



## **The Challenges of Rebuilding a Strong State in Libya: Confessionalism and Consociationalism**

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### **Abstract**

**Objective:** Eight years after Gaddafi's fall in 2011, Libya is still in deep internal disputes and does not have an integrated government and army to enforce national sovereignty. In addition to tribal affiliations and the region allegiances that provide fuel for the civil war, regional and global powers have also get involved in a proxy war, which in turn may also even lead to a global crisis by expanding its scope. In this context, the most important issue is the absence of a strong coherent government so question arises, given this social and political background, what are the challenges of rebuilding a strong government based on an appropriate constitutional model in Libya?

**Methods:** This paper based on qualitative-descriptive framework aims to answer the challenges of state-building in Libya.

**Findings:** Libya is a heterogeneous territory characterized by distances, deserts and unequal distribution of resources, as well as tribal fractions. In some ways, the Libyan civil war is the result of Gaddafi's policies in undermining the institutions of the state, the army and the security apparatus. Also, lack of the proper social reforms and reliance on tribal allegiances have played a major role in continuing its tribal structure, now manifested in tribal, regional and political conflicts. Nevertheless, irredentism or separatism are not seen in Libya. Therefore, the prospect of peace and reconciliation improves.

**Conclusion:** Consociationalism can provide a platform for reaching an agreement between the Libyan major political and regional actors. Consociationalism and Confessionalism are two patterns for conflict resolving in the ethnically fragmented communities. The article argues while Consociationalism can be an imperative theoretical basis for designing the new Libyan constitution, there is no need to resorting political confessionalism that has not a positive record in other Middle Eastern countries.

**Keywords:** Libya, State Failure, Civil War, Proxy War, Consociationalism, Confessionalism.

## 1. Introduction

Libya is a large country with a relatively small population; most of its population is concentrated very narrowly along its Mediterranean coast. The population density is about 50 peoples per km<sup>2</sup> in the two northern regions of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, but in other parts of the country it is reduced to one person per km<sup>2</sup>. About 88% of the population is urban, mostly concentrated in the three largest cities, Tripoli, Benghazi and Misrata. Ninety percent of Libya's population is Arab-Muslim berberian origin who has embraced Arabic culture and language, genuine berberians who preserve berberic culture and language make up their minority. There are about 140 clans in Libya, mostly belonging to various ethnic groups of the Berber with majority of Muslim Arab tribes many also tracing their ancestry to the Banu Sulaym tribe, beside a minority of Turkish and purely Berber ethnicities (worldpopulationreview.com, Libya).

Libya as a multicultural and multi-ethnic territory represents a challenge for the observation of popular culture; its ethnic group relations as heterogeneous and multicultural offer it as one of the most complex case-study.

Tribe has been Libya's main and enduring social tie. The extended and patriarchal family has demonstrated remarkable resiliency as a unit of social organization. In fact, there is still much truth to the often repeated observation that in Libya the tribe, not the civic, urban or individual is the basic social unit. One's status and power, in other words, are still partly ascribed by primordial loyalties. So surely liban society has predominantly a tribal culture. Society starts with the kinship and tribe and is fashioned after it. Even Qaddafi's socialist rule could not change tribal pattern. Since blood ties are cordial and subjugating, the sovereignty of the tribe outreaches all other loyalties, and in hard times especially the tribe pledges one's loyalty and subordination. Not only the tribe has been an agency of political socialization and patronage, it's been a means for perpetuating leadership (Cole and Mangan, 2016).

Modernization theorists like Myrdal and Lerner consider the present-day Libya a traditional society that began to modernize under Italian, a modern European state, colonialism. Based on this interpretation, traditional tribal and religious values gradually will fade and be replaced by modern, Western, rational civil values. But in fact under the postcolonial governments, Libyan society has been suffering from a rental economy, family and military rule, and dominance of persona cult (Ahmida, 2005: 69). Civil society organizations although formally existed during Gaddafi's rule only after his fall became relevant and active nevertheless because of political splits, security vacuum, random circulation of weapons, and tribalism and/or identity prejudices, CSOs<sup>1</sup> could not assert to have transformed the Libyan prospects.

