about the impact of immigration. For example, Kreibaum has demonstrated that refugees in Uganda affect the average household of the locals and consume public services (Kreibaum, 2016). In Lebanon government have limited sources to accommodate Syrian immigrants in their overcrowded local education system and in their saturated job market. Thus, all of these concerns make people and politicians sceptical about accepting immigrants and refugees in European countries (Berti, 2015).

3. CONTAGION OF VIOLENT CONFLICTS ACROSS NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES

In this article, violent conflict is defined as the physical use of force because of conflicting claims, interests, or ideologies, and involves at least two parties. While wars constitute the most common type of violent conflict, the Development Assistance Committee (DAC)

considers terrorism as another type (OECD, 2003). Stepanova has argued that terrorism is a tactic of armed conflict as well as a highly dynamic strategy that can take momentum at different times during a conflict (Stepanova, 2008). In this article, terrorism is taken as a type of violent conflict on par with intrastate wars.

In conflict studies, the term diffusion refers to "the spread of instability from one geographic area to another." (Rodt, 2016) Siverson and Starr have provided two conceptualizations for the diffusion of war. First, the *linkage-penetration* approach argues that events unfolding in other contexts change a state's disposition to behave similarly. Secondly, in the *infection-contagion* approach "diffusion is conceived as the growth of ongoing wars." (Siverson and Starr, 1990: 64) The term "contagion" of a conflict is also widely used in the literature as, "the spread of conflict over time" (Jehn, Rispens, Jonsen, and Greer, 2013: 353) or "spread of a conflict" from one country to another (Gleditsch, 2009: 601). Moreover, many studies use the term contagion and diffusion interchangeably. For example, Hill and Rothchild utilize the term contagion and define it as "… diffusion of group conflict from one country to another." (Hill and Rothchild, 1986: 716). Similarly, Lobell and Mauceri have stated that diffusion and contagion have the same meaning that "entails igniting conflict in other states or the spillover processes by which conflicts in one country directly affect neighbouring countries." (Lobell and Mauceri, 2004: 3). Accordingly, this article uses contagion and diffusion interchangeably to refer to the same phenomenon.

Brown has explained the breakout of a violent conflict in a two-stage process: permissive conditions and proximate causes (Brown, 1996). Permissive conditions are circumstances that turn an environment ripe for violent conflict, whereas proximate causes are the reasons a conflict actually becomes violent. These factors act both individually and in combination and play an important role in the emergence of violent conflict. Furthermore, the reasons that lead to a conflict are highly related to the drivers of conflict diffusion (Rodt, 2016). Secessionism, uneven demographic distribution, cultural discrimination, exclusionary political institutions, and discriminatory economic systems can be given as examples of some conditions that may increase propensity for violent conflict and its diffusion.

3.1. How and why does diffusion occur?
There is a huge body of literature examining and analysing diffusion of conflicts into neighbouring states. Although many studies have argued that conflicts and civil wars in one country significantly increase the likelihood of conflict in nearby countries, there is no single explanation of why and how contagion occurs. Conflict can spread from one area to another via actors as well as ideologies.

There are three main lines of literature which investigate how diffusion of conflicts occurs. One of these lines follows the arguments that borders might provide interaction opportunities to those who have potential to initiate war (Most and Starr, 1980). Secondly, alliances might be easier to create in war atmospheres, especially between states sharing ideologies and perspectives (Siverson and King, 1980). Thirdly, a third line combines these two perspectives and argues that both political (alliances) and geographic (borders) factors are important in the diffusion of war (Siverson and Starr, 1990).

The civil violence and warfare in neighbours may have destabilizing effects on political regimes in several ways. Salehyan and Gleditsch have analysed the effect of population movements on conflicts in origin and host countries, and argued that the presence of refugees increases the likelihood of violence and conflict diffusion through organized rebel social networks

(Salehyan and Gleditsch, 2006). The countries' vicinity increases the interaction opportunities established by shared borders thus cause the spread of war (Most, Starr and Siverson, 1989; Siverson and Starr, 1990). Refugee populations are one of the reasons generating interaction opportunities between terrorist networks and potential recruits. According to Saleyhan and Gleditsch (2006), refugees do not directly lead to violence; rather, refugee flows enable the dispersion of ideologies, weapons, and fighters that tend to cause conflict and violent actions. Mitts has added that insurgents' choice of targets and the location of military bases have a crucial impact on the diffusion of insurgent violence for Jammu and Kashmir regions (Mitts, 2012).

