

The Impact of Foreign Interventions on the Formation of Regional Security Governance in West Asia: A Comparative Study of Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey

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Abstract

West Asia has consistently drawn international attention due to the unprecedented proliferation of terrorist groups on one hand, and internal (intrastate) and regional (interstate) conflicts on the other. This situation has meant that, unlike other regions such as the European Union, governments are primarily the sole security actors in this area. In other words, non-governmental organizations and companies do not play a role in regional security governance—encompassing policymaking, regulation, facilitation, and service provision. Various factors influence this issue, and given its negative historical record, one such factor could be foreign interventions. Based on this, the main question of the present research is: What impact have foreign interventions had on regional security governance in West Asia? To answer this question, three regional powers (Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey) were subjected to a comparative study. Therefore, the research objective is to measure the impact of foreign interventions on regional security governance in West Asia. To this end, by employing a quantitative method and collecting data from various institutions (secondary analysis), the study not only investigates the relationship or correlation between foreign interventions and regional security governance but also aims to provide an explanation. This is achieved by utilizing SPSS version 22 and the simultaneous univariate linear regression test (Enter method) to measure the impact coefficient of foreign interventions on the four dimensions of regional security governance: Prevention, Assurance (persuasive), Compellence (coercive), and Protection. According to the research findings, foreign interventions alone have been able to explain approximately 39% and 58% of the prevention and assurance dimensions of regional security governance in West Asia, respectively.

Keywords: Iran, Turkey, Regional Security Governance, Saudi Arabia, Foreign Interventions.

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Introduction

West Asia has consistently been a focal point of international attention due to the unprecedented spread of terrorist groups on one hand, and internal (intrastate) and regional (interstate) conflicts on the other. For instance, from 2007 to 2022, the highest number of terrorist attacks globally occurred in this region (23,108 attacks) (Statista, 2022). ISIS was also recognized as the deadliest terrorist group in the world in 2021, primarily operating in the Middle East (ReliefWeb, 2023).

These factors have led to regional security governance facing numerous challenges. “By applying the concept of governance to security policymaking, the term security governance reflects the division of political authority into hybrid methods of 'political steering' across various levels of decision-making and an increasing number of public and private actors. Security governance generally refers to the hierarchical and non-hierarchical methods of political steering, decision-making, and oversight present in the security domain” (Schroeder, 2010: 10).

Among these, various factors have influenced this issue, with one prominent factor being the foreign interventions of extra-regional powers. These interventions, through diverse means—particularly by shaping artificial borders and leaving behind border disputes, the dispersion of ethnicities across different countries, and so forth—have consistently left historical imprints. For this reason, the question arises: What impact have foreign interventions had on regional security governance in West Asia? The main hypothesis proposed is: “Foreign interventions have a significant impact on the low quality of regional security governance in West Asia.” Given that it is primarily these regional powers and the nature of their relationships that shape regional security governance, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey will be examined comparatively.

Research Background

The research background can be examined under the two following categories:

1- Theoretical Foundations of Regional Security Governance

In this category, numerous studies have been conducted by researchers such as Kahari Kacowicz and Press-Barnathan (2016) titled “Regional Security Governance,” Adler and Greve (2009) under the title “When Security Community Meets Balance of Power: Overlapping Regional

Mechanisms of Security Governance,” Kirchner and Sperling (2006) titled “Global Security Governance,” and Emami and Javadi (2021). However, the focus here has been on previous works that delve into security governance at the regional level.

Bevir and Hall (2013), in “The Emergence of Security Governance,” addressed the how and why of security governance coming to prominence. Breslin and Croft (2013), in “Investigating Regional Security Governance: Dimensions, Debates and Discourses,” posed the question: how is regional security governance achieved? Daase and Friesendorf (2010), in “Rethinking Security Governance: The Problem of Unintended Consequences (Contemporary Security Studies),” argued that while traditional security policies were formerly monopolized by states and aimed at military defense, security governance is now performed by multiple actors and aims to create a safe global environment for states, social groups, and individuals.

From Krahmann's (2003 and 2005) perspective, in articles titled “Conceptualizing Security Governance: Cooperation and Conflict” and “Security Governance and Networks: New Theoretical Perspectives in Transatlantic Security,” not only have international institutions increased since the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, but private actors—such as non-governmental organizations and private security companies—have also gained significant influence. Krahmann believes these characteristics are not fully understood by traditional theories in security studies. Therefore, she proposes security governance as a concept to comprehend the changes that have occurred in the new era.

2- Security Governance in Practice, Focusing on a Specific Region or Country

This category of research analyzes the status or process of security governance within a specific country or region. For instance, Kirshner and Sperling (2007), Christou et al. (2014), Monar (2014), Schroeder (2013), and Sperling and Webber (2014) have addressed regional security governance in Europe. Pinfari (2014) focused on Egypt, Tangör (2012) and Müftüler-Baç (2014) on Turkey, Ceccorulli, Frappi, and Lucarelli (2017) on the South Caucasus, Svensson (2013) on South Asia, and Jetschke (2011) on Southeast Asia. Among these, the central issue for Ehteshami (2013), in “The MENA Region: Security and Regional Governance,” is why security governance in the MENA region, unlike other areas such as Europe, has not formed with the participation of non-

state actors. He concludes that although the MENA region possesses security centers (like the Gulf Cooperation Council), they lack the necessary power and legitimacy to resolve interstate crises or contain internal security problems. From his perspective, in the absence of regional governance institutions, internal security issues have the potential to spiral out of control and become regional (e.g., Yemen 2009), and also lead to extra-regional interventions (e.g., the intervention of the international community in the Darfur crisis in Sudan). Ehteshami argues that states are the primary actors in establishing regional governance in MENA, but they do not have a monopoly on action. Although this research shares common ground with the present study in examining regional security governance in West Asia, Ehteshami sought the primary reason for the lack of regional security governance formation in internal factors, whereas this article attributes the root cause of this problem to external factors. This is because the main premise of this article is that historically, colonizing countries, through various political, economic, and cultural dimensions, and by means such as drawing artificial and fabricated borders, prevented the natural process of state-nation building and the formation of both internal and regional security governance.

Theoretical Underpinnings

To attain an understanding of security governance, it is first necessary to define the meaning of its two components: security and governance.

Security

The meaning of security has been extensively debated since the 1980s. Central to this discourse have been efforts to deepen and broaden the concept of security, extending it from the state level to societies and individuals, and from purely military concerns to non-military issues. This challenge to the state-centric notion of security is predicated on the argument that the end of the Cold War significantly diminished the probability of "interstate" warfare, while threats stemming from civil conflict, transnational crime, terrorism, and infectious diseases appear to have escalated (Krahmann, 2003: 9-10). For instance, fatalities from interstate wars decreased from over four million in 1944 to approximately 263,000 in 1972, and further to roughly 159,000 in 1986 and a mere 26 in 2014, respectively (Our World in Data, 2023).

Generally, following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, "intrastate" rather than "interstate" conflict emerged as a primary challenge (Uppsala

Conflict Data Program, 2023). Fatalities resulting from terrorist attacks likewise escalated, from 171 in 1971 to approximately 45,000 in 2014 (Global Terrorism Database, 2022). Concurrently, AIDS-related deaths rose from approximately 336,000 in 1999 to roughly 2 million in 2004 and 1 million in 2019, respectively (Roser and Ritchie, 2023).