Ethnic clashes have always been a social issue. The issue of belonging to a people, a smaller geographical unit, such as a tribe clan or a neighborhood, is an omnipresent fact in the human thoughts towards his environment

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1 - CSOs include all non-market and non- state organizations

((Mojtahedzadeh, 2002: 57-8). In a society where the organization, values and social worldview are based on traditional tribal structures, there are many obstacles to the creation of a modern nation-state because, as we will see, there are virtually no unifying institutions or integrative social costumes on the national level (U.S. Library of Congress). The sociology of Libya suggests that, at least in the near future, no stable democratic government is in the offing.

Eight years after disposing and killing Gaddafi in the revolution, Libya has gone full circle from dictatorship through revolution, democracy, chaos and back to a new kind of autocracy. Except this time there is not one dictator but dozens, in the form of the very militias who defeated him (the Guardian, 2018). Since 2017, the large Tripolitanian militias have turned into criminal networks and have shadowed over politics, large businesses, and government offices. They have penetrated the bureaucracy and are increasingly able to coordinate their activities in various state institutions. The government is virtually unable to exercise sovereignty against the influence of such groups. State control over the territory is really feeble. Some militias are even stronger than the Army itself (Lacher & al-Idrissi, 2018: 3).

Since Gaddafi's fall no political system has succeeded to maintain a balance of power among its heterogeneous, confessional, ethnic, kinship and communal groups to the extent that the Libyan crisis has got increasingly a global character. Particularly in 2014, when ISIL succeeded in seizing some parts of the country, and different foreign players as proxies represented in the country's civil war, the Libyan issue has imposed itself as an influential issue on international security.

This paper aims to answer the questions of the real obstacles to state building in Libya, the potential unification of a heterogeneous territory characterized by distance, deserts and unequal distribution of resources, as well as tribal fractions in the political arena and in social relations also indicators of Gaddafi's legacy. These questions will try to be answered through the construction of a bibliographic and qualitative method.

Considering the emergence and consolidation of various power blocks in Libya's internal campaign, there are numerous issues regarding the way the draft constitution is raised including (1) which actors nominate the constitutional drafting committee (2) Which mechanism (national, international or combination of the two) determines the candidates (3) Which agenda or operational framework can be used by the constitution drafters to realize the national unity process? (4) Which system of governance can be used to solder various tribal, ethnic, political discrepancies in the Libyan arena?

This article suggests that since Libya's population is religiously, linguistically and ethnically mostly homogeneous, and generally urban and coastal, state-rebuilding and creating the stabilization there somewhat less daunting than in places such as Lebanon, Iraq, Syria, Yemen. Also political confessionalism as a provision will not be needed in possible constitution of Libya as enshrined in the Lebanese and Iraqi constitutions.

## 2. Analytical framework

Multicultural ethnicity is the opposite of ethnic assimilation, a process by which members of an ethnic minority group lose cultural characteristics that distinguish them from the dominant cultural group or take on the cultural characteristics of another group. My framework provides a new way to think about state-building in post-revolutionary Libya by nesting several concepts within the state-making process: fragmented society, state failure, confessionalism and cosociationalism. So a modified constitution on this basis could establish permanent arrangements and nationally coordinated elections.

### 2.1. Failure State

Some experts have assessed Libya as the failed state, which, due to the lack of established state institutions, even during the Gaddafi era, failed to achieve a reasonable degree of integration and democracy, instead it sank into a severe civilian warfare.

How the state is defined is central to understand state failure so any definition of state failure needs in the first place an understanding of the varying state description. The classic definition, first initiated by Machiavelli, underlines the employment force alone, as the basic element of a state. Max Weber in his definition of statehood expanded this idea: 'a state [is] a human community that claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory' even when 'the right to used physical force is ascribed to other institutions or to individuals only to the extent to which the state permits it'. The idea of 'social contract', which focuses on the relationship between the state and citizen expresses one foundation else. Perhaps more important, of modern states.

