



UNIVERSITY OF BRASÍLIA

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THE TRIBES AND CIVIL WAR IN LIBYA:

Tribes and Militias Post Arab Springs in the Process of Political Transition

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This final written paper was presented to the Examining Board from the Institute of International Relations of the University of Brasília as a final requirement to obtain the title of an International Relations Bachelor.

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Approved on: 13/12/2017

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To Prof. Maria Helena for giving me the opportunity to participate in her research group that allowed me to develop my academic skills and awaken my interest in the subject. Also, for her dedication and patience and for being the excellent and exemplary professor that she is.

To my professors who I encountered during my undergraduate years and my fellow research students whom I worked with. Especially to Prof. Ulysses Teixeira, who also assisted in the research group and kindly shared his own knowledge.

To my father, Pedro, and my mother, Adma, for all their dedication and support to provide me an education. To my sister, Nayara, and my brother-in-law, Tiago, my grandparents, Fautso, Margarida and Maria José, my aunt, Adriana, and my uncle, Marcus, for keeping me in their prayers and believing in me.

To those who were by my side during the production of this paper, for being my support and refuge while my family was not physically present, especially to Amanda Vieira, Fátima Odeh, Heitor Cadogan, Karen Rosaboni, Mariana Garcia, Marina Hamassaki, and Sathya Gimenes.

And, most importantly, to God for illuminating my path and for His faithfulness.

SUMMARY

The following project has as its goal to refine Downes & Monten's Foreign-Imposed Regime Change (FIRC) literature based on the Libyan military intervention in 2011 while using quantitative and qualitative analysis. According to FIRC, a successful intervention to implant a democratic transition must be in a country that possessed economic development, previous democratic experience, and ethnic-religious homogeneity before the intervention. In addition, FIRC defends that institution type interventions are more successful than leadership interventions. Based on this literature, it was clear that the Libyan case would not be able to have a successful political transition, however, after much analysis, it was found that FIRC variables were not enough to truly comprehend the reason for Libya to have entered civil war instead of becoming a democracy. This paper adds two more variables to better explain Libya's political process, which are the tribes and militias. The analysis will present the historical context of Libya, and how the tribes and militias were fundamental political instruments before the intervention. It will also be discussed the Libyan case study based on the FIRC literature and later on the addition of the two variables before mentioned.

Key words: 1- Libya, 2 – Military Intervention, 3-Foreign-Imposed Regime Change, 4-Tribes, 5- Militias

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ABBREVIATION LIST

ASU - Arab Socialist Union
EPSA - Exploration Production-Sharing Arrangements
FIRC - Foreign Imposed Regime Change
GNA - Government of National Accord
GNC - General National Congress
GNS - Government of National Salvation
GPC - General People's Congress
HoR - House of Representatives
LIFG - Libyan Islamic Fighting Group
LNA - Libyan National Army
LNOC - The Libyan National Oil Company
LPA - Libyan Political Agreement
LSF - Libya Shield Force
NFSL - National Front for the Salvation of Libya
NTC - National Transitional Council
PC - Presidential Council
PFG - Petroleum Facilities Guard
RCC - Revolutionary Command Council
SSC - Supreme Security Committees

1. INTRODUCTION

In the year of 2011, the world saw the uprising of the Arab World against decades-old dictatorships and fought for new and pluralized regimes. The results varied. Some countries successfully took down their oppressive government, some aborted the rebellions, while others started civil wars. This political phenomenon was called the Arab Springs and, even though it was brief, its consequences persist to this day.

One of the participating members of this revolutionary movement was Libya, who was successful in taking down the old regime and quickly build transitional institutions. However, the country currently faces civil war and political chaos. The Libyan society, made up of tribes and traditional families, were able to take down, with the international assistance of U.S. leading NATO forces, the 42-year-old military regime of Colonel Muammar Kaddafi.

In less than a year, a new Libyan transitional government initiated, and Kaddafi's rule ended. In a country that was once colonized continuously by foreign empires and states and oppressed by a military regime, more democratic institutions started to take form. In a somewhat short time, political parties based on tribes and religion emerged, elections were in progress, and politicians were drafting a new constitution, in a society that had no prior experience with a democratic regime. Nevertheless, in the year 2014, civil war erupted in the Libyan territory, leading to conflict and chaos, causing thousands of people to flee the country and inviting foreign radical Islamist armed groups to take advantage of the oil revenues. However, what caused such a promising scenario to reduce to civil conflict?

This paper will analyze how the transitional government backfired to a Civil War, referring to the Foreign-Imposed Regime Change (FIRC) literature. FIRC seeks to point out what are the main factors for a successful military intervention towards regime change. It takes into account four variables: ethnic and religious fragmentation; prior democratic experience; economic development; and type of foreign military intervention.

This paper intends to refine the findings of the FIRC literature, which utilizes quantitative methods of analysis, by making use of the case study's qualitative material, it will as well take into consideration the role of the Libyan tribes and militias in this process. In fact, the Libyan society is mostly based on tribal structures, being that throughout the country's history, tribal relations were a pivotal point in the politics and economics of the region. When Libya was a colony, a kingdom or a dictatorship, tribal ties were always present in Libyan politics and were used as a political instrument to maneuver the government's interests. Also, the socio-political characteristics of these tribes reflect upon Libya's present

policies, as well as many of their current militias' agendas, groups that emerged during the uprising and continue active till today.

The paper will be divided into three chapters. The first one will have a more detailed function, which will point out the actions and roles of tribes during the Khadafi regime. This first section will also describe Libya's modern history during the beginning of the Kadhafi revolution to the end of his rule, assisting the reader to understand better how the era's policies and historical events influenced the Libyan country of today.

The second chapter will examine the FIRC theory and its variables while applying it to Libya. International actors pressured the country to become free from autocratic rule by taking out Kadhafi. Although these actors did not directly implement new government institutions in Libyan territory, this case can still be viewed as a leadership type of intervention. As mentioned before, change was not successful in Libya. Based on such notions, the second chapter will address if the FIRC variables were insufficient in stating the cause of civil war.

The third chapter is believed to be the most important to understanding the reason for which Libya escalated to civil unrest. This section will approach if the tribal structure and the militias indeed influenced the 2014 civil war. Meanwhile, it is fundamental to take into consideration the previous chapters to fully grasp why the tribes and militias may also be considered as essential variables in this section.

2. THE KADHAFI ERA - 1969-2011

This chapter analyzes the role that tribes had during Libya's political history in the Kadhafi era and justifies why the tribes and militias should be considered as essential actors during the post-Kadhafi transitional period.

2.1 The First Years of the 1969 Revolution

Before the 1969 revolution, Libya became independent from Italy through negotiations with its metropolis and western powerhouses, such as Britain and France, and independence came without a political or physical struggle (VANDEWALLE, 2012). In the 60's, King Idris (1951-1969), who belonged to the Senussi tribe, enjoyed little legitimacy outside the regions of Cyrenaica, and poorly dealt with the challenges of a traditional society exposed to modernization and the demands of an outward-oriented oil economy. The tribes of

Cyrenaica had cultural and political autonomy. Idris I. never possessed any feelings of cultural attachment to the two other regions, Fezzan and Tripolitania. This regional and cultural detachment from the power center would continue to influence the political history of Libya (HÜSKEN, 2012).

Inspired by Arab nationalism and by an antagonism of the West's role in regional politics, young officers with no links to the monarchy or senior military leaders overthrew King Idris' reign, in 1969. After dislodging the monarchy and its key elites, the revolutionaries started creating new political structures for the country, with Muammar al-Kadhafi emerging as the representative of the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC). The RCC's revolutionaries political and socioeconomic backgrounds were quite similar. The majority were young, middle class, from less prestigious tribes and families, rural and did not have access to university education during the monarchy. During the first two decades of the revolution, the RCC would recruit new elites from the revolutionary committees and security apparatus, including members of leading players' families and tribes (EL FATHALY & PALMER, 1982).

The RCC was successful in purging the old regime's elites, without much opposition. Thus, the first year of the revolution, the Council targeted high-level bureaucrats and entrepreneurs in the country, removed Sanusi army officers, and dislodged Cyrenaican tribal and rural elites who had served under the monarchy. Many of the powerful families who had ties with the monarchy fled the country, while the revolutionaries imprisoned their leading proponents. However, the RCC lacked political and economic management skills, and without able substitutes to take over the bureaucratic elites tasks, the first years of the regime were unstable.

The first political agenda emerged in December 1970, which sought to remove foreign bases and troops, establish neutrality and national unity, and suppress all political parties. To reduce further the power of traditional identities and institutions, a structure of local, provincial, and national assemblies for the Arab Socialist Union (ASU) was established (VANDEWALLE, 2012, p.82). Meanwhile, political action outside of the ASU was considered a severe crime because of the possibility of triggering civil unrest. Criminalizing political activity outside of the Union prevented independent political initiatives and reduced the remaining power of the country's tribal chiefs. This reduction of tribal power caused the ASU to fail at creating loyalties across regional and provincial boundaries, being that tribal, personal and local solidarities were still essential in the daily relations in Libya, particularly in the rural areas.

In the year 1973, Kadhafi implanted a new bottom-up mobilization strategy, called the Popular Revolution. The objective was to obliterate the country's existing political structures and intensify popular sentiment in the revolution, while the RCC remained in control.

Even though Kadhafi claimed national unity and the end of the tribal structure, the revolutionaries, later on, became aware of the necessity of creating a new political community that relied on the consultative mechanisms of a tribal system, such as existed before the Italian invasion. Therefore, a systematic recruitment commenced and members of Libya's secondary tribes emerged to provide robust support for the regime.

Regarding religious-based organizations, at the beginning of the revolution, Kadhafi was prudent in inserting Islam into the new government and was "determined to stress that Islam should constitute a direct relationship between an individual and God, and should not be used for political purposes" (VANDEWALLE, 2012, p.87). Since the new government was intolerant of organized opposition, Kadhafi often persecuted the *ulama*, who were Islamic scholars and theologians, due to their filiation with the Sanusi Monarchy. During the time of the monarchy, members of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood under the Nasser regime were offered refuge and even taught in Libyan universities, where they contributed to building a student branch of the Brotherhood. Kadhafi viewed the order as a threat and sought therefore to marginalize Sanusi influences in the eastern province (REPORT LIBYA: MILITIAS, TRIBES AND ISLAMISTS, 2014).

In the economic front, the regime was able to legitimise itself economically through patronage provided by increasing oil revenues.

National expenditures on literacy, health care, and education expanded rapidly under the new regime. Minimum wages were raised and interest-free loans provided. Starting in 1970, confiscated land, that had once belonged to the Italians or the Sanusi monarchy, was distributed to farmers who became eligible for purchases of livestock and for farming implements at greatly reduced prices, and enjoyed government salaries until their farms could make a profit. After taking over the banking system in 1970, the government freely provided subsidies for the construction of houses (VANDEWALLE, 2012, p.87).

By the time of the 1973 oil crisis, the revolutionaries were successful in replacing educated officials and former tribal and family elites with a younger population in the government institutions, obscuring traditional loyalties. Nevertheless, the RCC was not able to reach its goal of political mobilization and indoctrination, thus creating what would be

known as the Jamahiriyya, a political community marked by consultation, rather than representation.

This period of the military rule would have as its base the Green Book, which was codified by Kadhafi and was considered by him as an alternative to capitalism and Marxism and was a collection of three volumes, containing his views about economics, political systems, and social relationships. According to the Green Book, one of the most fundamental problems that society faces are political systems and states that rely on representation. The Green Book debates that representation involves the surrender by individuals of their natural, personal sovereignty to the advantage of others. Therefore, the struggle for power between political parties, much like between classes and tribes, is destructive (VANDEWALLE, 2012, p.102). In Kadhafi's perspective, the only possible solution was "direct democracy," by establishing local popular congresses, which delegate power to higher congresses and popular committees, thus can represent the popular congresses' interest at the national level.

Kadhafi had a view of a stateless society, "to an individual, the family is more important than the state . . . Mankind . . . is the individual and the family. The state is an artificial economic and political system, sometimes a military system, with which mankind has no relationship and has nothing to do" (AL-KADHAFI, 1980, p.4). Also, regarding the economic sector, he claimed that every citizen had the right to share and profit equally from the country's wealth and productive activities. As a result, services that did not constitute a shared productive economic activity were no longer allowed, such as private enterprises.

Thanks to the massive inflows of revenues caused by the oil crisis, the regime believed it would be able to pursue its goal of a just, egalitarian, and participatory society. However, the government's efforts to maintain the allegiance of its leading supporters caused unrestrained spending.

Libya's transformation into an oil economy was compatible with tribal ties because it gave way for officials to hand out positions, budgets, and projects based on patronage rather than merit and efficiency. Also, Kadhafi's economic policies deliberately sought to prevent social differentiation into classes, which would have threatened tribal loyalties, and urbanization caused communities to settle in cities according to parentage, with close relatives settling nearest to each other (LACHER, 2011).