Governance

Governance articulates the manner and mode of governing. Government and the state delineate the instruments and outcomes of governing. Governance refers to a set of processes that, through power, influence, and authority, undertake procedures and policies for the purpose of governing (KianKhah, 1398: 156-157). The adoption of the concept of governance globally was a natural consequence of increasing evidence demonstrating that the international system was no longer solely comprised of states, but rather that the world was undergoing fundamental transformation. Although actors such as the Catholic Church, General Motors, and the International Committee of the Red Cross are hardly newcomers to the Westphalian system, the proliferation of non-state actors and their growing significance and power are distinctive features of contemporary global affairs (Held et al., 1999: 88-89).

The World Bank defines governance as the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources. The World Bank has identified three distinct aspects of governance: 1. the form of the political regime, 2. the process through which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development, and 3. the capacity of governments to design, formulate, and implement policies and fulfill functions (World Bank, 1994: 14).

Security Governance

Causes of the Emergence of Security Governance

Security governance has garnered increasing attention since 1989. Its conceptual prominence largely stems from the challenges presented by the new security agenda (Kirshner and Sperling, 2018: 18). The emergence of security governance is embedded in mainstream narratives of globalization, transnational risks, and liberal cosmopolitanism following the end of the Cold War. First, its application is guided by the premise that international terrorism and other transnational security threats have complemented, without entirely replacing, long-standing concerns such as inter-state warfare or nuclear weapons. Consequently, it accepts the view

that a state-centric perspective, focused on traditional security policies and studies, does not align with post-Cold War realities. Second, security governance is founded on the assertion that these transnational risks pose challenges to traditional state-based methods of providing security, thereby emphasizing the need for novel methods of transnational governance (Ehrhart et al., 2013: 146-147).

The new security agenda necessitates a more precise and complex engagement with the problem of security: the state is merely one agent and target of security threats among several others. Non-state actors play a significant role as agents of insecurity, and security is sought for society, the state, and environmental objectives that the international community or a group of states have clearly defined. There has been a relative decline in the importance of the state, both as a target and as a source of threat. Therefore, the typology of threats, which directly impacts the problem of security governance and the credibility of the post-Westphalian hypothesis, defines threats across two dimensions: First, agency is predominantly attributed to non-state actors operating beyond the reach of states. Second, threats against the state are now indirect rather than direct, and deliberately target society or encompass the regional environment (Sperling, 2014: 104).

Definition of Security Governance

Security governance rests upon several fundamental assumptions regarding the nature of contemporary international relations. The first assumption posits that inter-state warfare has been supplanted by non-state and intra-state threats, such as terrorism, proliferation of weapons, and internal conflicts, as the most critical sources of insecurity. The second assumption holds that the multiplicity, complexity, and inherent intra- or transnational character of contemporary security threats challenge the capacity of sovereign nation-states to ensure the security of their citizens. Given that new threats can transcend national borders, states within regions are increasingly compelled to collaborate or utilize non-state actors, such as international organizations, to counter them. This assumption leads to a third, which indicates that the exclusive provision of national and international security, characteristic of Europe and North America throughout the Cold War era, is progressively eroding. In other words, the norm of state monopoly on the legitimate use of force is being superseded by considerations of efficiency and cost-effectiveness offered by other non-state actors (Krahmann, 2005: 22-23).

From Krahmann's perspective, security governance pertains to emergent structures and processes that enable a diverse array of state and private actors to coordinate their individual and mutual interests through the adoption and implementation of binding policy decisions in the absence of a central political authority (Krahmann, 2005: 20).

As a concept, security governance primarily succeeded in acquiring characteristics evident to policymakers and the majority of researchers: namely, the expansion of security threats and risks, and the proliferation of actors and mechanisms to address them. These two characteristics, in turn, demonstrated the limited capacity of the state (the traditional security actor) to confront multiple threats alone (Sperling and Weber, 2014: 129).

In general, the initial definition of security governance offers three advantages over existing approaches to security studies:

- 1. It constituted an open formulation that allowed for a reassessment of the nature of security with respect to actors as well as agents and the definition of threat.
- 2. It provided a mechanism for bridging the ostensible oppositions characterizing contemporary security debates, particularly among various forms of (neo)realism, neoliberal institutionalism, and constructivism.
- 3. It directed attention to the types of mechanisms (including the involvement of non-state actors in providing security and as agents of insecurity, etc.) by which states and societies secure themselves (Sperling, 2014: 5).

Regional Security Governance Policies

The framework of security governance rests on four dimensions of security policy: Assurance, Prevention, Protection, and Compellence (Kirshner and Dominguez, 2013: 6). Assurance policies delineate efforts aimed at post-conflict reconstruction and participation in confidence-building measures. Prevention policies encompass endeavors to avert conflict by establishing or maintaining domestic, regional, or international institutions that contribute to mitigating chaos and fostering order. Compellence policies involve conflict resolution tasks through military intervention, specifically peacekeeping and enforcement. The protective policies of security governance describe efforts to fulfill the traditional function of safeguarding society from external threats. These four tasks of security governance are often pursued concurrently. It is also evident that

economic and military instruments can be employed to achieve ostensibly dissimilar objectives.

A primitive international state of nature and a civilized international society constitute the chain boundaries of security governance systems, along which seven other general forms are sequentially positioned, from elementary to advanced. These include: impermanent alliances, cooperative security, concerts, collective defense, collective security, and two types of security communities—contractual security community and fused security community (Sperling, 2014: 110). Given the aforementioned subjects, the research model is depicted in Figure No. 1.

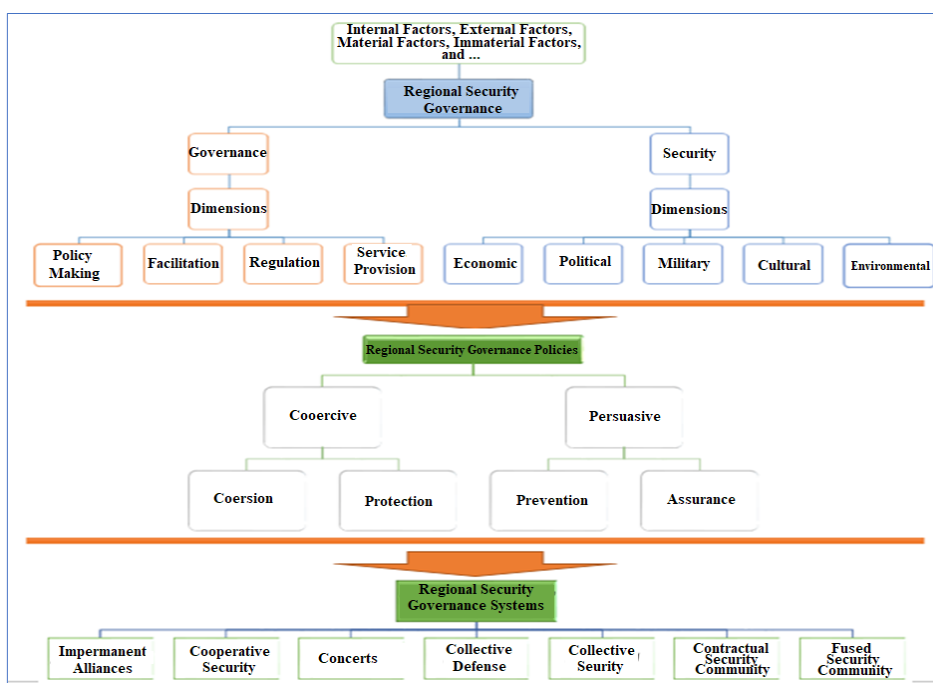


Figure No. 1: Research Analysis Model

Research Methodology

Type and Application of Method

The research method is quantitative, and data collection has been conducted through library research and by consulting the websites of various institutions. The data are secondary, sourced from different global institutions (such as the World Bank, Kof Institute, and others). External

interventions have been designated as the independent variable, and regional security governance as the dependent variable.