Based upon the 'social contract' Sovereign states are expected to perform some minimal functions for the security and well-being of their citizens as well as the peaceful working in the international system. States that fail to meet these minimal criteria have been described as 'weak', 'fragile', or 'poorly performing' (Torres and Anderson 2004: 5).

When key elements of modern statehood such as redistributive functions and elements of justice and equality is realized we can say that generalized statehood in a political entity, state or non-state has formed (Hüsken, 2019: 232-5), As Rotberg in defining failed states says (Rotberg, 2002: 85): nation-states ceases to work well because they can no longer render positive political goods to their people. Their governments lose legitimacy, and for a growing plurality of their citizens the nation-state itself seems illegitimate. For Rotberg, state failure turns out tense, deeply conflicted, dangerous, and sourly contested by warring factions. In most failed states like Libya, Afghanistan and Somalia, government troops struggle with armed rebellion led by one or more fighting juntas. In this definition, exuberance of violence is not the only failed state character. Rather, what identifies a failed state is long-lasting and wide-spreading violence, the direction of such violence originally against an

existing government, and the drastic character of the political, ethnical, religious or geographical claims for power sharing arrangements or self-government.

Another yardstick for naming a state as failed pertains to incapability to rein borders. These states lose hegemony over hunks of the territory (Rotberg, 2003:2). Often the official power enforcement is confined to the capital city and one or more ethnically specific zones. Actually one measure of the extent of state failure is how much it controls and dominates on the country's territorial arena and its ethnic-linguistic power blocs. Weak states display a mingled silhouette, and failed states counts a sub-category of weak states (Rotberg, 2002:85-91).

Libya serves as a particular symbol of state failure. The end of the Cold War and The collapse of the socialist bloc in 1990s, as well as the anti-dictatorship uprisings torrent in the Arab Middle East in 2010s, had its effects on the country. Here, however, Gaddafi's downfall led to a deep crisis of statehood that seems to be deeper than anywhere else in the Middle East. Rapid political changes took place and new good-looking regime became destabilized. The revolutionists' political agenda included democratization along with hopes for social, political and economic renovation, as well as enforcement of Islamic Shariah after decades of authoritarian rule, economic crisis and political disengagement. The period of stability did not last long, and the internationally recognized alternative regime has failed to extend control beyond the Tripoli district so far.

Now in 2019, Libya's question continues to be the vacation of an effectively sovereign state and the high level of tribal fragmentations. So the essential imperative for Libya today should be establishing a minimal political consensus to permit the state consolidation, the reestablishment of basic services, and the oil production revival to restart the economy (Allen, etal, 2019: 7-9).

## **2.2. Consociationalism**

Since the 1950's and 1960's, the question of creating stability and democracy in divided, conflicted societies has been a puzzle for scholars. In this model, some degree of group autonomy and power-sharing in the executive for "all significant segments" (O'Leary 2005: 12) that comprise a society is best way to bring peace and stability in fragmented societies. According to Lijphart the consociational democratic system is particularly appropriate in fragmented societies it as an important method to move forward toward democratic stability. On and off, the choice is between consociational democracy, which may steer to a democracy down the road, or authoritarianism (Lijphart 1969). The consociational theory of conflict management in divided societies is one of the most influential, which addresses institutional design as a means to bring about reconciliation and stability. "Consociational democracy means government by elite cartel designed to turn a democracy with a fragmented political culture into a stable democracy." For a consociation to succeed Lijphart prescribes the following: the elites' ability to accommodate the divergent

interests and demands of the subcultures; the elites' ability to transcend cleavages and to join in a common effort with the elites of rival subcultures; the elites' devotion to the system maintenance; and eventually the elites' understanding of the perils of political fragmentation. Lijphart argues that the consociational democratic system is not only proper in fragmented societies, but also, for many states, it is an impressive method to ascertain democratic power equation.