According to Rodt (2016), one of the main conditions for conflict is a group division in a society. Thus, flows of refugees in high numbers may change the ethnic composition of the state leading to polarization and division in society. In parallel, Forsberg has found, "… the involvement by an ethnic group in one state renders links and similarities it has to kin nearby salient. This starts a process where kin members are more likely to become inspired to replicate violent behaviour of kin members involved in conflict" (Forsberg, 2014: 159.). Weidmann has brought an important insight into this debate by showing that it is communication flows within and strategic learning of transnational groups that increase the probability of violence across borders (Weidmann, 2015).

On the other hand, Leenders has analysed the nature and the scope of interconnectedness of politics and violence in the Middle East by focusing on three countries: Iraq, Lebanon, and Syria. He demonstrated that military networks such as Iraqi Ba'athists in Syria can destabilize bordering countries (Leenders, 2007). Haider has added that conflicts are context-specific, multi-causal, and multidimensional. Most of the conflicts result from a combination of factors such as political and institutional, socioeconomic, and environmental. These include weak state institutions, elite power struggles and political exclusion, breakdown in social contract and corruption, identity politics, inequality, exclusion and marginalization, absence or weakening of social cohesion, poverty, greed, scarcity of national resources, unjust resource exploitation (Haider, 2014).

3.2. Contagion of conflict in the form of terrorist attacks

The literature on terrorism suggests that terrorist attacks originated in a country might have a contagious effect on similar targets in other countries (Neumayer and Plümper, 2010).Beginning in the 1980s, scholars such as Midlarsky, Crenshaw and Yoshida (1980), as well as Hamilton and Hamilton (1983), have argued that terrorist attacks are highly interlinked.

Terrorism is seen as a particularly contagious type of violent conflict. The strategies used by terrorists in one region can set an example for terrorists across the globe. NeuMayer and Plümper (2010) have found evidence that the spatial variable is statistically significant when controlling for common trends, shocks, and spatial clustering. Yet, "radical Islamic groups were not rallying in the spirit of a Clash of Civilizations, but competing with each other for scarce resources provided by supporters with similar political goals." (NeuMayer and Plümper, 2010: 323) Whereas, as put by Huntington (1993), major post-Cold War conflicts were expected to be between "civilizations" (i.e. highest cultural groupings), especially between Western and Islamic civilizations.

Civil conflicts can promote diffusion of terrorist actions, since unstable governments and civil conflicts provide a good environment for terrorists to organize and locate themselves. In this way, they turn those countries into a base to launch attacks against neighbours (Byman and

Pollack, 2008). Moreover, Mitts has argued that insurgents' choice of targets have an important impact on how violence diffuses. Analysing the conflict of Kashmir and Jammu, Mitts has demonstrated that a spatial spread of violence is directly related to the location of bases from which violence originates (Mitts, 2012).

As the rule of law is very weak in conflict areas, terrorist can work to create secret networks both within the country and with neighbouring countries in a more effective way. Vidino argues that terrorist networks across Europe, Middle East and North Africa are composed by "European born Muslims —sons and grandsons of Muslim immigrants who have come to Europe over the past fifty years—and a small but growing number of European converts to Islam;" these networks are created either by marginal ties or through friendship with radicalized people (Vidino, 2007: 579.). Kinship networks are also important in terrorist groups and are tend to be increasingly endogamous over time, as there is a cross marriage practice between one another's siblings and being increasingly bound by trust. In some terrorist organizations, for instance in Indonesia and Malaysia, the most important networks that bound these groups together are developed through family ties and this relationship is not only limited to within organizational linkages but also across organizations (Magouirk, Atran and Sageman, 2008). Not only local but global networks also play an important role in the diffusion of terrorist attacks. Sageman (2004) demonstrates that 75 percent of mujahedin in her global sample had either friendship or kinship relations to the already existing members of terrorist organizations.Radicalization is shaped and transmitted in these friendship and kinship networks and these networks play an important role in the formal introduction into the terrorist organizations (Wiktorowicz, 2004).