The collected data were analyzed utilizing SPSS software, version 22. In this section, in addition to Pearson's correlation coefficient, regression analysis was also employed. Regression helps ascertain the extent to which regional security governance can be explained or accounted for by external interventions.

Method of Variable Measurement

This section scrutinizes the methodology for measuring variables, specifically external interventions and regional security governance.

External Interventions

It considers the impact and influence of external actors on a state's performance, particularly in security and economic spheres. On the one hand, external intervention focuses on the security aspects of foreign actors' engagement—both covert and overt—in the internal affairs of a country at risk, by states, militaries, intelligence services, identity groups, or other entities that may affect the balance of power within a state. On the other hand, external intervention focuses on economic engagement by foreign actors, including multilateral organizations, through large loans, development projects, or foreign aid, such as controlling finances or managing a state's economic policy to create economic dependency. External intervention also accounts for humanitarian interventions, such as the deployment of an international peacekeeping mission (Fragile States Index, 2023).

Regional Security Governance

To elucidate the process of regional security governance in the Middle East, four security policy indicators have been extracted as follows: assurance, prevention, protection, and compellence.

A. Assurance policies pertain to post-conflict reconstruction activities and peacebuilding efforts, such as confidence-building measures. Specific policy actions include: policing and border missions, post-conflict monitoring missions, and assistance for economic reconstruction. In evaluating the contributions of core states, attention is given to the budgetary and personnel support provided to operations. Furthermore, the following questions are posed: Does the country under examination exhibit a geographical bias in its governmental policies? And does the country prefer

to act bilaterally or multilaterally? (Kirshner, 2014: 8). To operationalize this dimension of regional security governance policy, the indicators “Relations with Neighboring Countries” (Vision of Humanity, 2023a), “Globalization” (KOF, 2023), and “Global Peace” (Economics and Peace, 2023) were selected.

B. Prevention policies encompass efforts to avert conflict by establishing or maintaining domestic, regional, or international institutions that contribute to mitigating chaos and fostering order. Their objective is to eliminate the root causes of conflicts. Common prevention policies include arms control and non-proliferation measures, as well as technical assistance for domestic political and economic reforms; ranging from establishing civilian-military relations to enhancing the prospects of democratic governance and aiding the development of market economies (Kirshner, 2014: 8). To operationalize prevention policies, the indicators “Financial Contribution to UN Peacekeeping Missions” (Vision of Humanity, 2023b), “Nuclear Capabilities and Heavy Weapons” (Vision of Humanity, 2023c), “Civil Liberties” (Freedom House, 2023a), “Political Rights” (Freedom House, 2023b), and “Overall Index of Economic Freedom” (Heritage, 2023) were selected.

C. Protective policies encompass domestic and multilateral efforts to realize the traditional function of safeguarding society against external threats. The five general categories of protective policies include: health security, border control, terrorism, organized crime (drug trafficking, human trafficking, and migration), and environmental degradation (natural disaster management). The objective of specific country analyses is to demonstrate the relative significance of each threat category, primarily measured by budgetary expenditures and policy initiatives that seek to manage threats (e.g., improving health surveillance or budget allocated to medical research) or to eradicate them (such as increasing human or budgetary resources for combating crime or terrorism) (Kirshner, 2014: 8). The indicators selected to operationalize this dimension of security governance policy are: “Health” (Prosperity Index, 2023a), “Safety and Security” (Prosperity Index, 2023b), “Global Terrorism” (Economics and Peace, 2022), “Perceptions of Corruption” (Transparency, 2023), “Environmental Performance Index” (Yale university, 2023), and “Human Migration and Brain Drain” (Fund for Peace, 2023).

D. compellence policies indicate conflict resolution tasks through military intervention, particularly peacekeeping and its enforcement (Kirshner, 2014: 8). The indicators “Number of Deaths from Organized External Conflicts” (Uppsala Conflict Data Program, 2023) and "Military Expenditure as a Percentage of GDP" (SIPRI, 2023) were selected to operationalize this dimension. The dimensions and indicators of regional security governance are observable in the table below:

Table No. 1: Dimensions and Indicators of Regional Security Governance

Variable	Tool	Dimensions of Security Governance	Component	Indicator	Scale
Security Governance	Coercive	Protection	Health security	Health	Rank
			Terrorism	Global Terrorism	Rank
			Organized crime	Safety and Security	Rank
				Perceptions of Corruption	Rank
			Environmental degradation	Environmental Performance Index	Rank
			Migration	Human Migration and Brain Drain	Rank
		Compellence	Military intervention	Number of Deaths from Organized External Conflicts	Number
			Military expenditure	Military Expenditure as a Percentage of GDP	Rank
	Persuasive	Prevention	War prevention	Financial Contribution to UN Peacekeeping Missions	Dollar
			Non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction	Nuclear Capabilities and Heavy Weapons	Number
			Enhancing prospects for democratic governance	Civil Liberties	Rank
				Political Rights	Rank
			Aid for the development of free-market economies	Overall Index of Economic Freedom	Rank

		Assurance	Alliance-building and institution-building activities	Relations with Neighboring Countries	Score
			Bilateral or multilateral performance of countries	Globalization	Rank
			Diplomatic and political measures for conflict resolution	Global Peace Index	Rank

Standardization of Indicators

Upon a cursory review of Table No. 2, it becomes evident that all the indicators intended for calculating regional security governance have not been presented uniformly. Discrepancies in measurement scale and range, on the one hand, and variations in the number of countries surveyed (even within each indicator across different years) necessitate their standardization prior to computation. To this end, an effort will be made to convert all indicators to ranks and to utilize a unified scale and range for them.

Given that the majority of the indicators under consideration are established on a zero-to-one hundred scale, the most efficacious method for standardization involves the conversion of other scores, such as those ranging from zero to ten or zero to seven, also to the zero-to-one hundred scale. Consequently, for indicators originally calculated on a zero-to-one hundred scale, only the number of surveyed countries across different years requires standardization. However, for other indicators, the existing range is first transformed to a zero-to-one hundred scale, followed by the standardization of the number of countries. For instance, in the “Human Migration and Brain Drain” indicator, where countries' scores are calculated from zero to ten, ten is treated as one hundred, nine as ninety, and all numbers are similarly rescaled out of one hundred. After converting all indicators to ranks, each country's rank is divided by the total number of countries in that ranking, and the resulting figure is multiplied by one hundred. This formula is applied annually across all indicators, ensuring that all ranks are ultimately calculated out of one hundred, thereby achieving standardization in terms of scale, range, and the number of ranked countries. Following these stages, charts for the various dimensions

of regional security governance are plotted. Once the chart is generated, contrary to the common convention where a number closer to one hundred typically signifies a superior status, the situation here is inverted. In other words, the closer a country's score is to zero, the better its status. For example, Saudi Arabia's rank in the Safety and Security indicator in 2011 was 144. When this rank was divided by the total number of countries surveyed (167), the result was 0.86. Multiplying this by one hundred yielded 86. In contrast, Iran's rank in the same indicator and year was 94, which, after undergoing the aforementioned process, resulted in a score of 56. This demonstrates that the closer a country's score is to zero, the better its performance. For this reason, the initial charting might lead to the misperception that a country with a score closer to one hundred has a better status and performance. To rectify this issue, the derived score is subtracted from one hundred. In the preceding example, Saudi Arabia's score then became 14, and Iran's became 44.

Analysis of Findings

The findings are examined in three distinct sections: descriptive, analytical, and inferential.

Descriptive Findings

In this section, the process of regional security governance in West Asia and external interventions in the countries of Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey are subjected to separate analysis.