The first relevant internal conflict in the RCC happened in 1975 which led to its first attempt at a coup in August. The tension between distributive proclivities and regulatory intervention became an acute political challenge for the regime, pitting factions within the council against each other (VANDEWALLE, 2012, p.98). This attempt caused Kadhafi to

consolidate himself as the undisputed leader of the revolution, and he weakened all prospects for a viable public sector in the country. The coup attempt was also the reason for the end of professional and technical criteria for military recruitment, and the beginning of an influx of individual members of Kadhafi's tribe, the Qadhadhfa into security and army positions, along with the Marqaha and the Warfalla tribes, which were co-opted by the regime.

The Warfalla tribe is one of Libya's largest tribes and has Bani Walid as its home city and served as one of the regime's strongholds. Because a Misratan officer led the prior coup attempt, Kadhafi aligned himself with the Warfalla tribe to invoke not only their historical alliance with the Qadhadhfa but also exploit Bani Walid's past rivalry with Misrata going back to a dispute in 1920 (LACHER, 2016).

After the year of the failed coup, the regime decided to rename the ASU as the General People's Congress (GPC). However, the system of popular rule restrained opposition to the regime, since political activities were restricted to the GPC. Tribal allegiances also influenced the Congress. In some urban areas, tribes continued to determine elections for the GPC (LACHER, 2011).

By 1980, Libya's new political structures were in place, the people had political control through the Congress and committee system, and the ASU was formally abolished. Nevertheless, there were several areas that the GPC did not have the competence to act upon: foreign policy, the army, the police, the country's budget, and the petroleum sector.

The regime gradually evolved in making a clear distinction between formal and revolutionary authority. The Popular Committees' competence and authority were limited, while the revolutionaries guarded at the top the ultimate control functions in the Jamahiriyya. Therefore the People's Congress was under the permanent control of the Revolutionary Committee, and the RCC controlled their agenda, contradicting the directives of the Jamahiriyya that was meant to invigorate the revolution.

The Committee also had power over the judiciary system, in which it staffed the revolutionary courts with its members, rather than regular judges. These members were not limited by the country's penal codes, which not surprisingly, allowed a large number of documented abuses. This increasingly repressive justice system would eventually contribute to feeding the tension within the Jamahiriyya, and lead to many restrictions on the Committee's powers.

Still, in the 80's, the government revealed more authoritarian actions. The regime had implemented measures to distribute and redistribute much of the country's assets, and the state controlled the distribution of all basic necessities. Many private properties had been

confiscated and were redistributed or kept by the state. The committees also took over the country's press, and their functions were expanded to propagate, guide, and control the revolution (VANDEWALLE, 2012, p.120). Their objective was to defend the revolution at all costs, pursuing and liquidating all enemies of the revolution to ensure its survival. This hunt also expanded to enemies located internationally and contributed to worsening the country's relations with the West.

Regarding Libya's approach to foreign affairs, the military leader has always proclaimed his disdain against the West. An increasingly activist foreign policy that brought the regime into open confrontation with the West caused economic difficulties for the country. At the end of 1981, the U.S. implanted economic sanctions against all crude oil imports from the North African nation. The sanctions caused little effect on the State because it still had the European market. Notwithstanding, the United States gradually extended its economic boycott including products crucial to Libya's oil industry. After 1986, Libya was economically and diplomatically isolated due to its escalating confrontation with the West, causing diplomatic disruptions with the U.S. and Great Britain.

Washington assiduously pursued its attempts to limit Libya's behavior in several distinct areas, seeking to oppose its support of extremist and terrorist groups, to curtail its foreign policy adventurism, to halt its unwavering opposition to US-sponsored attempts to settle the Arab-Israeli conflict, and to prevent its attempts to acquire or produce non-conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction (VANDEWALLE, 2012, p.98).

Kadhafi's revolution created various internal enemies: monarchical elites who had been dispossessed or forced to flee the country; fellow revolutionaries, who disagreed with the overspending of the country's resources; and the *ulama* who had been severely restrained. Not surprisingly so, many Libyan opposition groups formed abroad, such as the National Front for the Salvation of Libya (NFSL), which was the best-known opposition group, founded in 1981 by Muhammad Mugharyif. The fact that organized political activity was forbidden made it challenging to crystallize opposition inside of Libya. The security sector institutions, the effectiveness of the use of symbols, the injunction against political groupings, and Kadhafi's appeal to the population prevented organized opposition (VANDEWALLE, 2012, p.126). Kadhafi wanted to halt any group, even the Revolution Committee, to have autonomous power. He repeatedly reshaped the army and prevented a professional military from emerging by creating a popular army and popular militias.

The security backbone of the Kadhafi regime was the military strength of particular tribes, first and foremost his own tribe, the Qadhadhfa around Sirte and Sabha, the Warfalla, whose stronghold is Bani Walid, and the Marqaha from the al-Shate' region in the Fezzan. Various other groups were considered as loyal to the regime, as also several smaller tribes around the Nafusa Mountains and in the north-western coastal plain and the residents of Tawergha, who were descended from slaves from sub-Saharan Africa (LACHER, 2014).

State institutions generally were deliberately weakened by Kadhafi, who centralized power in the informal networks surrounding his extended family and tribe and constantly rearranged the confusing patchwork of institutions with unclear and overlapping remits. The regular army was purposely kept weak to minimize the possibility of a coup d'état, and an elaborate system was established in which numerous security agencies, paramilitary and special forces watched over each other. This structure was headed by close relatives of Kadhafi, and its personnel were recruited primarily from Kadhafi's tribe (the Qadhadhfa) as well as two allied tribes, the Warfalla and Magarha (LACHER, 2011).

Another critical factor that assisted in maintaining the regime's status quo is that Libyans no longer had common economic interests that other societies have. Since the State had control over the economy and distributed capital, political silence became a must-have for Libya's citizens. Kadhafi was able to prevent a coalescing of political interests based on purely economic criteria (VANDEWALLE, 2012, p.128). Thus, Libyans absorbed all the benefits bestowed upon them by a oil economy but politically stood cowed and silent. The notion that Libyans in principle ruled themselves made opposition impossible. In addition, the gap between formal and informal mechanisms of governing influenced in the depoliticization of Libyans, because they saw no prospects of making claims in a political system that they could not reform, a sentiment that the revolution desired to avoid during its first years.

2.2 Economic and Diplomatic Isolation

A decade after the oil boom of 1973, the Kadhafi government was not able to translate the rapid inflows of oil revenues it had into real development. Externally, its confrontations with the West made international trade difficult, even causing a U.S. airstrike bombing in both Tripoli and Benghazi, in April 1986. Meanwhile, at the national level, Kadhafi had

managed to take down, reshape, and reorganize many of the state institutions in the name of populism. Libya became a centrally unplanned economy which depended on patronage and relied on economic distribution. This reliance led to an excessive spending which halted efficiency and regulation.

Between the year 1979, when Libya had been put on the US list of state sponsors of terrorism, and the year 1986, when the US bombed Libyan territory, the relationship between the United States and the Jamahiriyya deteriorated. Six years after the bombing the United Nations also extended an economic embargo, due to Libya's refusal to turn over suspects involved in the Pan Am 103 bombing over Lockerbie, in December 1988.

The decline in oil prices that began in the early 1980s, and which worsened even more because of Reagan's imposed first set of sanctions in 1986. Consequently, Libya was forced to abandon projects that strived to diversify its economy. Also, the performance of the overspending on the Green Books directives failed if compared to other oil states which experienced the oil shock. These factors were one of the leading causes of Libya's overall economic performance to gradually worsen.

In the two decades of 1980 and 1990, the Libyan population confronted a different reality than what they faced with the massive influx of oil revenues with the oil boom and economic development. The diplomatic isolation and corruption among state institutions were taking a toll onto the Libyan people, and despite the regime's insistence on egalitarianism and solidarity, economic inequality had started to become much more apparent in the country.

The appearance of inequalities fueled many Islamist groups, mostly in Cyrenaica where resistance to the regime was in part linked to longstanding reservations about Kadhafi's political use of Islam. The first radical jihadi cells were created in the 1970s. During the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, in the 80s, young men mobilized around the call for Jihad in the Afghan country against the forces of the Soviet Union. Upon return, Jihadi fighters started to focus on the injustices of the Kadhafi regime. Throughout the first years of the 1990s, uprisings of Islamist groups were harshly repressed (REPORT LIBYA: MILITIAS, TRIBES AND ISLAMISTS, 2014). Their suppression relied in large part on the Revolutionary Committees, which were brought back for the purpose, rather than the country's regular army - due to Kadhafi's suspicion regarding the regular army.

Even though Libya's armed services were able to have a certain amount of growth, the military was never assigned tasks meant to protect the regime. Also, Kadhafi made sure to create a carefully balanced system of promotions and rotations of the location and leadership

of the military, therefore keeping the Jamahiriyya's armed forces de-politicized throughout the 1970s and early 1980s.

This strategy left the national army professionally incompetent. The war with Chad was embarrassingly unsuccessful, and the deteriorating economic conditions often left wages unpaid for months on end. Also, the economic sanctions established by the U.S. and the UK against Libya helped decline the country's military strength, and the Soviet Union's collapse - which provided about half of the country's acquisitions of arms and assorted military items - added to its decline.

In Kadhafi's regime there existed two separate sets of institutions that had the power over the use of force. These institutions were the pro-regime tribal armed forces, and the set of praetorian-guard-like organizations that were responsible for the regime's physical survival, while Libya's official national army was kept on the sidelines (VANDEWALLE, 2014, p.146). What controlled the security functions of the regime was, then, a multi-layered and overlapping system of security organizations within Libya. As opposed to a regular army, Kadhafi had developed in The Green Book the notion of armed citizens and specialized bodies, such as the Revolutionary Committees. This strategy maintained the leader's power. A decentralized and weak army would be less able to execute a coup d'etat and overthrow Kadhafi successfully.

One of the leading informal organizations in the Jamahiriyya that served as a security mechanism was the *lijan al-qiyada al-sha'biya al-ijtima'iya* (People's Social Leadership Committees). The Leadership Committees consisted of heads of families or prominent individuals loyal to the regime within the country's regions. Their purpose was to help maintain social stability by controlling members of tribes and families loyal to the regime. The organization was headed by a General Coordinator who was usually a high-ranking member of the military. This Committee system was a powerful instrument that was used by the regime to balance the political system.

Through these Committees the tribes' political function was able to formalize, and tribal leaders were represented in such platform. The People's Social Leadership Committees were designed, among other things, to hold tribal leaders responsible for subversive activity by members of their tribe. Meanwhile, political mobilization across tribal divides, through parties or civil -society organizations, remained impossible. However, "state formation, urbanization, and economic transformation had in many ways perpetuated tribal loyalties rather than undermined them. The disruptive nature of Libyan state formation allowed individuals to remain loyal to their tribes" (LACHER, 2011).

The American bombing of Tripoli and Benghazi forced the regime to reevaluate its behavior as a state. Through many diplomatic initiatives, Kadhafi attempted to break the country's diplomatic isolation within the region and with Europe. In 1987, after being defeated by Chadian forces, Libya withdrew its troops from Chad and agreed to submit its claim to the contested territory to the International Court of Justice, thus improving French-Libyan relations. At the same time, the Libyan leader participated in the creation of the Arab Maghreb Union in 1989, meant to construct an economic community among the North African countries. Kadhafi also publicly announced his intention to withdraw from his previous activism. However, in 1988, the United States accused Libya of manufacturing chemical weapons at Rabta and pursuing weapons of mass destruction.

After the unstable years of Libya's revolutionary decade, the government took small but symbolically significant measures, as an attempt to expand its political liberalization to a broader audience. Scores of political prisoners were released, Kadhafi personally participated in the destruction of Tripoli's central prison, and, under his supervision, thousands of security files on Libyan citizens were destroyed. Libyans also became free to travel to where they wished, earning generous currency allowances provided by their government. These initiatives enticed Libyan exiles back to the country, with promises of employment and immunity from prosecution. Confiscated passports were returned to Libyan citizens, and their issuance was now entrusted to Popular Committees rather than to the security sector organizations. The Libyan leader also met with some opposition figures hoping to bring them back to Libya but failed to do so (VANDEWALLE, 2012, p. 141).