Consociationalism is the power-sharing system between different tribal blocks in Lebanon and Iraq. This is a pattern for conflict resolving in the ethnically fragmented communities which is grounded on quotas in government and bureaucracy, reciprocal veto rights, regional autonomy, and proportional representation. This political setup has been implemented in Lebanon and, thanks to this, Lebanese system been the only democracy of the Arab world for many years (Ghanim, 2011: 136).

In Lebanon, Consociationalism has not been successful for its power-sharing system is based on pacts among the elites that form pre and post electoral compromises thereby ensuring stability of the overall system, but leave little opportunities for a meaningful project of the demands of citizens (Ghanim, 2011: 136). Also in Lebanese consociational democracy, because of the multiplicity of linguistic, racial, ethnic and religious identities, and even external loyalties, amalgamation of communities in the Lebanese state faces many obstacles so that It makes it very difficult to reach intercommunal coalitions or on an overall national consensus.

### **2.3. Confessionalism**

The consociational system in Lebanon and Iraq is based on a delicate power-sharing arrangement between the elites who represent the different confessional communities. It requires continuous consensus and cooperation among members of the political elite. "Political confessionalism" refers here to the distribution of posts in state institutions between elite religious and ethnical identities. Their constitutions stipulate that recruitment in the civil service should be exclusively merit-based. "The suppression of political confessionalism" in the preamble of the Lebanese Constitution (Item h) is declared as "an essential goal". Confessionalism is a system of government that is a de jure mix of religion and politics. It typically entails distributing political and institutional power proportionally among confessional communities.

Lebanon since 1988 and post-Saddam Iraq has opted for a kind of democracy that is based on communalism and confessionalism. The adoption of this model of representation system in these countries was mainly aimed at creating a power-sharing arrangement between different confessional blocks. This conflict resolution model is designed for communities that are ethnically, religiously and linguistically fragmented which is grounded on quotas in government and bureaucracy, reciprocal veto rights, regional autonomy, and proportional representation. However, communalism and confessionalism have been

inefficient and discredited due to numerous failures in Lebanon and Iraq (Ghanim, 2011: 136).

Although Libya counts a nascent nation-state, apart from tribal or tribal divisions that are commonplace in this country, separatism is not seen in Libya. The main language of all Libyans is Arabic with the Berber minority dialect. The Berber minority has been among the main force of the uprising against Qaddafi. Thus Libyan society seems to have more unity than Lebanon and Iraq in spite of its tribal and multicultural society. Major differences in Libya are mainly in tribal lines and to a lesser extent ethnic and linguistic, so the prospect of creating consociational democracy in the country will be much clearer.

However, despite the different backgrounds, loyalties and agendas of many conflicting tribes, militias, and political leaders, none of these small and big local powers in Libya have so far tended to divide or to disintegrate the country territory - not even the federalists who pursue regionalism based on the 1951 constitution. (Al-Shadeedi, 2019: 38). After the fall of the old regime, revolutionaries failed to form a far-reaching government, instead have shown an enduring tropism toward fragmentation and disintegration over the past eight years. So while the "suppression of political confessionalism" in Lebanon or Iraq is an ultimate political goal, there is no need for it in Libya enjoying greater unity and communality.

### **3. Brief background on Qaddafi's Rule**

The federal system adopted by the 1951 constitution was the subject of much animadversion. Opponents argued that in an underpopulated country like Libya federation weakened central authority and made the state more vulnerable to foreign influence. Economically, it was also difficult to maintain three provincial governments and a central government without imposing a crushing tax burden on the populace. Finally, critics emphasized that the Libyan population was both numerically small and generally homogeneous, two criteria often considered supportive of a unitary system. Faced with constant criticism, King Idris on 27 April 1963 approved an amendment to the constitution that abolished the federal system and replaced it with a unitary one (John, 2006: 51). Idris' government was increasingly unpopular by the latter 1960s; it had exacerbated Libya's traditional regional and tribal divisions by centralizing the country's federal system to take advantage of the country's oil wealth (Harris, 1986: 14). On 1 September 1960, a group of 70 army officers, who in imitation of Abdel-Nasser coup called themselves the Free Officers Movement, took control of the government and declared the dissolution of the Libyan monarchy. The group formed the Libyan government after a coup.