4. RESEARCH METHOD AND OPERATIONALIZATION OF VARIABLES

This article raises the question whether contagion effect applies to overseas neighbours. More specifically, the impact of civil and interstate wars in the Med-MENA on violence between Muslim immigrants-refugees and native populations in Southern European countries is investigated in this article.

Main Hypothesis: Violent conflicts in the Med-MENA are likely to diffuse to Southern European countries in the form of violence between Muslim immigrants-refugees and native populations.

Implementing mixed methods research design, a logistic regression analysis was run to analyse the drivers of violence between Muslim immigrants-refugees and native populations in twelve Western European countries for the period 1990–2013 (lagged 1 year). These countries are: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and United Kingdom. Secondly, this study explores the issue by examining a couple of illustrative case studies where one can observe the diffusion of violent conflict.

4.1. Dependent Variable

The dependent variable is a categorical one, "terrorism-related violent incidents between Muslim immigrants-refugees and native populations, or their institutions, in a Western European country" in a given year. The data are retrieved from the Global Terrorism Database,

which covers the entire studied period (Global Terrorism Database, 2016). Only data points where the target is Muslim immigrants-refugees and the perpetrator is natives, or vice versa was included in the analysis. Thus, attacks on Turkish stores by the PKK in Germany, or attacks on Jewish targets by Neo-Nazis in France are excluded from the dataset, since either the target or the perpetrator is not part of the stated groups. Furthermore, incidents with unidentified assailants are excluded for the purposes of conservative data collection, even when the event is most probably within the scope of this study (e.g. vandalism against mosques in Germany and the United Kingdom). Finally, terrorist attacks committed by groups of non-Med-MENA origins (e.g. al-Qaeda, since Afghanistan is not a MENA country bordering the Mediterranean Sea) are excluded from the data. The dependent variable is coded as "0" if no Muslim immigrant-refugee vs. native violence took place in the studied European countries in a given year; it is coded as "1" if any such event occurred.

4.2. Independent Variables

Our independent variables are (1) the interstate and (2) civil conflicts in predominantly Muslim countries (i.e. more than 50 percent of the population is Muslim) in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) with a Mediterranean border. These eight Med-MENA countries are: Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, and Turkey. Excluded countries are the Palestinian Territories, which were not recognized by the United Nations as a state until 2012, and Israel, which has a non-Muslim majority.

The data are retrieved from the Major Episodes of Political Violence (MEPV) and Conflict Regions dataset (Marshall, 2016). If a med-MENA country with Muslim majority is involved in: (1) an international violent conflict and/or (2) serious domestic warfare or higher (category 4 in the MEPV and Conflict Regions dataset), the independent variables are coded as 1, otherwise 0, in a given year.

4.3. Control Variables

The control variables are the level of multiculturalism, Muslim population as percent of overall population, unemployment as percent of total labour force, public social spending as percent of gross domestic product, and total number of refugees and asylum seekers in host country in a given year.

First, the literature suggests that multicultural policies provide support for immigrant communities in order to facilitate their integration into their host society (Banting and Kymlicka, 2006). These policies include education in immigrants' mother tongue, affirmative action, and funding for ethnic institutions (Joppke, 1998). Accordingly, this paper expects that higher multiculturalism levels decrease the likelihood of violence between immigrants and natives through better integration. The data come from the Multiculturalism Policy Index, which measures multiculturalism on a scale of 0-8 over eight qualitative indicators ranging from school curriculum to media licensing and affirmative action (Multiculturalism Policy Index, 2016).