The Process of Regional Security Governance in West Asia

A. Protection

According to Diagram No. 1, among the three countries under study, Saudi Arabia exhibited a superior performance in the protective dimension of regional security governance during the years under review. Specifically, a discrepancy of 8 points separated Saudi Arabia's optimal performance from that of Turkey, and 32 points from Iran. A pertinent observation regarding this dimension of regional security governance is that both Saudi Arabia and Turkey evinced a descending trend, while Iran, conversely, demonstrated an ascending trajectory.

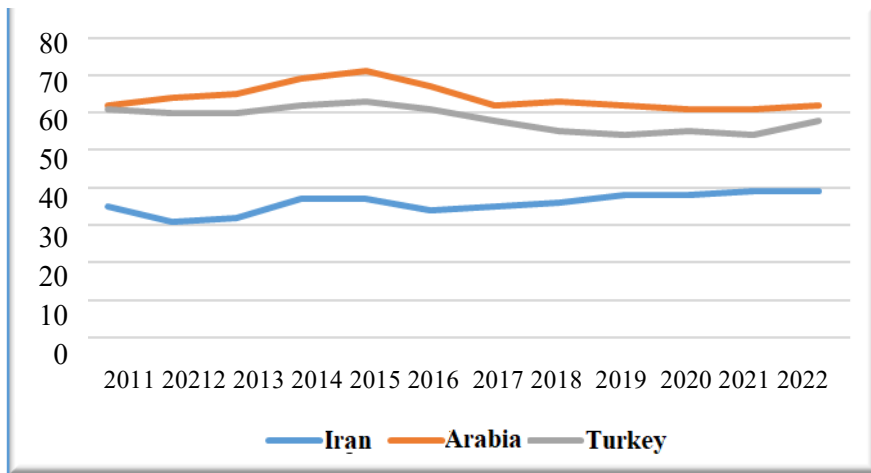


Chart No. 1: Comparison of the Process of the Protective Dimension of Regional Security Governance in Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey

This is despite the fact that, as depicted in Figure No. 2, Iran has demonstrated a significantly superior performance in certain indicators (e.g., impact from terrorism) compared to other global nations (ranking among the top 15 worldwide) and especially regional countries like Turkey and Saudi Arabia. Specifically, at the peak of terrorism's expansion in the region (2015), Iran experienced a very limited impact from it, effectively demonstrating its capacity to protect the country from both internal and external attacks.

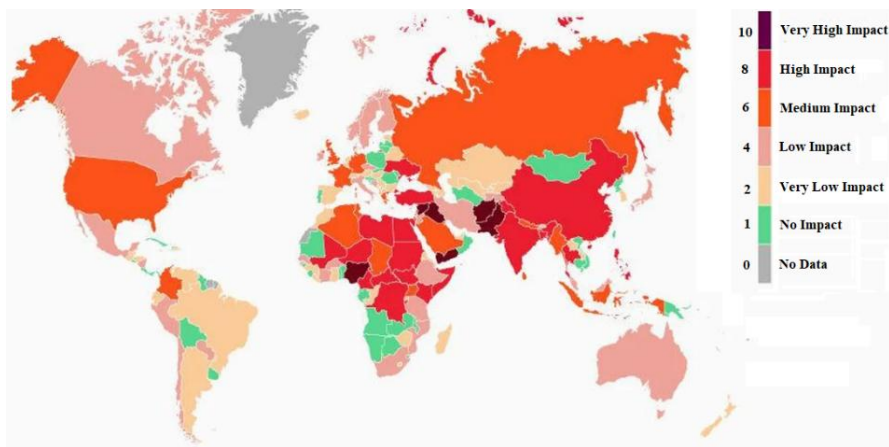


Figure No. 2: Impact of Terrorism on Countries (Zatat, 2016)

B. Compellence

As per Chart No. 2, Saudi Arabia achieved a score of approximately 70 in 2014, while Iran, in contrast, obtained a score of 54 in 2016. The lowest score, with an average of 38 in 2022, pertains to Turkey. It is noteworthy that Iran has exhibited an upward trend over the past few years, whereas Turkey has experienced a downward trajectory.

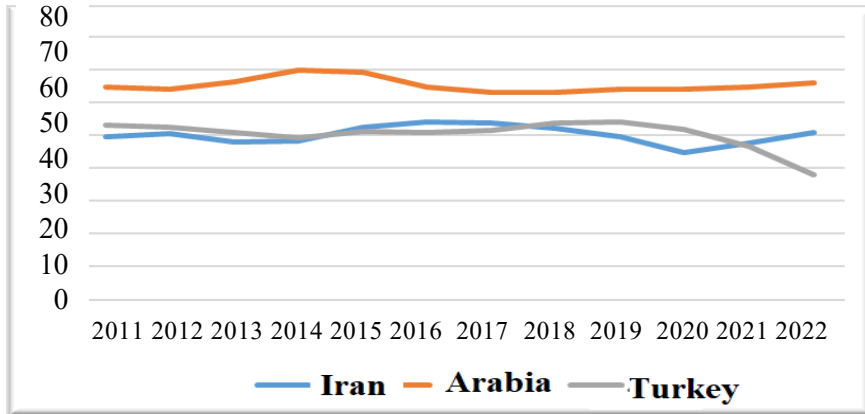


Chart No. 2: Comparison of the Process of the Coercion Dimension of Regional Security Governance in Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey

According to data from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI, 2023), Iran, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia have incurred military expenditures of approximately 7, 11, and 75 billion dollars, respectively. However, the pivotal point here is that Iran, in contrast to Turkey and particularly Saudi Arabia, has demonstrated superior performance in military spending—as one of the indicators for the regional security governance dimension—despite lower expenditures. This is because Saudi Arabia and Turkey allocate their spending to arms imports, a significant portion of which is also dedicated to foreign advisors. Iran, conversely, by relying on its indigenous capabilities, has managed to rank among the top global countries in certain areas, such as drone production. This confers greater independence upon Iran, while conversely fostering the dependence of its rivals on external actors, a condition that, in turn, facilitates foreign intervention.

C. Prevention

According to Chart No. 3, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey have exhibited a downward trend in the prevention dimension of regional security governance. Although Turkey's score has consistently been higher

than both Iran's and Saudi Arabia's throughout all years under review, its rate of decline has also been more rapid compared to the other two countries. At its most significant, Iran has experienced an average score decrease of 8 points. Turkey and Saudi Arabia have similarly seen drops of 22 and 19 points, respectively.

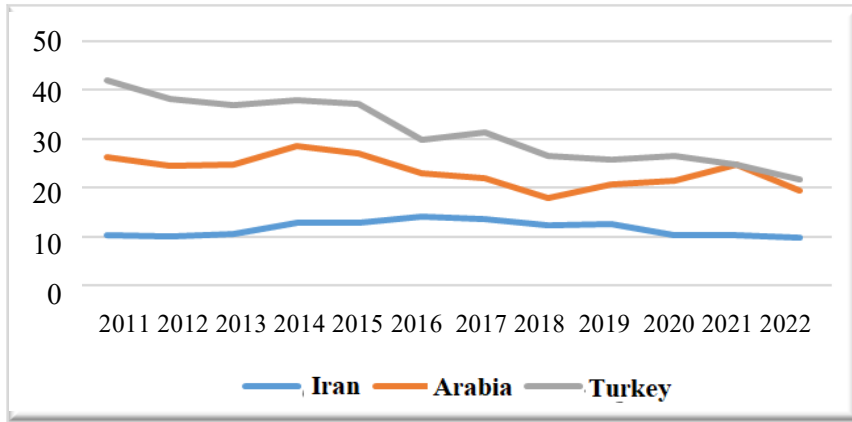


Chart No. 3: Comparison of the Process of the Prevention Dimension of Regional Security Governance in Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey

D. Assurance

According to Chart No. 4, among the countries under study, Saudi Arabia registered the highest average score with 54 points in 2014. However, Iran, in contrast to both Saudi Arabia and Turkey, exhibited an upward trend from 2012 to 2018. During this same period, the other two countries experienced a downward trajectory.