Contradicting his past more authoritarian actions, Kadhafi even adopted measures that encouraged greater legal guarantees within the country, announcing a liberalization campaign in June 1988 called *Al-Wathiqa al-Khadra al-Kubra lil-Huquq al-Insanfi 'Asr al-Jamahir* (The Great Green Charter of Human Rights in the Era of the Masses) (VANDEWALLE, 2012, p.142). He promoted a greater degree of freedom and began advocating human rights in the country and region. He admitted to the abuses that the revolutionary legal system committed in the past, and he proposed codifications of legal principles through the GPC, putting the security sector organizations and activities under the GPC's area of responsibility. The revolutionary courts were partially disbanded, having the sole purpose of charges of treason, and replaced by People's Courts, and a new Ministry of Justice was created at the beginning of 1989.

Kadhafi's attempt to bring greater predictability and accountability must be viewed, therefore, within the larger context of the country's political life, and particularly within its formal and informal power structures. The Great Green Charter did not contain any stipulation that would have allowed political opposition, nor did it make the expression of such opposition in any public setting possible. As the Libyan leader continued to argue, Libya was a Jamahiriyya ruled directly by its citizens. Hence, the rules of opposition and of free expression did not apply. In effect, the Great Green Charter did not provide either the civil or political rights that are normally provided under international law nor, as one long-term observer noted, "the privileges of citizenship." (VANDEWALLE, 2012, p. 142).

Due to Libya's economic dependence on exports of Libyan oil, the country's leaders sought to try and minimize the impact of the US and multilateral sanctions on its oil industry. The Libyan National Oil Company (LNOC) organized itself to entice investors and tried to maintain attractive conditions under new Exploration Production-Sharing Arrangements (EPSA) regulations. In 1997, the GPC adopted Law #5 that allowed for foreign direct investment in the country.

By 1999, Libya's economic fortunes grew, thanks to the suspension of the multilateral sanctions and the increase in international oil prices that occurred soon after the lifting of the sanctions. During the torn of the millennium, the Libyan economy once more experienced growth and inflation dwindled, after an extended period of contraction and stagnation.

The attempts at reform and liberalization exposed local interests and power of different constituencies in Libya. The first phase was marked by the liberalization of trade and the end of import regulations, which benefited consumers and small entrepreneurs. This first set of measures also did not affect the fortunes of those groups deemed vital to the Libyan leader's maintenance of power (VANDEWALLE, 2012, p.165). However, the first phase of reform was followed by a second marked by a lack of regulation, which brought more economic stratification.

Nevertheless, the Kadhafi regime fostered two decades of economic unpredictability and, because of its distributive policies, fed citizens' inclinations to avoid personal initiative and risk. The Libyan population was suspicious of a reduction of the elaborate welfare functions of the state, which before reform provided a risk-free, albeit limited, existence. For the essential supporters of the government, an open market system could only mean the potential loss of privileges.

Economic reform to an open market system would have meant:

(...) loosening some of the tools it had created to manage Libyan citizens and to prevent opposition. The potential development of groups with similar economic interests that they were willing to defend opened up the possibility of opposition. Kadhafi clearly pinpointed the political dangers of economic liberalization in his speeches, as well as its undesirable cultural side effects that would diminish his attempts at egalitarianism (VANDEWALLE, 2012, p.166).

2.3 Libya's Attempts to Liberalization and the Arab Spring

Not surprisingly so, economic liberalization failed in 1990's Libya. Due to centralization, poor decision-making, neglect, and revolutionary pursuits subjecting economic development, Libya had developed intricate patterns of patronage that constituted significant political and economic liabilities to serious reform. The state's decreasing ability to provide welfare to the overall population was fundamental for the regime's populist rhetoric, and for its ability to reward its close supporters handsomely. By the end of the 1990's, both sets of entitlements were critically at risk.

Meanwhile, there was considerable progress in normalizing Libya's diplomatic situation. In the year of 2003, Kadhafi finally gave in to international pressure and announced Libya's renunciation of weapons of mass destruction, which freed the way toward global normalization, and toward economic reconstruction and reform. Until the regime's fall in 2011, the period of diplomatic and economic normality attempts "was marked by continuity in how the regime retained its hold on power and by a set of discontinuities as the country started to adjust to its reintegration into the international community from which it had been excluded for two decades" (VANDEWALLE, 2012, p. 173).

Kadhafi also released more than one hundred members of the Muslim Brotherhood in 2006, after the late 1990s government negotiations with the Islamists in exchange for reconciliation and denouncement of violence. The government also released hundreds of Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) members in 2008 (REPORT LIBYA: MILITIAS, TRIBES AND ISLAMISTS, 2014).

The responsible for such ideas of reform in the country was the dictator's son, Saif al-Islam al-Kadhafi, who declared himself as the reformer of Libya. He desired to make political and economic changes in the country so that it could meet with its diplomatic and economic normalization, and, like his father, he aspired to use oil revenues as the key to pursuing his

goals. However, these reforms were confronted with severe difficulties because of his father's three decades attempts at creating a stateless Libya.

To be able to get back on track in the economic front, the country needed technology know-how and capital investment that could only be provided by some of the Western companies, mostly U.S. companies, which left after the implementation of the sanctions and political uncertainty in the country. Thus, both Kadhafi and Saif al-Islam were aware that Libya needed a complete lifting of U.S. sanctions, and it would only be possible if its name left the U.S. State Department's list of sponsors of state terrorism.

The regime's agreement to allow the Lockerbie suspects to be tried, its willingness to settle the UTA issue, the diplomatic attempt to salvage its international reputation, and the start of back-channel diplomacy in 1999 between Libya, Great Britain, and the United States were all seeming indications that the Kadhafi regime was willing to settle for a more pragmatic and responsible set of policies that would reintegrate the country politically, diplomatically, and economically within the international community (VANDEWALLE, 2012, p. 174).

In addition to Libya's foreign affairs, the Jamahiriyya's policies towards the African continent also took a sharp turn in the opposite direction. In the past, Kadhafi was known for his role in destabilizing and confronting other African states, however, because of his desire to change Libya's international image, the regime distanced itself from direct or indirect involvement in regional insurgencies.

Libya dissociated itself from Arab Socialism and sought a new approach, Pan-African Unity. Kadhafi strived to establish bilateral and multilateral organizations in Africa, hoping that it would bring about regional economic and security arrangements and, hopefully, lead to a United States of Africa. Although his ambitions were met with mixed reactions and his initiatives were stalled, Kadhafi was appointed as chairman of the African Union in February 2009.

Five years before at the beginning of 2004, the U.S. lifted the ban on Libya, and the African nation was prosperous in inserting itself once again in the international community. By the end of the year, a U.S. Congressional delegation visited Tripoli, Kadhafi made an official visit to the European Union, the United States and Libya formalized its new relationship by establishing U.S. representation in the Libyan country, and all of its nuclear weapons' program equipment and chemical weapons had been removed.

Though reconciliation to the West and economic reform was the chosen option of the Kadhafi regime, this contradicted the Jamahiriyya's survival. The new change of pace was the leader's and the revolutionaries' main concern. Meanwhile, the younger generation of Libyans was impatient with the political and economic attempt due to other reasons. Saif al-Islam was not an exemption of a Western-educated or well educated Libyan. Most of the youth had high levels of education after the 1969 coup and were frustrated that international reconciliation would probably afford few opportunities for employment. Being that the little options available were in the country's inefficient bureaucracies that were negatively viewed by those who strived for personal advancement, or entrepreneurship for the youth not intimately connected to the regime.

Nevertheless, the political reform that Saif al-Islam aspired failed due to the large-scale patronage which strategically stabilized the political system. Any initiatives to change the mechanisms of patronage or decrease the economic stability of those who profited with the regime was doomed to fail from the start. These arrangements were one of the leading principles that maintained the regime for four decades.

Before the 2011 uprising, it was clear to see that the regime was focused exclusively around Kadhafi and his supporters, and not by the people, as he always stated. The government was protected by its highly efficient coercive institutions and had been able to suppress all opposition. Any expression of organized social, political, or economic interests was oppressed, and popular participation was fictitious because the political system made any real participation impossible. However, even though there was no political mobility, Libya's reintegration in the international community and economic development improved the average Libyan's situation.

Resentment against the Kadhafi regime was soon revealed and emerged on 15 February in the year 2011. The uprising started in Benghazi, the capital of the region of Cyrenaica, which was economically neglected by the government over the years and had political leverage during the monarchy. Kaddafi failed to co-opt the younger generation of Cyrenaica as forces of the revolution to turn them against the conservative tribal establishment. Resistance from tribal, urban, regional and Islamic oppositional movements from 1980 until the early 1990s began in the region (PARGETER, 2008). During his rule, Kaddafi systematically neglected Cyrenaica, and implanted desperate measures of repression, while also trying to assure the loyalty of individual figures through privileges and favors.

Tribal affiliation remained sufficiently strong for districts of major cities, which influenced people into siding with the regime or the uprising, depending on the tribal

community dominating the city. Nevertheless, tribal loyalties have historically been weaker in cities with a longstanding urban history, including Tripoli, Misrata, and Benghazi, where the ones who played a leading role were prominent families (LACHER, 2011).

To protect his regime, Kadhafi sent loyal brigades, his air force, loyalist troops and foreign soldiers to fight against the rebels. Due to the slaughter of his people, the United Nations and Europe implemented a number of sanctions and imposed arms embargoes and a travel-ban to the country.

In Cyrenaica, a National Transitional Council (NTC) emerged that declared itself the sole representative of the Libyan people, which was recognized by powerhouses in the international community. The NTC was heavily represented by the northeast of the country. The principal reasons lie in the fact that northeastern Libya experienced an early liberation and revolutionary strongholds (Misrata, Western Mountains) from the northeast were isolated from the regime's influence. Also, the fact that the former elites of the region had held prominent roles during the Sanusi monarchy and were fiercely persecuted by Kadhafi determined the region's substantial presence in the NTC (LACHER, 2011).

As was mentioned above, many of the independent or opposition figures who joined the National Transition Council were descendants of the aristocratic and bourgeois families that controlled Libya during the monarchy: Al Nasr from the region of Fezzan; Montasir and Suweil from the city of Misrata, Al Dagheili who was close to the Senussi family; and Sallabi from the city of Benghazi. However, the uprising was not caused due to a power struggle between tribes. "Mobilization of the revolutionary militias largely occurred on the basis of towns and cities rather than tribes/families, even though the distinction between local and tribal ties was very complex in many cases, especially in the smaller towns" (VARVELLI, 2013).

However, Kadhafi's brutality against his people prompted tribal leaders to switch allegiances. Even the Warfalla tribe, who had been integrated into his regime and at the time made up an estimated 1 million of Libya's more than 6 million population, couldn't remain utterly loyal to the Libyan dictator, even though some members continued supporting the regime (APPS, 2011). During the 2011 war, the head of the North Africa program at the London School of Economics, Alia Brahimi said "In Libya, it will be the tribal system that will hold the balance of power rather than the military. I think you will see defections of some of the main tribes if that is not happening already. It looks like he has already lost

control of the east of the country where he was never popular and never fully managed to consolidate his power.”¹

At the beginning of the conflict, the Obama administration was initially reluctant to intervene, arguing that the U.S. have no real national interests in Libya. However, the president was forced to take a position by growing internal and external pressures, and by the dire situation of the rebels. Once the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1973 on 17 March 2011, the U.S. administration eventually agreed to assume a leading initial role in enforcing the no-fly zone over Libya and protecting civilian lives.

Although Obama had made it clear that he did not want to commit ground forces to the conflict, many of the Western leaders pressured for the removal of the regime. NATO's assistance in the conflict helped maintain the rebels' positions, and it eventually became clear that a more significant and more decisive NATO intervention would be needed to defeat the loyalist side.

In Tripoli on 15 August, rebels in western Libya, aided by NATO support, managed to conquer Tripoli and penetrated into Bab al-Azziziya, symbolic core of the Kadhafi regime. A month later, the last strongholds of the regime would be taken, Bani Walid (home of the Warfalla tribe) and Sirt. On 20 October, Sirt was finally overrun by the rebels, and Mu'ammarr al-Kadhafi was executed.

Even though the rebels were deemed victorious, there were many challenges ahead left by the monarchy and the military regime:

(...) to create the institutions of a modern state out of the chaos of competing interests, especially when faced with large inflows of oil revenues that make such institution building difficult. In addition, the Transitional National Council and its successors will need to make such a state attractive enough to capture the consensus and allegiance of a wide variety of groups and individuals. Against this background, against unpromising beginnings, the new Libyan authorities will now have to embark on a process of state and nation building the country has never experienced before (VANDEWALLE, 2012, p.209).

¹ Interview available at: <https://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFJOE71L0M020110222?sp=true>. Accessed on: 21/10/2017

2.4 Conclusion

Kadhafi's initial ambitions for Libya at the beginning of the 1969 Revolution was an Arab nationalist stateless country where the people governed themselves and enjoyed political mobility and economic equality. The oil revenues were seen as the main economic component to establish his vision of egalitarianism and development. He desired to take down inefficient bureaucracies and tribal and regional elites. However, during the four decades of Kadhafi's regime, the mechanisms that maintained his rule were patronage and retribalization. The dictator co-opted tribes from Tripolitania that weren't affiliated to the monarchy and through patronage was able to sustain their loyalty. Along with his tribe, those who were loyal to the regime held high political positions, received economic benefits and were the backbone of the security apparatus, weakening the national army. These strategies to support his regime contradicted his previous ambitions and marginalized tribes from Cyrenaica who in the past were linked to the Sanussi monarchy.