Second, increasing immigrant populations can be perceived as a threat by natives due to competition over jobs and public resources (Quillian, 1995). While higher rates of unemployment may indicate a fierce competition for scarce resources, (Fleishmann and Dronkers, 2007) these feelings can also be agitated by far right political parties for electoral benefits (Art, 2011). Accordingly, this paper hypothesizes that higher percentage of Muslim

population, Muslim refugees-asylum seekers and unemployment level in host country increase the likelihood of violence between newcomers and natives. Muslim population and refugee-asylum seeker numbers are retrieved from the World Christian Encyclopaedia (2001) and the United Nations Refugee Agency (2016), respectively.

Finally, the welfare state has proven to be effective in integrating ethnic and social minorities in Western countries by providing housing and unemployment benefits and other provisions (Banting, 1999). Accordingly, this paper expects that same provisions might have helped to alleviate the tensions between immigrants-refugees and natives over competition on scarce economic resources. The welfare data (public social spending, percent of GDP) come from the OECD (OECD, 2016).

5. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

In Model 1, which includes all twelve European countries, neither international nor civil conflict variable has statistically significant odd ratios. On the other hand, Muslim population and the refugee-asylum numbers increase the likelihood of violence in Europe.

Model 2 and Model 3 include only Spain, France, and Italy (Med-Europe countries). In these two Models, the number of cases is limited to 69. As a result, there was the problem of multicollinearity between three variables; Muslim population, welfare state and refugee and asylum numbers (Pearson's Correlations: .78, .83 and .93). Thus, Model 2 was run with only refugee and asylum numbers and Model 3 with only Muslim population. Welfare state variable was insignificant once included in the model, and the variable is not one of the key variables thus, it is not presented here. Model 2 and Model 3 indicate that the "overseas contagion effect" exists for these three Mediterranean countries. In that, intense civil conflicts in the Med-MENA countries have a significant and positive impact on Muslim immigrant-refugees vs. native violence in the stated three European countries. However, there was no statistically significant impact for international conflicts. In addition, Muslim population is also significant in Model 3, whereas refugee and asylum numbers are not significant in Model 2. These results indicate that Med-Europe countries with higher number of Muslims are more prone to experiencing such violence. This relationship provides support for the relevance of the contagion effect for overseas neighbours. However, Model 2 points out that refugee and asylum numbers cannot be directly associated with violent attacks in Med-MENA countries when their absolute numbers remain low compared to the overall population.

Table 1: Logistic Regression of Violence in Western Europe, 1990–2013 (lagged 1 year)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Int. violence/warfare in Med-MENA	1.205 (.686)	3.566 (4.146)	3.536 (4.253)	.825 (.586)
Civil violence/warfare in Med-MENA	1.22 (.477)	18.568* (22.556)	16.160* (20.128)	.755 (.326)
Level of multiculturalism	1.114 (.089)	1.145 (.502)	.918 (.466)	1.127 (.098)
Muslim population	1.340** (.125)		1.281* (.157)	1.167** (.210)
Total unemployment level	1.031 (.045)	.847 (.098)	.857 (.108)	1.056 (.108)
Welfare provisions	.927 (.042)			.934 (.051)
N. Refugee and asylum	1.000** (5.35e)	1.000 (1.000)		1.000** (6.56e)
Constant	.275 (.300)	.088 (.158)	.069 (.134)	.373 (.492)
N	**275**	**69**	**69**	**206**
Pseudo R-sq	**0.098**	**0.181**	**0.223**	**0.100**

*Note: Odds ratios presented, standard errors in parenthesis, * $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$, (Prob> z = 0.00)*

Finally, Model 4 includes European countries without Med-MENA cases. Compared with Model 3, the effect of civil conflict disappears in Model 4. This Model presents the results only with one year lagged analyses. However, even with two and three year lagged analyses, we could not find any statistically significant results for the civil and international conflict variables. Thus, our results confirm that the overseas contagion effect is more a Mediterranean phenomenon than a European phenomenon. This confirms the expectations that geographic diffusion of conflicts to inner parts of the continent take some time as creation or networks take some time

and the mechanisms through which these conflicts can be deployed cannot work immediately. Another robust significant variable in three Models is Muslim population. This finding demonstrates that higher proportion of Muslim population increases the likelihood of violence for all the European countries included in our analyses.