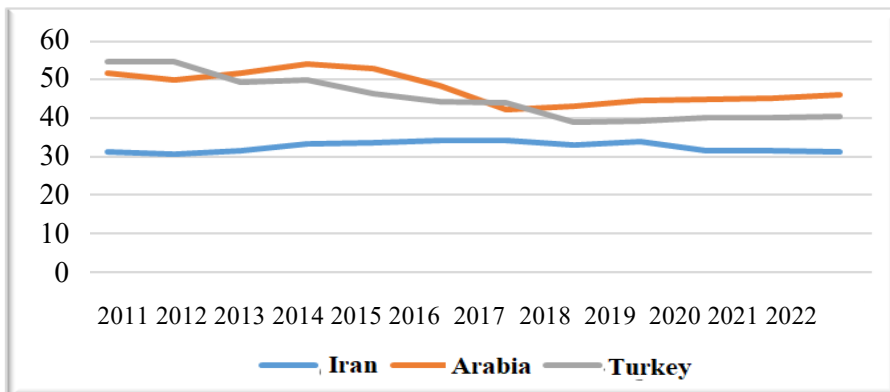


Chart No. 4: Comparison of the Process of the Assurance Dimension of Regional Security Governance in Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey

E. A Comparative Assessment of the Aggregate Processes of Regional Security Governance in Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey.

In 2014, Saudi Arabia registered an average score of approximately 58, constituting the highest attainment among the nations under scrutiny. Conversely, the lowest score, an average of 31 in 2020, was recorded for Iran. As illustrated by Figure 5, a salient point emerges: Iran, contrary to the trajectories of Turkey and Saudi Arabia, which have demonstrated a discernible downward trend, has consistently exhibited an upward trajectory, with but a singular annual exception. More precisely, Iran's average score declined solely from 34 in 2019 to 31 in 2020, maintaining an ascending progression across all other observed years.

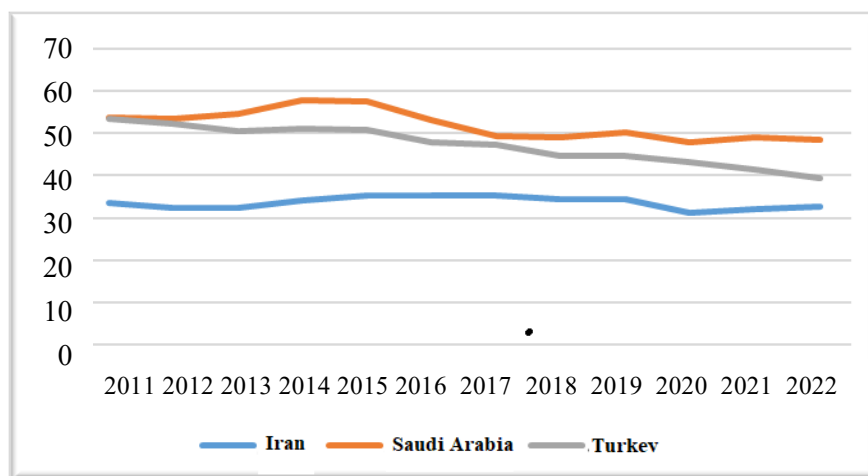


Figure 5: A Comparative Analysis of the Aggregate Processes of Regional Security Governance in Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey

The average scores for regional security governance across Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey within the protective dimension were 36, 64, and 58, respectively. In the compellence dimension, these three nations, following the aforementioned order, attained average scores of 50, 65, and 50. Furthermore, in the preventative dimension, the average scores were 30 for Saudi Arabia, 35 for Turkey, and 16 for Iran; and in the assurance dimension, Saudi Arabia registered an average of 48, Iran 33, and Turkey 45. Ultimately, in the overall average of regional security governance, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey recorded scores of 33, 50, and 46, respectively.

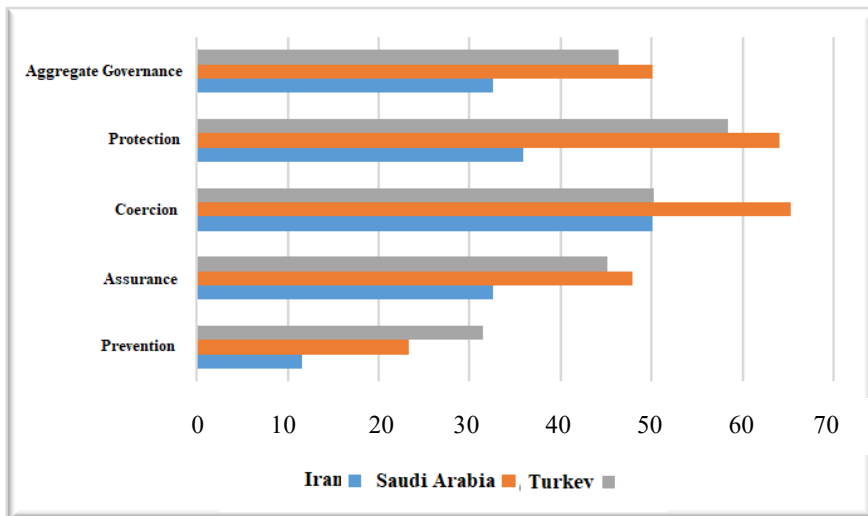


Figure 6: Comparative Analysis of the Average Dimensions of Regional Security Governance in Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey.

In the compellence dimension of security governance, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey have registered average scores of 43, 64, and 54, respectively. Furthermore, in the persuasive dimension, the average scores for these three nations, in the aforementioned sequence, have been 22, 35, and 38.

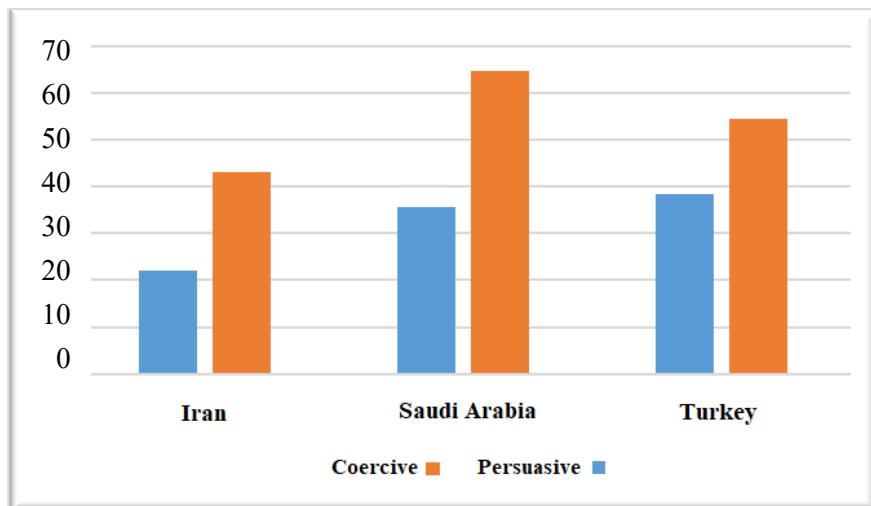


Figure 7: Comparative Analysis of the Average Persuasive and Coercive Processes of Regional Security Governance in Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey.