By the year 2011, when the uprisings began, negative sentiment towards the Kadhafi regime was revealed. Those who were marginalized during the four decades of the Colonel's reign, tribes from Cyrenaica and Islamist groups, rebelled against his rule and quickly organized a transitional council to make way for a new form of government. With the assistance of NATO and US forces, the rebels were able to attain victory at the end of 2011.

Even though the Kadhafi regime fell, there were still remnants that the regime left behind. Libya never had any contact with a democratic government, political opposition and political parties were forbidden. Meanwhile, the country had a vast range of oil revenues making it a potential oil state that interested foreign investors and foreign capital. However, the main problems were the mechanisms of patronage and retribalization that characterized Libyan society and the birth of armed groups created to takedown Kadhafi. The interest of the tribe, region, city, family, and militia were prioritized before the national interest, thus causing social obstacles for Libya's political transition.

3. EXPORTING DEMOCRACY THROUGH FOREIGN IMPOSED REGIME CHANGE

The American government has associated during the years after the Cold War that exporting democracy to rogue states is a form of assuring national security and has been inserted into American foreign policy for some time. However, very few past US military

interventions have been successful in creating a democratic government in rogue states. The few that had success were countries such as Japan and Germany. Meanwhile, other states who experienced intervention, such as Haiti, Afghanistan, and Iraq, remain, until today, unstable and vulnerable to conflict.

There exists a particular literature that analyzes military-imposed regime change, which is known as Foreign-Imposed Regime Change (FIRC). This literature offers variables that should be present in the target country so the intervener could establish a democratic government. Downes and Montan (2013, p. 6-7) defined (FIRC) as an analysis of military interventions that sought to democratize the target country, focusing on its results, in altering its leaders or government institutions and the country's transition to a consolidated democracy. According to the authors, regime change is the efficient removal of the political leader of a state by the command of another state's government. There are times that stakeholders also establish a new leader and a new set of institutions.

Peic and Reiter (2010) provide another definition that includes changing leaders and political institutions. As stated by the scholars, the term regime has been used to refer to leaders and, in some cases, to political institutions. FIRC may also mean an imposed change of leaders or institutions by foreign force, and it is more common that both political changes occur (PEIC; REITER, 2010, p.454). Enterline and Greig (2008) also included another element to the FIRC definition, which is that imposed democratic regimes are democratic governments established by a foreign force. This force possesses a vital role in determining, promoting, and maintaining government institutions (ENTERLINE; GREIG, 2008, p.323).

However, the use of military force has not been deemed historically successful. Downes and Montan (2012, p.8) observed that countries which experienced FIRC seldom demonstrated little democratic change and were not able to successfully transition themselves to a consolidated democracy. Those countries in which regime change was imposed upon them remained autocratic, mainly if only the leader was removed and substituted by someone whom the foreign force supported (DOWNES & MONTAN, 2012, p. 8).

Downes and Montan (2012) established variables to analyze the probability of a successful democratic transition. These variables refer to specific preexisting conditions of the target countries which affect the forced regime change to succeed or fail into implementing a democratic government. They are: the degree of prosperity; the level of ethnic and religious homogeneity; and the previous experience with democracy. There is also another essential variable that is the type of intervention conducted by the foreign actor, which is associated with the intervener's actions in implementing a regime change.

Chart 01. FIRC Variables

Economic Prosperity	Ethnic and Religious Homogeneity	Previous Democratic Experience	Type of Intervention
- or +	- or +	- or +	Leadership (-) or Institutional (+)

This Chart 01 of FIRC's variables will serve in analyzing which variables were present before the 2011 uprising and which type of intervention occurred in the Libyan case, that was mentioned in the previous chapter and will be discussed in the following paragraph.

The intervention in Libya was conducted by the Obama administration who was reluctant to intervene in the North African country. However, due to international and internal pressure, Obama took action as the lead in the NATO intervention. The type of intervention that the U.S. opted for was the removal of the autocratic leader, Colonel Mu'ammar Kadhafi, without the imposition of a new leader nor of direct support for new democratic institutions, which is known as leadership intervention. This choice opposed to previous interventions, such as the case in Afghanistan, which was conducted by the Bush administration and executed the type of intervention in which the autocratic leader was removed, and there was active and direct support for nation-building, known as institutional intervention.

Barack Obama defended that the Libyan population had the right to choose their own leader and build their own institutions, with the international community acting as a supporting actor and not as a decision maker of Libya's policies.

“So let me be clear again about what our policy as determined by me, the President of the United States, is towards the situation there. I believe that Kadhafi is on the wrong side of history. I believe that the Libyan people are anxious for freedom and the removal of somebody who has suppressed them for decades now. And we are going to be in contact with the opposition, as well as in consultation with the international community, to try to achieve the goal of Mr. Kadhafi being removed from power” (OBAMA, 2011).²

² OBAMA, Barack. The President's News Conference. March 11, 2011. Available at: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=90137&st=&st1=>. Accessed on: 16/10/2017

In the following sections, we will analyze if the necessary variables for implementing a democratic government was present in the North African country before the NATO intervention, and the leadership intervention executed by the Obama administration. This analysis will assist in validating or not if FIRC was sufficient in explaining the reason why Libya was not able to establish a thriving democracy.

3.1 Economic Development

One of the variables that are mentioned in FIRC's literature is the degree of prosperity before the intervention. To understand Libya's economy before the 2011 intervention, this section will briefly analyze the economy and its policies during the Kadhafi regime. Also, this section can be associated with the previous chapter, in which it was approached the country's economic development after the sanctions were lifted and before the Arab Springs.

As it was mentioned in the first chapter, Libya experienced great profits with oil revenues in the 1973 oil crisis. Thanks to the oil boom, Kadhafi had the financial means to fulfill his aspirations for the country, by exporting the commodity and using the profit gained to develop Libya. Many scholars classify the oil-producing nation as a rentier state.

According to the Rentier State theory, oil-producing states do not accumulate revenue through the local population's taxation but instead depend on externally generated rents (BENLI ALTUNISIK, 2014). A rentier state is characterized by three aspects: oil revenues are paid to governments in the form of rent, in which the relationship between product price and market price is fragile due to the fact that oil is a "strategic commodity"; oil revenues are externally generated through marketing in the global economy; and oil revenues are directly accrued by the state. Also, Luciani (1990) defended that countries relying on oil for at least 40 percent of their economic income should be classified as rentier states and it was identified that between 1972 and 1999, Libya had a 58% of financial dependence on oil revenues.³

The Kadhafi regime sought to consolidate its power in the mid-1970s with the Jamahiriya system, which aimed at a total restructuring of political, economic and social relations linked to a distributive state. This method of distribution allowed the regime to mold Libyan society through a strategic consolidation of influence. Because the rentier state itself

³ HERB, Michael. *No Representation without taxation? Rents, Development, and Democracy*. Comparative Politics, Vol. 37, No. 3, 2005, p.299.

collected oil revenues accumulated abroad, Libya achieved societal autonomy, free to create its clientelistic networks by buying allegiance outright instead of negotiating with the people. In the absence of any meaningful political participation, this structure of patronage constituted the most important links between the state and society.

However, when the oil prices began to drop in the 1980's, along with the sanctions imposed on Libya and its ineffective bureaucracy, the regime failed to efficiently develop and implement policies to deal with the global oil bust in the 1990s. The state's institutional incapacity was the main stumbling block to the implementation of reform policies, along with the regime's impassive support of reforms due to Kadhafi's fear of losing power (BENLI ALTUNISIK, 2014).

Before the uprising in 2011, Libya had a small population of about six million and had survived the Western embargo and the oil bust of the 1980s by adopting limited economic liberalization measures. Nevertheless, the state was unable to improve living conditions, to deal with increasing unemployment and problems of distribution which also raised criticism against regional and/or tribal favoritism, mainly among the youth, which had high levels of education thanks to the Jamahiriyya's goals of social equality. The World Bank⁴ reported that the Literacy rate of people ages 15 and above was 91.04% in 2015, a high percentage for an underdeveloped country.

Among its attempts to solve Libya's economic downfall, Kadhafi opened Libyan economy to international capital, and several measures were introduced to liberalize the economy. In the year 2008, the country had one of its highest Gross Domestic Product percentages in years, being reported as 87.14 billion US dollars by the World Bank.⁵ Although the country's economy seemed to be improving, it was mainly the few, mostly Kadhafi's family and other members of the power bloc that benefitted from the economic system. The lack of economic development led "many Libyans to question their country's inability to develop, being that it possesses an excellent geo-strategic location, has an abundance of natural resources and has a small population. All these frustrations were reflected in the Libyan uprising of 2011 (BENLI ALTUNISIK, 2014).

⁴ THE WORLD BANK. Libya: Literacy rate, adult total (% of people ages 15 and above). United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics, 2015. Available: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.ADT.LITR.ZS?locations=LY>. Accessed on: 23/10/2017

⁵ THE WORLD BANK. Libya: GDP. World Bank national accounts data, and OECD National Accounts data files, 2011. Available: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?locations=LY>. Accessed on: 23/10/2017.

It is entirely possible that the improvement in the life of the ordinary Libyan and their high level of education influenced in triggering the desire for regime change. Libya's economic situation was gradually increasing before the intervention, which means that there was a certain amount of economic prosperity. Nevertheless, there was a significant degree of inequality, because of the clientelistic policies adopted by the regime⁶. Those who initiated the uprising was the population of poorly paid public -sector jobs and subsidies, with the youth being particularly affected by widespread unemployment, while the narrow elite was the only one who benefited with the economic boom of the past decade. For these reasons, the first FIRC variable should be considered as present. However, this was not sufficient to successfully implant a democratic state.

3.2 Ethnic and Religious Homogeneity

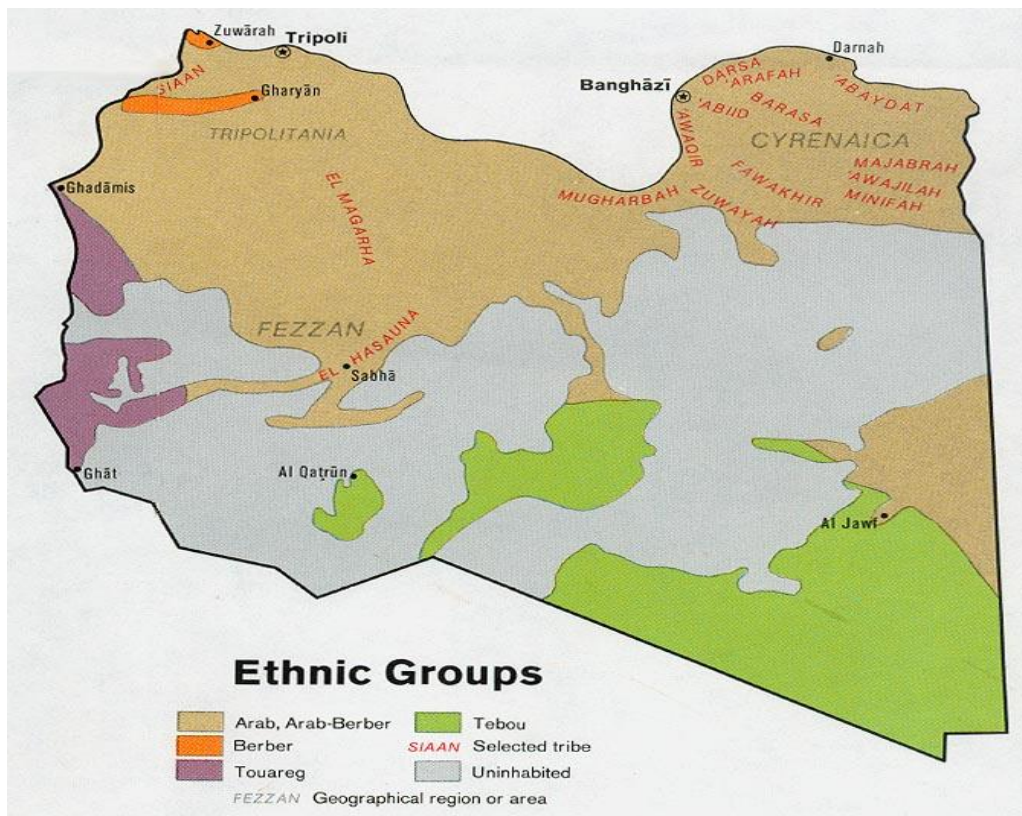
Another variable that is considered in FIRC literature for a possible successful transition to democracy is the country's level of ethnic and religious homogeneity. This section will analyze due variable in the target country.