The following case studies are presented to exemplify instances of regional conflicts spreading into the borders of Southern European countries. A news report on BBC, 9 December 2015, underlined that 14 November 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris were among the deadliest in history where a near simultaneous series of shootings and bomb explosions occurred. The attacks targeted civilians in public venues, including a stadium, a concert hall, restaurants, and bars. The violence left 130 people dead and hundreds more injured. In the concert hall venue, a witness reported hearing a gunmen lay blame on the French President Francois Hollande for intervening in the conflict in Syria, while another cried out in Arabic "God is Great." French President Francois Hollande soon after declared the event as an "act of war" by the ISIS/Daesh.

New York Times, 17 November 2015, reported that the intelligence later pointed to a Belgian native Abdelhamid Abaaoud, whose family originally came from Morocco, as responsible for orchestrating the attacks(Higgins, and Freytas-Tamuran, 2015). Abaaoud had previously left his family in Belgium to join the ISIS/Daesh. He explained soon after in a video that he made this choice because he had "seen the blood of Muslims flow" all his life. Notably, Abaaoud was an outcast from his family. His older sister claimed to "pray for his death" and his father wished to never see him again. He also spent time in prison for petty crime before deciding to leave Belgium and join ISIS/Daesh.

The Guardian, 20 January 2015, stated that the event certainly does not indict all Med-MENA immigrants in Europe as threats to their host country. It does, however, demonstrate the transnational nature of conflict, where France saw ISIS/Daesh terrorism lash back within its own borders. In French society, where Muslim immigrants suffer from an "abnormally exclusive employment and education system", some will "embrace radical Islam and violent crime" as a result. While the exact mental calculations of Abaaoud and his accomplices will remain unknown, these aggravating circumstances could explain the willingness of individuals to serve as agents for the phenomenon of transnational contagions of violence.

Second, a terrorist attack that happened in Spain in 2004 might multiply the examples. As the New York Times, 12 March 2004, reported, the capital of Spain was struck by ten nearly-simultaneous explosions on its heavily-trafficked Cercanias commuter rail on March 11, 2004 (Sciolino, 2004). These coordinated bombings, orchestrated just three days out from the Spanish general election, killed 191 and wounded more than 1,800 in what would go down as the deadliest terror attack carried out in Spain. While the incumbent party initially attempted to pass off the attack as a subversive act orchestrated by the separatist ETA party, further investigation, coupled with a public outcry for the truth, revealed the perpetrators of the attacks to be primarily first-generation Moroccan immigrants representing Salafia Yihadia, a local terrorist group inspired by al Qaeda (Jordan and Horsburg, 2004; Sageman, 2009).

At the time of the attack, over 600,000 Muslims were living in Spain in relative peace. A heavy influx of economic immigrants from Morocco in the 1980s and the 1990s had further diversified a Madrid already teeming with immigrants from the world over (Haas, 2005). In the investigation following the bombing it was revealed that most of those who interacted with the perpetrators knew them as happy, comfortably assimilated Moroccan-Spanish members of Madrid society (Silber and Bhatt, 2016). This case study reveals the difficulty of achieving full,

lasting integration and highlights the risk of radicalization inherent tosome individuals coming from a nation suffering domestic terror and unrest.

Third, Yeni Akit, 24 March 2016, and Euronews, 29 March 2017 (on the event's anniversary), reported that a far-right group (self-called "patriots") in Spain named Hogar Social Madrid called for a gathering over social media around the biggest mosque in Madrid, Spain for the purpose of protesting terrorist attacks in Belgium on 24 March 2016. Their previous events included protesting against multiculturalism and interrupting rallies in support of Syrian refugees. Declaring solidarity with Italian and Greek far-right movements, Hogar Social Madrid mobilized a group of protesters on March 24, and individual/individuals among the group torched the mosque. While no one got hurt, Madrid Islam Cultural Centre and local officials strongly condemned the attack.