After the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) grasped control of Libya, firstly, it moved to consolidate its power base by minimizing tribal and regional power, increasing political participation, and implanting local leadership supportive of revolutionary goals. However, the government failed to take social



and economic reforms after the coup to replace traditional, tribal or primordial identities with national and modern identities.

Previous tribal areas were sected into administrative zones based on population density and geographical divisions. The new zones went across old tribal lines and combined different tribes into a single zone. Rezoning reduced regional identity and accompanying social and political power and relocated traditional administrative centers (John, 2006: 157-8).

Though Gaddafi, from the Qadhadhfeh tribe, tried to reduce the tribal influence in the country's politics - and even completely to eliminate the tribal structure - his policies, in effect, helped to further strengthen the tribal system. The tribalization of power generated a castoff of the power symbols – the nation-state, bureaucracy, and its security apparatus.

In fact, he relied on the tribal system to consolidate his authoritarian rule and at the same time diminished the power and influence of some tribes by granting economic privileges, kinship-related rewards, and sometimes even exerted threats and punishments. Gaddafi also through 'divide and rule' policy, tried to maintain the balance of power between the various tribes within his government and among the various institutions of the country. Even in border protection, Gaddafi by establishing alliances with tribes and nomads that regularly moved back and forth across it rather than building a modern frontier system, controlled the borders (Chivvis & Martini, 2014: 9).

In the years that followed, Gaddafi witnessed various coups against himself, including The four-day rebellion in Tobruk, so he forced to gradually clean up military positions the military's offices and replace them with his own tribesmen (Davis, 1987). In the following years, he was completely mistrusted the body of the army so tried to decentralize army. Army was replaced by militias that operated independently for the control of the state. These militias often intimidated the citizenry (Larémont, 2013: 2).

The evisceration of the decentralized army and the loss of its integrity were among the factors that in the post-Gaddafi era hindered the power transition process and with deteriorating situation, militias became stronger in the aftermath of the civil war. In post Qaddafi's era at least two large militias have come out: the Libya Shield (led by Hafiz al-Agouri) and the Rafallah Sahati brigade (led by Ismail al-Salabi) (Wehrey 2012).

#### **4. Roots of a Civil Conflict: Qaddafi's legacy**

Libya's unstable and fragile post-war transition was the direct sequel of Qaddafi's legacy and the way in which the 2011 civil war spread out. One of the implications of his "divide and rule" policy was the emergence of socio-political ruptures and the weakness of national solidarity after the revolution. The nationwide insurgences came about as a consequence of several structural causes: corruption, inefficiency and repressive enthusiasm of the regime.

Demonstrations that swiftly transformed into armed rebellions once the regime unleashed its arsenal on them sat about in the east, in Benghazi. Libyan

government tried to silence the protesters by cutting off the Internet and electricity as well as closing the Benghazi airport. The opposition in Benghazi set up an interim government. However, regime collapse permitted new actors to enter the arena.

The factors driving the post-revolution civil war were complex: including a wide range of political, regional, tribal, religious, and linguistic differences that often overlap or clash with each other, leading to numerous loyalties and rivalries, the most important primordial loyalties. Indeed, civil war can be attributed to the struggle between various forces: revolutionaries against the remnants of the former regime, various Islamist groups against secular nationalists, and Arab ethnic groups against Berbers and other non-Arabs.