The ethnic identities of today's Libya are the Arabs, the Amazigh/Berber, the Tubu, and Tawargha. More than 90% of Libyans identify themselves to be Arab or an ethnic mix of Arab and Berber, while the rest of the 10% belong to other ethnicities, the nomadic Tuareg and Tebu tribes in the south and the Berbers (*Amazighs*)⁷.

⁶ A GINI coefficient during the Kadhafi era in the 2000's for Libya is not available.

⁷ S. TARKOWSKI TEMPELHOF – M. OMAR, Stakeholders of Libya's February 17 Revolution, USAIP, Special Report 300, January 2012.

Figure 1 - Ethnic Groups in Libya



University of Texas Libraries, 2011⁸

The Arabs and Turks, whose culture and ethnicity remain still in today's Libya, invaded North Africa around the fifth and seventh centuries, resulting in a mixture of the Arab and Berber population. The majority of the Berber people converted to Islam and adopted the Arab language and culture (NAJEM, 2004). The major Arab centers of today's Libya include Tripoli, Benghazi, Misrata, Zawiya, Sabrata, Khums, al-Bayda, Darna, Tubruq and some settlements along the coast and in the interior.⁹

Regarding the nomadic Berber ethnicity, Libyans are predominantly Berbers which have inhabited the shores of North Africa since prehistoric times. During the region's history, they were also known as *Amazigh* and were loosely recognized by others as one ethnic community despite the fact that they were inhomogeneous in their dialects, religion, and lifestyle (NAJEM, 2004). The Berber/Amazigh who have not entirely adapted to Arab culture are mainly concentrated in the western part of the country, in the coastal areas of Zuwara and

⁸ LIBYA - ETHNIC GROUPS MAP (PCL Map Collection). University of Texas Libraries, 2011. Available at: http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/africa/libya_ethnic_1974.jpg. Accessed on: 06/11/2017.

⁹ Temehu, Libyan People, 2 June 2013.

the Nafusa/Western Mountains (REPORT LIBYA: MILITIAS, TRIBES AND ISLAMISTS, 2014).

The Tuareg are an Amazigh/Berber nomadic pastoralist group. They are essential actors as they influence the trading routes along Libya's borders. The Tubu are black indigenous tribes located in southern Libya. Their main population centers are found in Kufra and Sabha. The Tubu population stem from oil-rich provinces, as well as lucrative trafficking /transit routes from sub-Saharan Africa to the Mediterranean North. The Tawargha originate from black Africans who settled in the east of Misrata (REPORT LIBYA: MILITIAS, TRIBES AND ISLAMISTS, 2014).

The aforementioned Arab conquest and migration eventually had the outcome of spreading Islam in North Africa. According to the Cia World Factbook, the current population of Libya is in its majority Muslim, being that 96,6% is converted to Islam and mainly Sunni.

One could consider that Libya is almost ethnically homogenous because 90% of the population identify themselves Arabs/Berbers, and religiously homogenous with a Muslim population of 96%. However, many of the non-Arab ethnicities, even the Berbers who were not assimilated into the Arab culture, were marginalized during the Kadhafi regime. Not surprisingly so, these ethnicities took arms against Kadhafi during the 2011 uprising.

Although there are other ethnicities, who have been marginalized during the former regime, they solely make up about 10% of a population of 6 million. Therefore, Libya could be considered ethnically homogenous, and, due to its large and dominating number of Sunni Muslims, it is also considered a religiously homogenous society. For these reasons, Libya should be recognized as a positive for this FIRC variable. This variable is crucial in understanding that the social and political cleavages which led the country to civil war are of a different nature. Ethnic differences were not responsible for the current violence. However the dispute for power of tribes and militias, mainly Islamist radical, can be associated to what caused the civil war.

3.3 Previous Democratic Experience

The last variable considered in the FIRC's literature that should have existed before an intervention is if the target country has had any previous democratic experience before regime change. This section will briefly analyze Libya's political situation before the 2011 uprising. Looking back to the first chapter, which had a more descriptive objective of Libya's

history during the Kadhafi era, it is possible to notice that there was no democratic freedom in the North African country during 1969 and 2011.

The population of Libya did not only not have democratic experience during Kadhafi but has never had any experience with this type of regime amid its existence. With its strategic geographical location in the Mediterranean, it has always been a land sought by other nations and has seen countless invasions during its history. The region has been conquered by the Roman, Arab, and Ottoman empires before becoming an Italian colony in 1912. During World War II in 1942, the Allies ousted Italy from Libya and took control over the former colony. In the year 1951, with the United Kingdom's and France's assistance, Libya became independent under King Idris al-Sanussi, the first monarch who united the three regions of Fezzan, Cyrenaica, and Tripolitania (VANDEWALLE, 2012).

As it was mentioned in the previous chapter, the monarchy suffers a coup d'état in 1969 by the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC). The leader of the Council, Kadhafi, latter implanted the Jamahiriyya system, aspiring to create a stateless country where Libyans could govern themselves. However, the Jamahiriyya's pillars were structured in a way that prevented political mobilization.

After dismantling the Arab Socialist Union, a structure of local, provincial, and national assemblies, due to the attempted 1975 coup, the regime created the General People's Congress (GPC) as a formal platform for citizens to participate in politics. However, the GPC's competence and authority were limited and restricted to the revolutionaries' agenda. While the revolutionaries held the ultimate control functions in the Jamahiriyya, such as security and foreign affairs, being that the GPC, or the regular citizen, had no say in these areas. Therefore the GPC and its agenda were under the permanent control of the Revolutionary Committee, contradicting the directives of the Jamahiriyya that were meant to invigorate the revolution. This gap between formal and informal mechanisms of governing influenced in the depoliticization of Libyans, because they saw no prospects of making claims in a political system that they could not reform.

Not only was the political platform for the ordinary citizen restricted, but political opposition and political parties were considered treason and forbidden by the State. According to Kadhafi, Libyans in principle ruled themselves, therefore making any form of opposition impossible. Without, political parties and the inability of creating political opposition, there are no existent means to exercise democracy.

In the years before the 2011 uprising, Kadhafi promised to allow more political freedom as a measure to improve Libya's relations with the international community.

However, political rights and civil liberties in the country remained restricted, and political parties and freedom of assembly were still deemed illegal. According to Freedom House, in 2010 Libya's Freedom Rating, Civil Liberties and Political Rights were all three classified as 7s, being that 7 is considered the worst rating that a country could receive.¹⁰

Although Mu'ammar Kadhafi defended that Libya was governed by its people and aspired to mobilize its population politically, the country was managed according to the autocratic leader's agenda, and political participation was made impossible by the Jamahiriyya system. Thus, the Libyan population had no previous democratic experience before the NATO intervention. Regarding the FIRC variable, in Libya's case, it will be considered as a negative.

3.4 Obama's Leadership Intervention

In the year 2011, the Libyan population was influenced by other Arab countries and initiated an uprising against the four-decade autocratic regime. Colonel Kadhafi opted in violently repressing the civilians that protested against his rule, slaughtering his own people. The international community took notice of such brutality, and the UN Security Council adopted the Resolution 1973 to enforce a no-fly zone and protect civilians.

As was mentioned earlier, the Obama administration was initially hesitant in intervening in the North African country. However, the United States accepted to lead NATO forces to implement the UNSC resolution. Nevertheless, the international community did not support the idea that such an oppressive ruler should remain in power, and politicians desired to oust Kadhafi's rule.

Contradicting previous U.S. presidents, Obama firmly believed that the Libyan people had the right to choose their own leaders and build their own institutions. Thus, his administration attempted to meet with the rebels and assist them in taking down the Colonel. NATO forces intensified airstrikes and sought to overthrow the Libyan leader. In October 2011, the rebels were able to depose Kadhafi with the international assistance, eventually being free to create their own institutions and select their own leaders.

According to Downes' and Monten's (2013) classification for intervention types, the Libyan case would be classified as a leadership FIRC, since the intervener removed the state's primary leader, but did not enforce political institutions and selection procedures. The two

¹⁰ FREEDOM HOUSE. Libya: Freedom in the World, 2011. Available at: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2011/libya>. Accessed on: 30/11/2017.

authors defend that this type of intervention is unlikely to stimulate any democratic change.

Democratic institutions take time to be created and built. Foreign interveners who install a new leader without making an effort to build democratic institutions may cause the onus to fall on the leader they empower, who may be more interested in securing and extending his rule than in creating a democracy (DOWNES & MONTEN, 2013).

The leader that the Obama administration opted to empower was the National Transitional Council (NTC) which quickly emerged in February 2011, days after the uprising. The Council was constituted of elite tribal leaders from the Sanusi era and prominent individuals who were defected from the Kadhafi regime. The United States assisted in ousting Mu'ammarr Kadhafi but did not remain to directly build new institutions, deciding the strategy of "leading from behind," in which the U.S. indirectly pressured the NTC to create democratic institutions. The U.S also depended on European allies to aid the Libyan transition. However such partners showed little initiative for the task at hand (FRIEDMAN, 2014). Not surprisingly, the administration would later admit its regret for failing to plan for the consequences.

Although the Libyan people had the freedom to elect their own leaders and build their own institutions, the newly born government struggled in maintaining order and the rule of law in the country. The state's security apparatus was almost nonexistent and highly depended on aligned militias to keep control. The armed groups were an obstacle for the Libyan government to implement stable institutions.

The instability eventually led to the civil war, that will be more discussed in the following chapter. In Libya, Washington overthrew the regime but abstained from planing for a new government or construct effective local forces. In a 2016 interview with Fox News, Obama revealed that his "biggest mistake" was intervening in Libya and not executing enough direct follow-up to manage the country's transition into a democratic regime.

And that is our participation in the coalition that overthrew Kaddafi in Libya. I absolutely believed that it was the right thing to do. ... Had we not intervened, it's likely that Libya would be Syria. ... And so there would be more death, more disruption, more destruction. But what is also true is that I think we [and] our European partners underestimated the need to come in full force if you're going to do this. Then it's the day after Qaddafi is gone, when everybody is feeling good and everybody is holding up posters saying, 'Thank you, America.' At that moment, there has to be a much more aggressive effort to rebuild societies that didn't have any civic traditions. ... So that's a lesson that I now apply every time I ask the

question, 'Should we intervene, militarily? Do we have an answer [for] the day after?' (Obama's interview to the New York Times. Cited by T. Friedman).¹¹

The most recent action that Obama executed in Libya was in 2016 when the United States heeded to the request of the UN-backed Parliament in Libya - that will be more discussed in the following chapter - to assist in combating the Islamic State which took advantage of the instability caused by the 2014 civil war. The former U.S. administration opted to support the UN Parliament and fight terrorism with airstrike campaigns without implanting ground forces.

One can agree with Downes and Monten (2013) that the type of intervention chose for the Libyan case was unlikely to assist in transitioning Libya to a democratic regime. Although the U.S. admitted its failure to assist in transitioning Libya to democracy, the United States continues to support the UN-backed parliament that will be mentioned in the next chapter.

3.5 Conclusion

After the 2011 intervention in the Libyan state to take down Kadhafi and aid the Libyan population who fought against its autocratic leader, the world bore witness to a possible example of a successful democratic transition. Libyan's themselves were creating their institutions and constitution, and electing their leaders. Many believed that a civil war in the state would not occur and the country would likely insert itself as one of the few democracies in the region. However, such aspirations went downhill in 2014 when Libya began a Civil War and a violent political dispute for power.

According to the Downes' and Monten's (2013) FIRC literature, a country must have all of the preexistent variables - economic prosperity, ethnic and religious homogeneity, and previous democratic experience - to possibly transition to a democratic regime after a foreign intervention to impose regime change. Also, the leadership intervention is the type of regime change that is least likely to transition the target country into a democracy successfully.

¹¹ FRIEDMAN, Thomas L. Obama on the World. New York Times, Aug. 08, 2014. Available at: https://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/09/opinion/president-obama-thomas-l-friedman-iraq-and-world-affairs.html?ribbon-ad-idx=4&rref=world&_r=0&module=ArrowsNav&contentCollection=Opinion&action=swipe®ion=FixedRight&pgtype=article. Accessed on: 30/11/2017.

In Libya's case, it had a certain level of economic prosperity and a high potential to become a wealthy state. Also, before the military intervention, it seemed that its economy seemed to be improving. However, poor leadership and ineffective bureaucracies prevented the country from reaching its maximum capability, and patronage generated social inequality among the population. Regarding the level of ethnic and religious homogeneity, the nation possesses a high degree of homogeneity. As mentioned before, more than 90% of Libyans consider themselves to be Arab or an ethnic mix of Arab and Berber, and 96,6% are converted to Islam, mainly of the Sunni branch. Meanwhile, the last variable of previous democratic experience is non-existent in the Libyan case, and the leadership intervention was most likely to be unsuccessful.