The Processes of Foreign Interventions in Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey.

As Figure 8 illustrates, foreign interventions have been notably significant across all three nations. Specifically, in 2013, an average score of 75 was recorded for Iran, representing the highest score among the countries under examination. Conversely, the lowest incidence of foreign intervention, registering a score of 41 in 2023, was observed in Saudi Arabia. Turkey's highest level of intervention similarly dates to 2023, with a recorded score of 63. The critical distinction, however, resides in the nature and typology of these interventions. In Turkey and Saudi Arabia, the character of interventions has been demonstrably positive and, importantly, volitional. This is attributable to the fact that Saudi Arabia and Turkey, for a variety of strategic considerations, permit external powers to intervene within their national territories, a concession resolutely withheld by Iran. More precisely, Turkey's enduring pursuit of European Union membership has historically impelled it to implement policies across numerous sectors that demonstrably aligned with the strategic interests of external powers. Similarly, Saudi Arabia, driven by various imperatives such as its procurement of armaments and the safeguarding of its security by the United States, has even acquiesced to the pejorative epithet of 'milch cow.' In stark contradistinction to these two nations, foreign interventions in Iran have consistently assumed a negative and resistance-centric character; indeed, Iran, in its unwavering pursuit of national sovereignty, has perpetually opposed external powers, thereby incurring multilateral sanctions across various strata. Consequently, the fundamental nature and specific typology of interventions within the surveyed nations exhibit profound divergence.

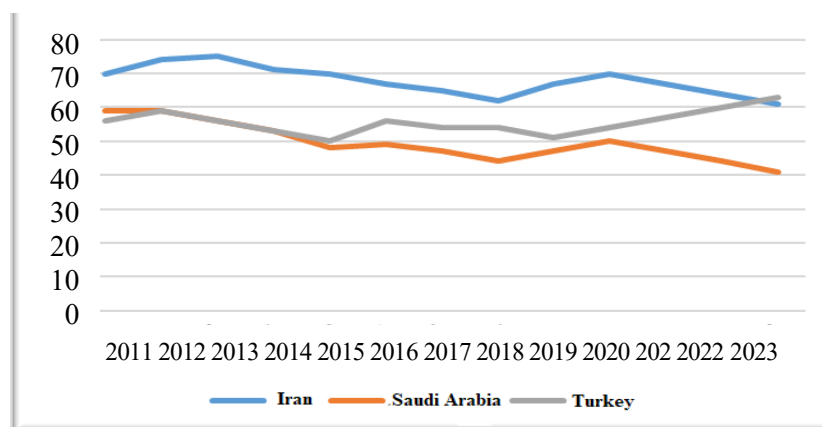


Figure 8: The Processes of Foreign Interventions in Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey

Accordingly, as is discernibly illustrated in Figure 9, the average score concerning interventions in Iran stood at approximately 68. This score, for Saudi Arabia and Turkey respectively, was recorded at approximately 50 and 56.

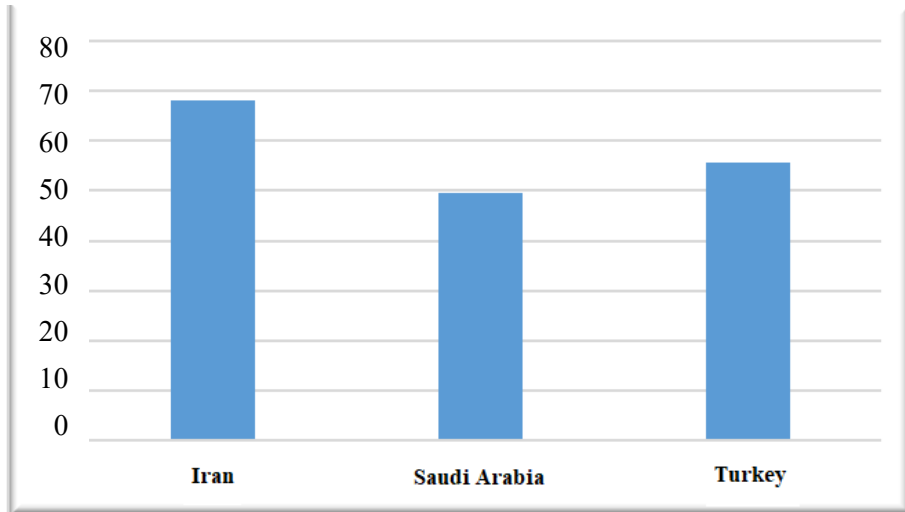


Figure 9: Comparative Analysis of the Average Foreign Interventions in Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey.

Analytical Findings

This section delves into the intricate relationship between the four fundamental dimensions of security governance and the phenomenon of foreign interventions.

The Nexus Between Foreign Interventions and the Preventative Dimension of Regional Security Governance

As Figure 10 demonstrably illustrates, concurrently with the ascending trajectory of foreign interventions, the preventative dimension of regional security governance has conversely undergone a discernible decline. Specifically, as the score for foreign interventions escalated from 67 in 2020 to 69 in 2022, the corresponding score for the preventative dimension simultaneously diminished from 19 to less than 17.

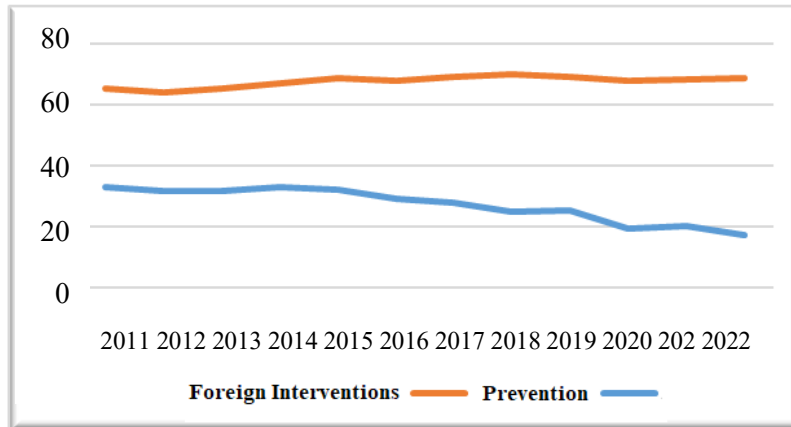


Figure 10: The Processes of Foreign Interventions and the Preventative Dimension of Regional Security Governance in West Asia.

Evidenced by a correlation coefficient of -0.624 and a significance level of 0.030, and thus with a 99 percent confidence interval, it can be cogently asserted that a significant inverse relationship has obtained between foreign interventions and the preventative dimension of regional security governance. This implies that a concurrent escalation in foreign interventions has demonstrably curtailed the capacity and efficacy of nations both to avert regional conflicts and to progress towards the establishment of an integrated security community.