This fragmentation was a direct result of Gaddafi's strategy of maintaining his regime against coups and popular uprisings. He tried to rebuild the idea of a state around his personality cult. He deliberately kept the official security devices weak and rivals to each other, protecting his regime at the same time, politically loyal paramilitary organizations and a ruthless secret police were established (Gaub, 2013). The basis of the appointments in the army was loyalty to his personality, not merit, a policy that quickly fueled the ambitions of officers for climbing the power ladder because ambitious officers would not have the luck to build a power base (Willcoxon, 2017: 92). In fact, Weakening of institutionalized state was Qaddafi's main policy for protecting his regime so that he systematically acted against the integrative state institutions such as the army, electoral systems, and even security apparatuses, and as a result, the transfer of power after the era of his rule has been faced with a lot of difficulties. Eight years after his fall, no unified government rules in Libya. (Larémont, 2013: 2).

As Watanabe (Watanabe, 2016) noted, this situation was not only a result of the dynamics of the insurgency but also because of the nature of the political and security under Gaddafi's rule. His reading of democracy, the *Jamahiriyah*, was deliberately designed to avoid political organization at the national level. There were neither political parties in Libya nor Parliament; therefore, there were no visible national elites. Instead, the political organization predominantly took place at the local level. The local popular congresses were representative of the people, who then elected the people's committees members to work in executive bodies. In fact, the local governance machines were devoid of any genuine political representation. Gaddafi's revolutionary committees ensured that the congress decisions and the people's committees were taken in line with the regime's demands. The people's congresses and committees cut across tribal lines to limit the political influence of tribal leaders, although this method ultimately failed to eliminate their meaningful social affiliations.

Libya, a country with a tribal structure, faces a complex conflict after Gaddafi's fall: at least two governments are fighting for political power and armed militias who battles for the control of the vast resources of oil and gas. In August 2014, a united group of Islamist militias captured Tripoli, creating a rival government

and parliament that forced the internationally recognized government to flee to the east (Oskoui, 2015).

Because many local elites reap benefits from the state weakness, their least common denominator has been to hinder the re-establishment of a central government. On the other hand, the central government weakness could create new opportunities for local elites: they could potentially expand their local reaches or use central government resources to consolidate their local position. Therefore, the re-establishment of the central government in Libya highly depends on the ability of local elites to form coalitions to create an effective and efficient central government also to adapt their interests to one another. (Lacher, 2016: 65).

In contrast to countries like Tunisia and Egypt, Libya never relied on an integrated army but on its paramilitary forces. Because of the fear of the coup against his government, from 1987 onwards, Gaddafi developed the militias even more than the army. Between the ends of his rule in late 2011 until the mid-2012 elections, militias replaced the former security apparatuses, thus reproducing the character of a country based on militias inherited from Gaddafi's regime (Martinez, 2014: 2)

Lacher (2011) points to the major differences between the Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions with Libya. In his opinion, the uprising of the first two weeks of the Revolution was driven mainly by the unemployed youths whose education level and their access to virtual media were far less than their Tunisian and Egyptian counterparts. In addition, the established opposition in Tunisia and Egypt played a very limited role in Tunisia and Egypt, but the absence of organized movements and institutions in the Libyan revolution was even less dramatic. The other significant difference was the lack of institutions capable of managing the crisis in Libya. Instead of pressuring the leader to step down and initiate a transition stage, as the armies of Tunisia and Egypt did, the army and other Libyan institutions disintegrated rapidly. As Lacher noted two factors explains the rapid collapse of government agencies: the importance of tribal loyalties and second weakness of these institutions.