Chart 02. FIRC Variables Regarding Libya

Economic Prosperity	Ethnic and Religious Homogeneity	Previous Democratic Experience	Type of Intervention
+	+	-	Leadership (-)

As shown above, on Chart 02, Libya would not be a successful case according to the FIRC literature. Libya had potential to become a developed economy and was increasing its prosperity after the multilateral sanctions were lifted, and Kadhafi opened the Libyan economy attaining a favorable amount of economic prosperity. The country's GDP was 87.14 billion US dollars in 2008¹² and the GDP per capita was 11,933.78 USD in 2010¹³, while only the elite benefited with the economic situation. However, the unemployment rate was 18.4% in 2010¹⁴, jobs with low wages were widespread, and the inflation rate was 14.16% in 2010¹⁵. Nevertheless, the first variable should be considered as a positive on Chart 02. The target country also presented a positive level of ethnic and religious homogeneity, yet a

¹² THE WORLD BANK. Libya: GDP. World Bank national accounts data, and OECD National Accounts data files, 2011. Available: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?locations=LY>. Accessed on: 23/10/2017.

¹³ TRADING ECONOMICS. Libya GDP per capita. Central Bank of Libya, 2015. Available at: <https://tradingeconomics.com/libya/gdp-per-capita>. Accessed on: 20/11/2017

¹⁴ TRADING ECONOMICS. Libya Unemployment Rate. International Labour Organization (ILO), 2016. Available at: <https://tradingeconomics.com/libya/unemployment-rate>. Accessed on: 20/11/2017

¹⁵ THE WORLD BANK. Libya: Inflation, GDP deflator (annual %). World Bank national accounts data, and OECD National Accounts data files. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.DEFL.KD.ZG?locations=LY&view=chart>. Accessed on: 20/11/2017.

negative level of previous democratic experience. In addition, the type of intervention, leadership FIRC, was unlikely to establish a favorable regime change.

According to FIRC literature, the foreign intervention to change the political regime should not proceed. Libya shows, in fact, “mixed” results. It is worth in evaluating more profoundly the impact of other variables in the Libyan case. After much analysis, it was noticed that the FIRC literature did not take into question the social-political characteristics of Libya’s tribal society and how it influenced the country’s history functioning as Kadhafi’s political instrument and, still today, has a significant impact on Libyan politics. Also, the FIRC literature missed the effect that armed groups or militias had in initiating the current political crisis. To better understand the tribe’s and militia’s impact on the Civil War, the following chapter will include those mentioned variables in addition to the FIRC’s.

4. LIBYAN TRIBES AND MILITIAS POST-KADHAFI

The internal variables of the Foreign-Imposed Regime Change model - economic prosperity, ethnic-religious homogeneity, and previous democratic experience -, along with the type of intervention, were not enough to explain Libya’s failure in transitioning to democracy after Kadhafi’s fall. The main issues that should also be considered to understand why the country is now dealing with civil war are the impacts that tribes and militias had on Libyan society during Kadhafi and the uprising.

The first chapter was to set a historical description of the Kadhafi era and tribal and militias roles during the period. As could be seen the tribal elites dated back to the monarchy were economically and politically marginalized, while Kadhafi, along with the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) retribalized the government with new tribal elites. Also, the tribes aligned to the regime had their own armed groups and strongholds, which served as the security apparatus of the dictatorship. Therefore, militias were present in the country before the uprising in 2011, although the numbers increased exponentially with the rebellion.

While having in mind, the importance of the tribes and militias during the Kadhafi regime, this chapter’s first two subsections will have as their focus period the 2011 uprising until the 2014 civil war. The spotlight of these two sections will be the impacts that the social-political characteristics of the tribal society and the militias have had in triggering the conflict and preventing a democratic transition.

The third section of this chapter will have as its focus period the 2014 civil war until the present year of 2017. This section will take into account how the tribes and militias prevented the consolidation of democratic institutions and a solution to the conflict.

4.1 Libyan Tribes After Kadhafi

Before analyzing the tribe's influence in the current political situation, it is necessary to understand how the tribes are constituted. Although tribalization has diminished due to urbanization and Kadhafi's attempts to weaken it, tribal ties continued part of Libyan identity. Today there exists about 140 main tribes in the country. However only 30 or 40 are politically and economically influential (VARVELLI, 2013). The notion of tribe (*qabila*) in Libya is associated with a sort of wide range of forms of social organizations. Tribal identities represent a collective sense of thinking and acting in Libya.

Libyan tribes are constituted by segmented sub-tribes, lineages, and extended families. The latter is the one that maintains the power relations between and within tribes. Tribal culture is significantly vital for Libyans; it contains ethics, norms and the adoption of values that make up concrete institutions and procedures, being that the most important of these is their traditional customary law, known as *urf* (VARVELLI, 2013). The *urf* played - and continues to play - an essential role in resolving conflict. Tribes and neighborhoods became central to both perpetrating and reducing revenge violence, and instructing and controlling militias.

During the Kadhafi regime, few tribes had political importance, while others were marginalized, mainly those that had political influence during the Sanussi monarchy in the Cyrenaica region. In the Senussi monarchy, tribal leaders held critical positions as consultants of the king, functioning as mediators between tribe and state such as *Sheikh* (tribal leader) and *Umdah* (village representative). They were essential in implementing policies at regional and local levels (VARVELLI, 2013).

Even though Kadhafi sought to weaken tribalization in Libya, he eventually used it as a political instrument to maintain his rule. Those tribes who did have leverage were Kadhafi's tribe, Qadhadhfa, and the Warfalla and Maqahra tribes. Those tribes who supported the regime were benefited with patronage and served as the security backbone of the government, preventing the official army to strengthen since it was seen as a threat to Kadhafi's rule.

To understand both the significance and the limits of tribal politics in post-Kadhafi Libya, it is important to analyze why tribal loyalties and rifts played such a prominent role, despite the fact that Libyan society had been transformed by the influx of oil revenues since the early 1960s and the urban population increased from 50 percent in 1970 to 77 percent of the total population in 2010. The most obvious reason is that Kadhafi, after having initially curbed the power of tribal notables by redrawing administrative units to transcend tribal fiefdoms, had increasingly used tribal divisions and loyalties as instruments of power. This had been evident since the mid-1970s in the establishment of alliances with major tribes through family marriages and appointments of senior officials, particularly in the security apparatus. (LACHER, 2011).

The National Transitional Council (NTC) was mostly made up of descendants of former monarchical elites of Cyrenaica, who were marginalized by the Kadhafi regime. The eastern region, not surprisingly so, was the first to initiate the uprising and the NTC quickly emerged in Benghazi. The NTC soon relocated to Tripoli, operating as the official national government. However it struggled to maintain legitimacy and control over territory, and armed groups followed their own agendas. The NTC eventually resigned in November 2011, and a new interim cabinet incorporated members of competing regional and tribal militias with the 2012 elections for the General National Congress (GNC), and was tasked with electing a committee that would elaborate a new constitution,

The GNC made it possible for tribal institutions to be represented in the new democratic framework, representing the interests of individual cities, tribes or families. Tribal/local-based belonging guided the votes. Tribal leaders once again had access to national interests and were no longer mediators of only the regional and local levels.

Although the new cabinet allowed more representation, some tribes were excluded due to their past allegiance to the Kadhafi regime and faced discrimination, violence, and displacement since the uprising. In May 2013, a political exclusion law was passed, which prevented individuals associated with Kadhafi to enter public life. Also, minorities protested for more cultural inclusion in the new constitution (FREEDOM HOUSE, 2014).

Meanwhile, there were extremist groups in the Gulf of Sirt and the northeast that tried to weaken tribal affiliations, emphasizing that there exists a common bond of Islam among Libyans, contradicting the fact that the tribal system in Libya assisted in preserving Islam in the country. Meanwhile, tribes also contributed to affirming a traditional but moderate vision of Islam, diverging from extremist views. Therefore, the tribal system is considered as the most reliable counterweight to radicalism. The elders of tribes – *wujaha* – attempted to

mitigate Islamist discourse by encouraging Islamists into local councils and integrating their militias into formal security sectors. Elders have also prevented their tribal youth from joining extremist groups and militias. The tribes' role as a counterweight to extremism has caused cleavages between radical militias and tribes on what should be the more legitimate law (*urf* vs. *sharia*). Radical powers tried to undermine the traditional role of the tribes, warning against nepotism and favoritism as anti-Islamic products of tribalism (VARVELLI, 2013).

In February 2014, Libya held national elections for a Constituent Assembly, which would draft a new constitution, and municipal council elections started in April. Also, the GNC was expected to transfer its power to an elected House of Representatives (HoR) in the middle of the year.

As was mentioned before, during this transition period many tribes created alliances between themselves. The northeast, Cyrenaica, the region that was politically marginalized by the former regime pledged tribal alliances to Kadhafi era exiled general, Khalifa Haftar. The general led an operation in May 2014, known as Operation Dignity, which sought to eradicate Islamists and tribes that were once affiliated to the former regime. Haftar argued that Islamists overran the GNC and that many politicians were linked to Islamist militias. Supporters included some of the Farjan tribes, Haftar's tribe, in the Gulf of Sirt, Maghariba, Ubaydat and al-Bar'asa. Some of the mentioned tribes also advocated for federalism like Maghariba, Hassi, and al-Awaqir (REPORT LIBYA: MILITIAS, TRIBES AND ISLAMISTS, 2014). As a response to the Operation, Islamists formed a coalition, known as Libyan Dawn, to confront Haftar's forces.

The prosecution occurred a month before the June 2014 elections for the new HoR parliament. Due to violent clashes, few showed up for the polls. Nevertheless, the results were unfavorable for the Islamists groups, and they soon contested the results. Misratan militias seized control of the airport in Tripoli, and the capital was invaded by militias who opposed the elections result. This led the parliament of the HoR to take refuge in the eastern city of Tobruk. Meanwhile, the Islamist militias remerged the GNC and later on renamed it the Government of National Salvation (GNS). In mid-2014, Libya found itself in a civil war in between two parliaments who deemed to be the rightful authority in the country.

4.2 Libyan Militias After Kadhafi

As was mentioned before, Colonel Kadhafi kept his national army weak to prevent any potential coups, opting to favor his tribal allegiances as the regime's security backbone. Besides, he encouraged the Libyan population to arm themselves, influenced by his ideals of a stateless Libya. Therefore, tribes and cities already possessed experience and armed fighters in the context previous to the uprising of 2011. Not only did Kadhafi loyalists have their militaries, but also other prominent tribes and cities, such as Misrata and Benghazi, bore their own armed and experienced personnel. Many had fighting experience even before the Kadhafi regime, in disputes to gain colonial freedom and other historical wars.

Nevertheless, the 2011 uprising was initiated by unorganized youths who protested against the arrest of a Libyan lawyer. During the revolt, many political, military and tribal leaders created means to protect their families and cities against the repressive acts of the regime to disrupt the rebels. These leaders were also responsible for creating the National Transitional Council (NTC) to take down the Kadhafi regime. Local councils and armed militia groups began to arise throughout the country to contest the military government on a city-by-city basis. These networks mainly emerged from pre-existing groups within the Libyan society, based on locality, regionalism, ideology, and tribe (LACHER, 2014). Over the course of the uprising, small units evolved into military brigades and councils to protect the population and cities against the regime.

Although the National Transitional Council (NTC) was created in the first phase of the rebellion and was able to achieve international recognition, the Council was unsuccessful in establishing control over the territory. With U.S. lead NATO foreign assistance, rebels were able to arm themselves, and while Kadhafi's security sectors collapsed, many rebels had access to the former government's weapon stocks. According to Crisis Group, the number of armed militia groups after the Kadhafi's regime fall was calculated to be between 100 to 300¹⁶.

Due to the NTC's inability to execute territorial control over the country, the local militias took up the task and established their authority upon their regions or cities of origin, as an informal option to implement order until the creation of new institutions and a new constitution. However, the militias and armed groups became stronger and more influential after the fall of the former regime. These paramilitaries acted upon their interests and

¹⁶ Crisis Group, Holding Libya Together; Security Challenges after Qadhafi, 14 December 2011.

agendas, establishing power bases and aligning with political groups, influential elites, and groups engaged in criminal and extremist violence.

Libya was unable to create formal security institutions to prevent and control the violence and extremism throughout the country. Armed groups and militias repeatedly threatened and used force to influence political processes, causing obstacles for governments' efforts to bring about stability.