Table 2: Results of Pearson Correlation Analysis between Foreign Interventions and the Preventative Dimension of Regional Security Governance

Variable / Test	Correlation Coefficient	Significance Level
Foreign Interventions	-0/624*	0/030

The Nexus Between Foreign Interventions and the Assurance Dimension of Regional Security Governance

When the score for foreign interventions escalated from 67 in 2016 to 70 in 2018, the corresponding score for the assurance dimension of regional security governance concurrently diminished from 42 to 38. The dynamic interplay between the assurance dimension and foreign interventions is graphically represented in the ensuing figure:

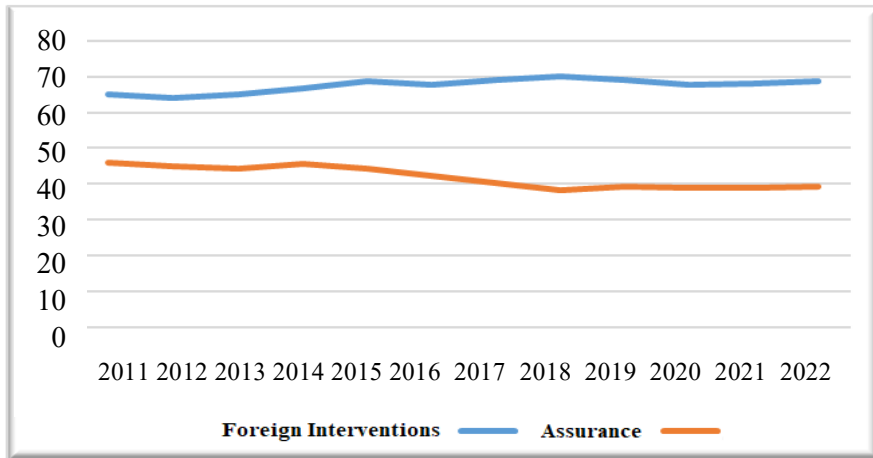


Figure 11: The Processes of Foreign Interventions and the Assurance Dimension of Regional Security Governance in West Asia.

Evidenced by a correlation coefficient of -0.764 and a significance level of 0.004, and thus with a 99 percent confidence interval, it can be cogently asserted that a significant inverse relationship has obtained between foreign interventions and the assurance dimension of regional security governance. Put differently, a concomitant escalation in foreign interventions has demonstrably curtailed the capacity of nations for effective confidence-building.

The Nexus Between Foreign Interventions and the Protective

Table 3: Results of Pearson Correlation Analysis between Foreign Interventions and the Assurance Dimension of Regional Security Governance

Variable / Test	Correlation Coefficient	Significance Level
Foreign Interventions	-0/764**	0/004

Dimension of Regional Security Governance

As Figure 12 indicates, the highest average score for the protective dimension, standing at 57, was recorded in 2015. Concurrently, 2018 marked the highest average score for foreign interventions, reaching 70.

Table 4: Results of Pearson Correlation Analysis between Foreign Interventions and the Protective Dimension of Regional Security Governance

Variable / Test	Correlation Coefficient	Significance Level
Foreign Interventions	-0/012	0/970

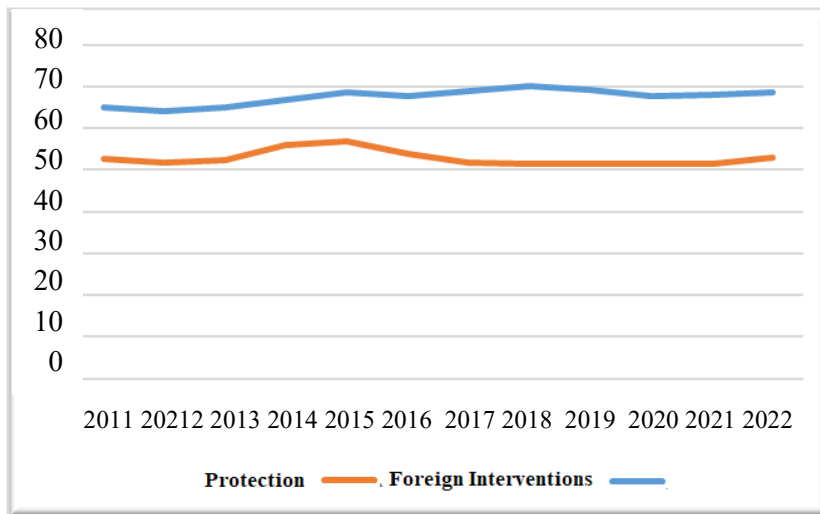


Figure 12: The Processes of Foreign Interventions and the Protection Dimension of Regional Security Governance in West Asia

As evidenced in Table 4 by a correlation coefficient of -0.012 and a significance level of 0.970, it can be asserted with 99 percent confidence that no statistically significant relationship obtained between the protection dimension of regional security governance and foreign interventions.

The Nexus Between Foreign Interventions and the Compellence Dimension of Regional Security Governance

The Compellence dimension of security governance registered its highest and lowest average scores, at 57 and 51 respectively, in the years 2015 and 2022. As Figure 13 indicates, virtually no discernible positive or negative correlation is observable between the two variables.

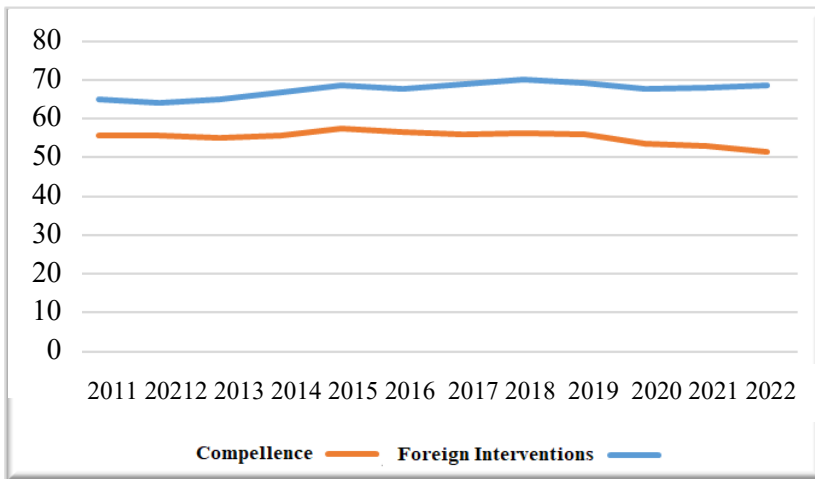


Figure 13: The Processes of Foreign Interventions and the Coercion Dimension of Regional Security Governance in West Asia

Evidenced by a correlation coefficient of -0.029 and a significance level of 0.929, it can be asserted with 99 percent confidence that no statistically significant relationship obtained between the coercion dimension of regional security governance and foreign interventions.

Table 5: Results of Pearson Correlation Analysis between Foreign Interventions and the Compellence Dimension of Regional Security Governance

Variable / Test	Correlation Coefficient	Significance Level
Foreign Interventions	-0/029	0/929

Examining the Relationship Between Foreign Interventions and Regional Security Governance Through Regression Analysis

In this inquiry, beyond the application of correlation analysis, regression has been systematically employed to elucidate the variations within the dependent variable, namely regional security governance, attributable to the independent variable of foreign interventions. Consequently, the predictive contribution of the independent variable in explaining the dependent variable is meticulously ascertained. In this regard, a single-variate regression method, specifically the simultaneous or "Enter" approach, has been employed. On this basis, the findings from the regression test reveal that the research model is confined to merely two dimensions of regional security governance: prevention and assurance.

According to Table No. 6, regarding the prevention dimension of regional security governance (dependent variable) and foreign interventions (independent variable), the coefficient of determination derived from the single-variate linear regression test is 0.389. This figure signifies that approximately 39 percent of the variations in the prevention dimension of regional security governance are attributable to the variable of foreign interventions. The analysis of variance further confirms the significance of the regression and the existence of a linear relationship between the variables. Should attention be directed to the analysis of variance, it becomes evident that the F-value is 6.367. Consequently, with a significance level of 0.030, it can be asserted with over 99 percent probability that a significant difference exists between the prevention dimension of regional security governance and foreign interventions. Furthermore, considering the beta value, it can be argued that for every unit of change in the extent of foreign interventions, a change of approximately -0.624 units has occurred in the prevention dimension of security governance.