Fourth, the Telegraph and the New York Times, 18 July 2016, reported that the driver of the truck that ran through a crowd gathered for celebrating Bastille Day in Nice, France on 14 July 2016 was identified as Mohamed Lahouaiej-Bouhlel (Specia, 2016). Killing 84 and wounding 303 people, the 31 year-old Tunisian native had been living in France since 2005 (Samuel and Jordan, 2016; . ISIS/Daesh claimed the responsibility for the attack identifying the attacker as a soldier against crusader states. BBC, 19 August 2016, further noted that Bouhlel had recently been involved in the network terrorist group and an Albanian couple was suspected to provide him logistics. As the New York Times, 15 July 2016, put it, this attack was also a well-organized act with some networks to outlander terrorist groups (Fisher, 2016). It is considered to be planned in a way that is more sophisticated and quite rudimentary that leaves all the victims defenceless. French government declared state of emergency after terror attacks in Paris, and the state of emergency was extended after the Nice attack. The terrorist attacks in France have led to social unrest and fear. In short, this case study demonstrated how radicalization of some immigrants through international terrorist networks can result in domestic violent terrorist actions.

6. CONCLUSION

This article investigates whether violent conflicts in Middle Eastern and North African states along the Mediterranean basin spread across Southern European countries. Our findings show that Med-MENA conflicts significantly increase the probability of violence between Muslim immigrants-refugees and native populations in Southern European countries such as Spain France and Italy. Most, Starr and Siverson, (1989) and Siverson and Starr (1990) consider territorial border as a fostering force for violence diffusion. However, this study demonstrated that although there is no territorial border providing direct passage from MENA countries to Southern European countries, being at the same sea basin might provide the related conflict diffusion environment. This finding not only supports the previous literature demonstrating empirical evidence on existence of geographical conflict diffusion (E.g. Saleyhan and Gleditsch, 2006) but also provides some empirical evidence establishing an association for overseas contagion effect of conflicts. These results might particularly confirm the arguments that the immigrant populations increase the likelihood of violence and conflict diffusion through enabling organized rebel social networks, army equipment, warriors and the dispersion of fundamentalist ideologies (Salehyan and Gleditsch, 2006).   The case studies presented in this paper point out a common strategy through which some immigrants committed the terrorist attacks by cooperating and connecting with terrorist groups through international networks.

A second important finding of this study is that European countries with higher number of Muslim population are more prone to experience terrorist attacks. This effect is also robust for not only Southern European countries but also other European countries. However, the overseas contagion effect is more a Mediterranean phenomenon than a European phenomenon. In this study, we could not find any empirical evidence on diffusion of violence through inner-European countries. This can be due to two reasons; first geographic diffusion of conflicts to inner parts of the continent might take some time as creation and development of networks take some time and the mechanisms through which these conflicts can be deployed cannot work immediately. Secondly, the inner-European countries might have more strict security controls and advanced intelligence units so that they can prevent diffusion of such conflicts. However, we have presented some case studies in which international terrorist networks between European countries played a crucial role since the border controls are relatively weak in European countries.

This article also leads to policy recommendations. It is demonstrated that conflicts are contagious not only across land borders but also sea basins. Thus, policy makers at the national and international levels need to consider third-party interventions as conflict management or settlement, if not conflict resolution, in their greater neighbourhoods under international institutions, such as the United Nations. Surely, decision makers need to carefully plan the results of the interventions in other countries For example, as CNN Politics, 11 April 2016, reported, Barack Obama declared that "the worst mistake of his presidency was a lack of planning for the aftermath of the 2011 toppling of Libyan dictator Moammar Gadhafi." As stated above, the failure of proper planning for the aftermath of the NATO-led intervention in Libya resulted in grave security problems since 2011, including internal violent conflict, malfunctioning of political and administrative institutions and instability of this country. This intervention, in a chain reaction, also caused massive refugee flows from Libya to Southern European countries, all of which are NATO members. Therefore, the security and stability of coastal states sharing the same basin is not independent of each other but needs to be studied in a comprehensive approach.

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