Each region varied its military dynamic after the uprising. In the areas where the paramilitaries reigned, the brigades assumed security and civilian responsibility under the authority of their local military councils. Consequently, the majority of the militias are geographically rooted, associated with specific neighborhoods, towns and cities rather than joined by ideology, tribal membership or ethnicity. In the beginning, they did not possess a clear political agenda beyond securing territorial control (LACHER, 2014).

The local rebel structures that emerged in Tripolitania (the north-western region) were mainly autonomous, self-armed and self-trained. Few of these Tripolitanian rebels had a military background, while most were civilians (LACHER, 2014). The situation in Tripoli was the most severe. There, the combination of efforts of residents and various militias from across the country poured into the capital intent on taking down the regime. This action caused the emergence of a series of parallel, at times uncoordinated chains of command.

Meanwhile, the militias of the region of Fezzan had their reasons to justify their legitimacy. They were the most marginalized, and they also were the ones who did the most to free the capital in 2011. The southwestern region was initially a Kadhafi stronghold, thus giving way for disputes between revolutionaries and tribes that were aligned to the regime. Civilian and military structures emerged in cities that had sided with the former government, and those who abstained in the rebellion sought to protect their people and cities (LACHER, 2014). The Fezzan governorate joined the uprising at a later stage. Ethnic and tribal identity often determined the councils that aroused since then. The region experienced tense ongoing fighting after the fall of the regime, mainly between ethnic tribes of Arabs and Tubus¹⁷, a tribe marginalized by the Kadhafi regime, who fought against the dictator. Ethnic tribes competed with Arab tribes for the abundant resources in the region, including its trade routes. The borders and natural resources (water and oil) of southern Libya make it strategically vital (REPORT LIBYA: MILITIAS, TRIBES AND ISLAMISTS, 2014).

¹⁷ As was mentioned in the second chapter, the Tubus are an ethnic minority of indigenous black African nomads ranging through the eastern Sahara, residing in the areas of Kufra and Sabha.

In Cyrenaica (in the east), where the monarchy elites originated, the situation was different. The region was known for being against the regime, and some cities, such as Benghazi, have been traditional anti-regime bases and provided army defectors a secure area to operate. The eastern rebellion was built on a strong core of experienced regime opponents and commanders who found a safe haven for renegade. Because region did not come under any direct military threat, it did not experience confrontations between individuals and tribes as was the case in the western part of the country (REPORT LIBYA: MILITIAS, TRIBES AND ISLAMISTS, 2014). Nevertheless, tensions surged between the Islamist camp, which had a stronghold in Benghazi and Darna, and the armed forces and security sectors. Besides, local and regional interests in the east have had an impact in mobilizing political demands for federalism and regional autonomy (LACHER, 2014).

Another type of armed group found in Libya, which has its roots not in city nor tribe, but in ideology, are the Islamist militias. First of all, one must be able to define an Islamist, which is an adherent of an ideological movement that desires Islam to dictate all aspects of society; from economy, politics and culture, to relationships and family, whereby society is regulated through sharia. Islamism seeks to reconcile Islam with modernization of society and technological innovation while resisting the Western cultural and political influence (REPORT LIBYA: MILITIAS, TRIBES AND ISLAMISTS, 2014). Those adherents to such ideology aim to establish an Islamic state which legislation is based on religious law. However, there exist different codifications of Islam even among Islamists.

Islam was inserted into modern Libyan political life by the Sanussi order in the early 1800s. Muhammad ibn Ali al-Sanussi was a cleric who sought to regenerate Muslim identity and spirituality and created the al-Sanussi order, that brought together Sufi Islamic tradition and religious reform based on the life of the Prophet Muhammad.

The Sanussi order was prominent in the Libyan struggle against colonialism. With the country's independence in 1951, Muhammad Idris, who belonged to the Sanussi family, was crowned king of Libya. The Sanussi order had significant influence in eastern Cyrenaica where the movement had its roots and stronghold. The monarch also offered refuge to members of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood who fled from the Nasser regime.

However, when Kadhafi came to power in 1969, he viewed the order as a threat and disbanded the Muslim Brotherhood. He sought, therefore, to marginalize and repress Sanussi influences in the eastern province throughout his regime. Most of the Brotherhood lived in exile and those that remained operated underground. Many took advantage of Kadhafi's policy to send students abroad to reconnect with the organization's members who were exiled

from the country. Yet, Kadhafi also used Islam as an instrument to maintain control and order, he implemented sharia law into his regime and utilized it as a mechanism to eliminate potential opposition.

As it was mentioned in Chapter 01, radical jihadi cells were first created in the 1970s and were ignited by the call for Jihad in Afghanistan against the Soviet forces. The veterans for Jihad against the USSR later created many groups in opposition to Kaddafi's injustices, the largest of which was the former Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG). Not surprisingly, this opposition triggered massive repression from the government. In the late 1990s, the government initiated negotiations with the Islamists for reconciliation and to cease violence. As a result, many were released in the early 2000s. Several former LIFG figures played critical roles in the 2011 uprising and later on participated in the country's democratic transition. They formed political parties, ran in elections, and served as prominent political positions in government. However, the younger generations of jihadists did not agree with these former LIFG members participating in the transition. The younger generation possessed more radical ideologies and rejected democracy as un-Islamic (FITZGERALD & TOALDO, 2016).

The Islamists were not the ones who initiated the uprising, yet they played an essential role in the conflict. The majority of the militias that fought in the rebellion had an Islamist, and even a Jihadi, background. Nevertheless, the Brotherhood movements in Libya were not able to build institutional support in the country. They did not connect with Libyan society in the same way as in other Arab Spring countries, such as Tunisia and Egypt. They were also not able to build efficient organizational structures or institutions. However, these Islamist groups managed to succeed in Libya's political scene, they are the only political force with a national agenda, in contrast with the rest of the local actors dominating the political landscape. Another contributing element is the Islamist goal to eradicate remnants of the previous regime. Islamist forces possessed the ability to take advantage of religious symbolism and rhetoric in Libya's conservative society, and their high revolutionary credentials have provided them with an edge over other political forces.

In 2012, former revolutionary fighters of the uprising against the former regime desired to immediately impose sharia law, thus creating Ansar al-Sharia in Benghazi, but whose affiliates also emerged in towns such as Derna, Sirte, and Ajdabiya. Ansar al-Sharia was mainly constituted of Libya's younger generation of jihadists, who were more radical and rejected democracy. They were also associated with the September 2012 attacks on the US diplomatic mission in Benghazi. The UN classified Ansar al-Sharia on its al-Qaeda

sanctions list in 2014. The last two groups were also present in Libya, both in the south and central/eastern regions (FITZGERALD & TOALDO, 2016).

Although Ansar al-Sharia is at its core an armed group with jihadist perspectives, they adopted a strategy between 2012 and 2014 which focused on preaching and humanitarian aid to build widespread support and drive recruitment. Consequently, it became the largest jihadist organization in Libya, with its principal branch being stationed in Benghazi (FITZGERALD & TOALDO, 2016).

With the 2012 election for the representatives within the General National Congress (GNC), militias gradually gained strength, due to the support that they had of politicians of the GNC and other prominent political forces. Libya's main political parties at the time did not have their armed groups, such as the Justice and Construction Party (the political wing of the Muslim Brotherhood), the National Force Alliance, and the Loyalty to the Martyrs' Blood bloc (Kutlat al-Wafa li-Damm al-Shuhada). Thus, they affiliated themselves with militias based on kin, local, tribe, as well as the religious and ideological cleavages that sustain them (REPORT LIBYA: MILITIAS, TRIBES AND ISLAMISTS, 2014).

What binds the armed groups with political actors could be related to patronage and exclusions, similar to Kadhafi's political tactics in the old regime. Libyan politicians drew support from militias to push forward their agendas and militias secured supporters in the government or ministries to consolidate their power. Many militias and politicians settled scores and marginalized and isolated the remnants of the Kadhafi era. An example of such behavior was seen when the Justice and Construction Party and the Martyr's bloc depended upon militia forces to push the Political Isolation Law into effect in May 2013, which bans officials from the Kadhafi era from government employment (REPORT LIBYA: MILITIAS, TRIBES AND ISLAMISTS, 2014).

As was mentioned before and can be seen, the growing influence and strength of armed groups and their councils brought enormous challenges to the security situation, as the government made efforts to contain them. There were programs set to Disarm, Disband and Rehabilitate militias (DDR), which focused on integrating these units within state institutions.

Integration offered the prospect of upholding the legitimacy of the fighters by infusing them within the police and army, thereby bringing the armed groups under government control, and strengthening the weakened security sector. In theory, the idea was sound, offering salaries, purposeful engagement, and containment. The state, however, failed to establish clear guidance for the integration. This disarrayed

process failed to demobilize armed groups, and instead produced a multitude of security sectors whereby whole units were incorporated within the ministries of defense and interior respectively (REPORT LIBYA: MILITIAS, TRIBES AND ISLAMISTS, 2014).

The majority of the armed groups were incorporated into two coalitions, the Libya Shield Force (LSF) and the Supreme Security Committees (SSC). They were established as transitional security forces, and under the authority of the Ministry of Defense's Chief of Staff and the Ministry of Interior. Theoretically, these groups were meant to supplement the regular army and police. Unfortunately, the militias incorporated in the security sectors acted on their terms, pursuing their agendas that were ideological and political.

The increasing numbers and influence of militias in Libya not only cost the country its security but also its economy. Many armed groups took control of oil export terminals in an attempt to sell oil. One of the most known militias who acted in such way was Jathran's Petroleum Facilities Guard (PFG), which controlled the main terminals in eastern Libya in 2013. This episode extended for almost one year and cost Libya billions in lost revenues (FITZGERALD & TOALDO, 2016).

During the transition period, in which the GNC sought to implement its rule along with new institutions, there were many disputes among militias. One of the most prominent armed factions that still has considerable influence in Libya is the Libyan National Army (LNA), led by General Khalifa Haftar. The LNA was originated in February 2014, when Haftar called for the suspension of the government due to the significant influence that Islamist had in the GNC, which the authorities quickly rejected. In May 2014, his militias launched an attack against Islamists in Benghazi, known as Operation Dignity (*Amaliyyat al-Karama*), after gathering support from army and air force units. Haftar also gained support from Benghazi militia forces: such as the Sa'iqa Brigade and the Cyrenaica Defence Force. In the south Haftar gained support from ethnic minorities, such as the Tubu and Tuareg, as well as armed members from the Baraghitha tribe. From the west, Haftar was also able to align with Zintan-based militias, such as Qa'qa', Madani and Sawa'iq (REPORT LIBYA: MILITIAS, TRIBES AND ISLAMISTS, 2014).

Operation Dignity sought to eradicate Islamist militias. Haftar's offensive also prompted the removal of the Islamist-dominated Libyan parliament in the GNC through new elections which took place in June 2014. Haftar's actions can be associated with the East's disdain of the GNC's collusion with Islamist armed groups.

In the following month, as a response to Operation Dignity, the coalition known as Libya Dawn was formed. It was made up of both Islamist and non-Islamist militias, factions from Tripoli and Misrata, and other places in western Libya, including from the *Amazigh* minority. The coalition contested the June elections for the new House of Representatives (HoR) parliament, and the militias from the city of Zintan were soon driven out of Tripoli by Misratan militias and, consequently, aligned with Haftar (FITZGERALD & TOALDO, 2016). In addition, Ansar al-Sharia's Benghazi unit merged with other militias to form the Benghazi Revolutionary Shura Council (BRSC) in summer 2014 after Operation Dignity to confront the LNA's attacks.

The clashes between the two sides further contributed to polarizing the political scene. The elected HoR had its legitimacy contested by the Islamists, and the government relocated itself to Tubruq after Misratan militias seized Tripoli. Subsequently, those in control of the capital reinstalled the former GNC, which is known as the National Salvation Government (NSG). This led to Libya being split into two rival parliaments, which each claim to be the official authority in the country, thus initiating civil war.

4.3 The Libyan Civil War

After the summer of 2014, when the civil war initiated, political power was split between two rival governments. The former Government of National Congress (GNC) was resurrected by the Islamist militias that did not agree with the output of the June 2014 elections, and continued its reign in Tripoli and altered its name to the Government of National Salvation (GNS). Consequently, the elected House of Representatives (HoR), which possess a more secular approach, fled to Tobruk and was recognized by the international community as the official authority of Libya.