Table 6: Regression Coefficient of Foreign Interventions with the Prevention Dimension of Regional Security Governance

Predictor Variable	Standard Error	B	Beta	T	Significance Level
Constant Term	28/390	93/733	-	3/302	0/008
Foreign Interventions	0/421	-1/061	-0/624	-2/523	0/030
ADJ.R2= 0/328 R2= 0/389 R= 0/ Note: F-statistic = 6.367					

The derived coefficient pertaining to the assurance dimension of regional security governance is -0.583. This indicates that over 58 percent of the variations within this dimension are attributable to the variable of foreign interventions. As presented in Table No. 7, the F-statistic yields a value of 13.981, with a corresponding significance level of 0.004. Consequently, it can be asserted that for every unit of alteration in the degree of foreign interventions, a change of -0.764 (Beta) has transpired within the assurance dimension of security governance.

Table 7: Regression Coefficient of Foreign Interventions with the Assurance Dimension of Regional Security Governance

Predictor Variable	Standard Error	B	Beta	T	Significance Level
Constant Term	22/218	124/935	-	5/623	0/000
Foreign Interventions	0/329	-1/231	-0/764	-3/739	0/004
Note: F-statistic =981/13 ADJ.R2=541/0 R2=0/583 R2=0/764					

Inferential Findings

The results and findings of this research do not align with those presented by Ehteshami (2013). This author posits that the primary reason regional security governance in West Asia has not gravitated towards a unified security community or a civil international system lies in internal factors. This article, conversely, concludes that foreign interventions constitute the principal cause of this predicament. For historically, since the period following the First World War and their imposition of artificial borders, up to the present day, these interventions have enabled them to define disputes among regional powers, and even other external powers, in this region in alignment with their own interests. Consequently, the internal problems of countries in West Asia have also been shaped under the influence of foreign interventions. Kirshner and Dominguez (2014) similarly sought the primary cause in internal factors, though their field of study was not West Asia.

The findings of this research exhibit consistency with certain conclusions reached by Breslin and Croft (2013). These authors concluded that foreign interventions, in the long term, offer no substantive contribution to regional security governance, a finding that resonates with the results of the current study. Furthermore, Jetschke (2011), in the context of East Asia, arrived at the conclusion that states, rather than delegating authority to regional organizations, are instead pursuing the enhancement of their national power. This observation aligns with the findings of the present research concerning West Asia, given the absence of any organization in this region established with the explicit objective of authority delegation.

Tangor (2012) similarly concluded that Turkey shares common objectives with Europe in the domain of security governance, a reality evidenced by its membership in NATO. Consequently, West Asia occupies a secondary position of importance for this state, and its engagement with regional powers is solely for the purpose of ensuring physical security, such as managing Syrian war refugees and analogous issues. Therefore, Tangor's findings corroborate the results of the present research. This is underscored by the markedly low level of bilateral interactions among regional powers in West Asia, a phenomenon starkly exemplified by the relationship between Iran and Saudi Arabia.

Müftüler-Baç(2014) and Pinfari (2014), examining, respectively, the roles of Turkey and Egypt in West Asian regional security governance, conclude that a movement towards democratization will augment their respective roles in the process of shaping regional security governance. This finding by these authors likewise aligns with the results of the present research. This is because, in the prevention dimension of security governance, it has been demonstrated that a trajectory towards democratization will ultimately not only foster cooperation among states and governments, but also facilitate the role played by non-state actors in the security domain.

Conclusion

The objective of this research is to analyze the extent and direction (positive or negative) of the impact of foreign interventions on regional security governance in West Asia, focusing on three principal regional powers: Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey. The findings and results of the study indicate that a significant relationship exists between foreign interventions and the persuasion dimension (assurance and prevention) of regional security governance. In other words, based on the Pearson correlation test, it was concluded that as foreign interventions have intensified, the persuasion dimension of regional security governance has undergone a downward trend, or vice versa. The single-variate linear regression test further demonstrated that foreign interventions are capable of explaining or predicting, respectively, 39 percent and 59 percent of the prevention and assurance dimensions of regional security governance.

Foreign interventions have evinced a positive dimension in Saudi Arabia and Turkey, whereas in Iran, they have manifested negatively. This divergence stems from the fact that the first two nations have consistently

endeavored to define themselves, respectively, as a European country embracing liberal values (evidenced by NATO membership and efforts towards European Union accession, among others) and as a state reliant on the United States in military, security, and even economic domains (the oil-for-security strategy). Conversely, Iran, subsequent to its Islamic Revolution, has consistently resisted foreign powers and their interventions at both domestic and regional levels. Indeed, it has perpetually underscored the imperative of collective regional security provision, devoid of extra-regional power interventions. Nevertheless, foreign interventions and their colonial legacy, such as artificially constructed borders, have rendered the possibility of security cooperation and participation among regional states, particularly the three countries under examination, exceedingly difficult.

Within the prevention and assurance dimensions of regional security governance, it was observed that even the lack of democratic progression in countries such as Turkey and Saudi Arabia, their failure to move towards free market development, their reliance on oil—characteristic of a rentier state—and their inclination towards the militarization of the region (prevention), coupled with their exclusive dependence on a single nation like the United States for security provision, their distrust of regional countries, their refusal to delegate authority to regional institutions, and their disinclination towards diplomatic and political resolution of conflicts (assurance), are all profoundly influenced by foreign interventions in the West Asia region. For instance, Saudi Arabia's assault on Yemen or Turkey's incursions into Iraq and Syria can be cited as examples that ought to have been resolved through diplomatic and political channels, yet militarism was preferred. This stands in stark contrast to Iran, which possesses no record of initiating an attack on any country.

The foregoing findings indicate that foreign interventions have primarily dedicated their efforts to obstructing Iran, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia from adopting persuasive policies at the regional level. That is to say, these interventions aim to prevent these nations from achieving common objectives through the centrality of diplomacy and dialogue. It is precisely for this reason that “Iranophobia” and similar policies have been consistently instrumentalized to preclude the formation of desirable interactions and relations among the countries of the region.

Suggestions

Suggestions are offered for the progression of West Asia's regional security governance towards an integrated security community, which include:

- 1. The most crucial criterion for the advancement of regional security governance is the formation of consensus regarding the security objective. States must, through dialogue, arrive at a shared understanding of the nature and essence of threats. For instance, so long as Saudi Arabia, under the influence of the United States, perceives Iran as an adversary, no progress at the regional level will be achieved. States ought to concentrate on shared issues, such as terrorist threats, and proceed with policy-making accordingly.
- 2. Regarding policy-making, the Islamic Republic of Iran should undertake the establishment of a regional institution with a primary focus on security matters. This is imperative because, in addition to the current absence of such an institution in the West Asia region, it would fulfill one of the systemic security objectives, namely the provision of collective regional security devoid of extra-regional interventions. Therefore, both policy-making and even security regulation at the regional level should be undertaken by this proposed institution.
- 3. The Islamic Republic of Iran must assume a pioneering role in facilitating the engagement of non-governmental organizations and entities within regional security governance. It is imperative that their perspectives and even direct participation be leveraged in the spheres of security policy-making and regulation.
- 4. Given the inherent complexity of security provision and the demonstrated inability of states alone to address the security requirements of all groups, the Islamic Republic of Iran should permit the establishment of "Private Military Security Companies," which are globally prevalent and operate legally, albeit at a minimal level and strictly in alignment with its domestic and regional interests. Furthermore, numerous other justifications exist for authorizing such entities, including the imperative to safeguard the

lives of national soldiers, to facilitate operations in other countries through these companies, and to preserve the state's own legitimacy.

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