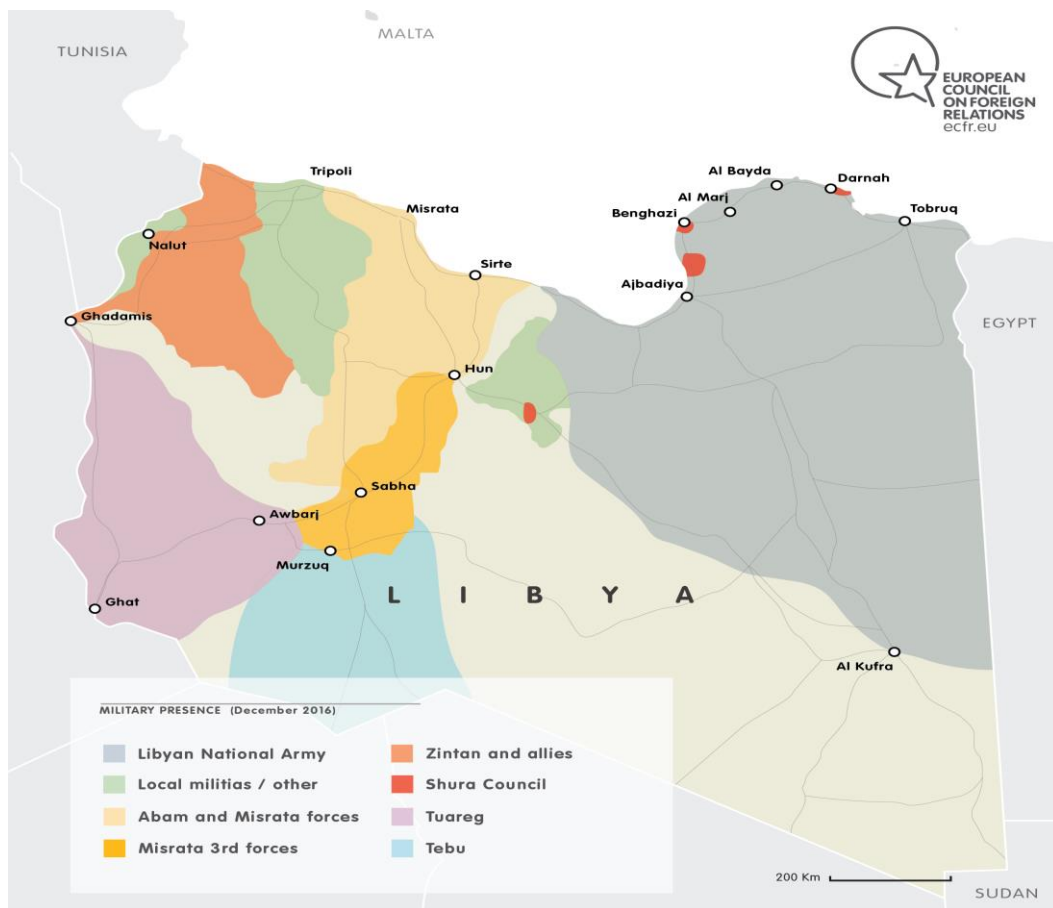
In December 2015, the Presidential Council, the UN-backed government, was borne out of the Libyan Political Agreement (LPA). It was created to act as the head of state and supreme commander of the Libyan armed forces. Its base is in Tripoli since March 2016, and the intention was for the PC to preside over the Government of National Accord (GNA) and should be endorsed by the HoR, according to the agreement (FITZGERALD & TOALDO, 2016).

The GNS is now headed by Prime Minister Khalifa Ghwell and lost control over relevant institutions during the civil war. The majority of the members of the GNS have been moved across to the State Council, one of the consultative bodies created under the LPA.

However, the ones that have caused more difficulty in establishing the PC as the primary and sole authority in Libya are the politicians based in Tobruk and al-Bayda, who agreed to work under the LPA. One of the main obstacles for the unity government is the HoR's concerns about GNS politicians' links to Islamist militias, while the GNS allies demand the exclusion of Libyan Army General Khalifa Haftar from the new government (COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS, 2017).

The HoR was supposed to become the legitimate legislative authority under the Agreement, but it has failed to pass a valid constitutional amendment to establish itself as an authoritative institution (FITZGERALD & TOALDO, 2016). The HoR instead opted to endorse the rival government of Abdullah al-Thinni which operates from the eastern Libyan city of al-Bayda. Both cities of Tobruk and al-Bayda controlled by the Egypt-aligned, anti-Islamist general Khalifa Haftar, who led 2014's Operation Dignity and is still in command of the Libyan National Army (LNA). The HoR has continuously rejected the government proposed by the PC.

Figure 2 - Military Presence in Libya



European Council on Foreign Relations, 2016.¹⁸

With the country divided into three parliaments, the thousands of active militias in Libya have aligned themselves to these parliaments, even though the military councils act upon their own interests and agenda. The country is split between Islamist, secularists and those who are in favor of the UN-backed parliament, which intends to unify the fractured nation.

Thanks to the country's security instability and failure to establish law and order, the Islamic State (IS) encountered a safe haven to settle its presence in the coastal city of Sirte in February 2015 (COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS, 2017). Although local armed groups, along with U.S. airstrikes - a campaign requested by the UN-backed parliament-, mostly removed IS fighters from the city by the end of 2016, the jihadists still maintain their presence in other areas of Libya, including around Benghazi and Derna.

¹⁸ A QUICK GUIDE TO LIBYA'S MAIN PLAYERS. European Council on Foreign Relations, Dec. 2016. Available at: http://www.ecfr.eu/mena/mapping_libya_conflict. Accessed on: 06/11/2017.

The General Haftar and his forces have both strengthened their hold on their stronghold in eastern Libya and are advancing westward since May 2017. After taking control over the central oil ports in September 2016, the LNA was victorious in Benghazi and took over the oil infrastructure that was once controlled by the Benghazi Brigade. This victory ended a three-year campaign to control the city and dislodged rival Islamist militias from vital military bases in the central and southwestern parts of the country. "Haftar's ability to navigate Libyan tribal dynamics enabled him to take control of most of Libya's oil infrastructure. He aims to seize Derna city to complete his control over eastern Libya" (ESTELLE & PARK, 2017). Haftar's intolerance of Islamists permits conditions that restrict political options, causing them to seek support of violent Islamist groups.

The LNA and other groups are also competing for control of the once Islamic State overrun Sirte and the capital, Tripoli. Militias aligned with the GNA recently uprooted rivals from Tripoli, yet conflict persists on the city's outskirts. The IS militants are also mobilizing outside the city, to possibly prepare to take back their former stronghold (ESTELLE & PARK, 2017).

Because of Libya's proximity to Europe, it has been used as a passageway for Libyan refugees and refugees from other countries. In 2015, half a million people had sailed by boat from Libya, while an estimated 76,000 refugees and migrants made the journey to Europe from Libya (COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS, 2017). Also, the proximity has benefited jihadist groups, such as Ansar al-Sharia and IS to launch attack and coordinate broader regional violence.

Fighting continues to fracture Libya, as the various rebel and militia groups have divided the country among political and tribal lines. The "to be" unity government has not been able to bring together the warring factions and reestablish stability in Libya. The most prominent individual of the current crisis, Haftar, defends his military campaign as a battle against Islamist "terrorists," increasing the rivalries between tribal and Islamist coalitions. The war has generated human rights violations on both sides and a humanitarian crisis. It has also cost the country's oil infrastructure to deteriorate, which is the economic life-blood of Libya.

4.4 Conclusion

The tribes and militias weight in causing the civil war are too significant to ignore in understanding why a successful democratic transition did not occur. Basing the reasons for

why a democratic change was not successful on the FIRC variables is not sufficient to comprehend the Libyan case. Ethnic and religious disparities did not trigger conflict, but the political and economic influence that tribes regained and militias obtained could be seen as one of the main reasons for triggering the war.

Tribes that were once prominent in colonial times and during the monarchy, which were later on marginalized in the Kadhafi era, regained their political influence, thus initiating the uprising in 2011. Meanwhile, armed groups were created by tribe leaders to protect their own against the regime's repressive actions towards its people. Although certain cities and tribes already possessed their armed groups due to Kadhafi's hesitation towards a strong national army, most of the militias present during the 2011-2014 transition period emerged with the uprising against the military regime. The ruin of the government's strongholds and NATO assistance provided weapons and training, which later on assisted in strengthening these groups.

Due to the fragmentation of former state institutions, these tribes and militias took upon themselves the responsibility to execute institutional functions, such as security and order. Both actors became fundamental in the creation of political parties in the former NTC and GNC, controlling their political interests through the influence they possessed in the newly made government institutions.

Although elections occurred twice during the transition, the militias and tribes had leverage over the results, influencing votes. The Islamist contested the summer elections of 2014 because of their significant loss. Their armed groups seized the capital, and the civil war began.

The events that have taken place after the 2014 civil war only enhances the militias and tribes significance in preventing regime change. With the division of two parliaments, Islamist and Secularist, disputes for economic and political power increased and caused a significant humanitarian crisis in the country. The conflict has also weakened the already fragile state institutions and gave way to foreign jihadist factions, such as IS, to enter and establish themselves in the territory.

The significant weight that the tribes and militias had during this period must be taken into consideration. These two actors have inserted themselves into all of the state institutions that were created after Kadhafi's demise. The history and role of such heavy-weight actors should have been evaluated when predicting Libya's capability in regime change.

5. CONCLUSION

Today Libya finds itself in a dire situation. The country is separated into three authorities: the Presidential Council (PC); the Government of National Salvation (GNS); and the House of Representatives. After the summer of 2014, when the civil war initiated, political power was split between two rival governments. The former Government of National Congress (GNC) located in Tripoli, which was resurrected by the Islamist militias and altered its name to the Government of National Salvation. Consequently, the elected House of Representatives fled to Tobruk and was recognized by the international community as the official authority of Libya.

The United Nations sought to unify the two parliaments with the Libyan Political Agreement (LPA), which would be endorsed by the PC. It was created to act as the head of state and supreme commander of the Libyan armed forces. However, the PC has confronted much difficulty in establishing its authority due to politicians who disagree to share their power with their respective rivals.

The main actors who initiated and persist in the conflict are the same that were marginalized by the Kadhafi regime. After years of repression from the former government, Islamist groups and tribes from the region of Cyrenaica actively participated in taking down the oppressive leader and establishing a new Libya in which they would be in control. However, due to divergences in how the country should proceed and the desire for political power by any means, the nation found itself in civil war after the second election in Libyan history.

According to Foreign-Imposed Regime Change, Libya was not able to implement a successful democracy due to the fact it did not possess all three FIRC internal variables - economic prosperity, ethnic-religious homogeneity, and previous democratic experience. Also, the leadership type of intervention meant that the operation was doomed from the start. However, these variables are not sufficient to comprehend the Libyan case.

The country was increasing its economy after the liberalization in the 2000s, and it had potential to prosper due to its natural resources and geostrategic location, although it experienced rough times during the sanction period. The North African nation also possessed a high level of ethnic and religious homogeneity, being that 90% of Libyans consider themselves to be Arab-Berber and 96% Sunni Muslims. Nevertheless, the people of Libya never had prior democratic experience, and leadership intervention without nation-building by the intervener was a poor choice.

Meanwhile, these variables were not enough to understand the Libyan case. Before Kadhafi, the elite tribes of Cyrenaica had political and economic leverage and were on the front lines for colonial freedom. When the Revolutionary Command Council came into power, with the Colonel as the leader, they sought to retribalize the country with other tribal elites, mainly from the region of Tripolitania. Also, Kadhafi viewed a future of a stateless Libya in which people governed themselves and armed themselves through the state system of the Jamahiriyya. To be able to maintain his power, the ruler purposely weakened the military and kept certain tribes as his security apparatus through patronage. Thus, tribes were considered political instruments to assist in maintaining Kadhafi's authority in the country.

In 2011, not surprisingly so, the uprising emerged in the region of Cyrenaica and later on Islamist groups also entered into the rebellion. To assist in taking down the authoritarian leader, the international community provided weapons, training, and airstrikes from above. However, there was little discretion in whom the NATO forces should support, except if the group was against Kadhafi. In addition to attaining arms from the international community, the rebels also obtained weapons and tanks when the national security sectors and strongholds were demolished.

With the uprising, militias emerged at an alarming rate, and today there exists thousands of armed groups who pledge allegiance to any of the three existent parliaments that are convenient to the militias agenda or interests. There are even some that support neither powers and behave according to their ideals. In summary, the armed groups are responsible for causing violence and chaos and disrupting the rule of law.

The cause of the 2014 civil war and the reason why it has persisted until today, although the UN has sought to find a peaceful solution, can be associated with the desire for political power of groups that were once oppressed by the Kadhafi regime. Being that these actors do not desire to compromise their power with those they consider tribal, regional and ideological rivals.

Therefore, neither the military interveners nor the FIRC literature did not take into consideration the social-political characteristics and history of Libyan society. The poorly thought out interference and lack of understanding of Libya's complexity in the societal level cost the lives of many and brought more conflict and disorder to the region. Providing an opportunity for foreign extremist groups to flourish and establish safe havens in the territory, and profoundly fracturing the country. The prospects for a unifying government to democratize and stabilize Libya are today quite bleak.

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