On the other hand, Libyan regionalism is another major source of conflict. The historical split and rivalry between Tripolitania and Cyrenaica and their deeply rooted suspects and political leanings of tribalism and federalism have reappeared as focal dispatching tenants of conflict. Cyrenaica has a long and rich history dating back to the century 7<sup>th</sup> BC. This region has been historically the rivalry of Tripolitania, founded by the Phoenicians. Libya, after independence, and during the reign of King Idris (whose power base was in Cyrenaica), had virtually two capitals: Tripoli in the west and Benghazi in the east. For many Cyrenaics, Benghazi - and not Tripoli - was considered the true capital. With the Gaddafi's coup d'état, for the first time, Tripoli were able to claim the centrality of political power in Libya. But in a country split by various dialects, tribes and ancient histories, only through a complex alliance of tribes, the army's loyalty and an iron fist, Tripolitanian power could be held. In the civil war after Gaddafi's fall, the Cyrenaics, like one of the militia leader

Ibrahim al-Jathran, have been advocating the revival of federalism as existed in the 1951 constitution.

## **5. Main Actors in Libyan Political Arena**

Immediately After Gaddafi's falling down regime in 2011, a revolutionary leadership council known as the National Transitional National Council took control of the country to hold democratically elections of the General National Congress in 2012. Also in the 2014 election, a House of Representatives was established. But failed politicians did not accept the results of the election and continued to hold meetings of the General National Congress, claiming that GNC is the sole legitimate parliament of Libya.

Several Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG)/Libyan Islamic Movement for Change (LIMC) veterans shaped Salafi moderate political parties. These Islamists after Qaddafi became involved in the political transition process, though their almost complete absence in Libya's first elected parliament they were present in transitional governance structures. The GNC radically circumscribed any political ambitions and appetences they might have had. Nonetheless, their links to important brigades do give them influence on the ground in several parts of the country (Watanabe, 2018:4-6).

The transitional government faced many challenges that led the country to turmoil: holding elections, forming a new government, dealing with remained militias who were result of Gadhafi's military policies, and some groups that were armed after the 2011 revolution, restoring security apparatus and solving security problems, such as dealing with miscreants, providing citizens' needs and public services, rebuilding the economy under a comprehensive, fair and non-rentier economic development plan. All of this seemed impossible in a country where ordinary political institutions were virtually missing and for years, rather than efficient political, security and economic institutions, the population was divided between tribal and local (Costantini, 2017: 150).

Since then, no superior power has managed fully controlling Libyan territory and creating a monopoly of violence. Instead, rival politicians and militias have maintained their position as effective local or regional powers with often incompatible agendas. It has led to a deadlock; Libyan politics have been taken hostage by a continuous and endless struggle between a multitude of actors including moderate Islamists, jihadists, nationalists, revolutionaries, counter-revolutionaries, ethnic minorities who conflict over the economic and Political power future of Libya (Gråtrud et al, 2017: 42). Meanwhile, a vacuum of insecurity and uncertainty has led to some murders and looting against the citizenry.

Since the government institutions broke out in mid-2014, the Tripoli armed groups has also undergone massive changes in their funding patterns. Extortion and widespread fraud have replaced government salaries as their main source of income, contributing to deepening the economic crisis (Lacher & al-Idrissi, 2018: 3).

In 2014 the country was de facto rived into two parts, one in Tobruk in the east under the rule of General Khalifa Haftar and House of Representatives (HoR elected in the same year), and the other in the west led by Islamist oriented militia leaders and those in the city of Misrata.

Currently, there are three main power centers in Libya. The first is the Presidential Council (PC), which has been headquartered in Tripoli since 30 March 2016. It was the result of the signing of the the UN-mediated Libyan political Agreement (LPA) in December 2015. The second center of power is the competing but weaker than the former, the National Salvation Government chaired by Prime Minister Khalifa Ghwell relying on the authority of the General National Congress (GNC), the parliament originally established by the 2012 election. The third center of power consists of authorities whose bases are in Tobruk and Bayda, and were supposed to work under the LPA. The authorities of Tobruk and Bayda are supporter of the self-proclaimed anti-Islamist general Khalifa Haftar who leads the Libyan national army (LNA), and is backed by Egypt and Russia. Haftar is the rival of the Government of National Accord (GNA), led by Al-Sarraj.

However, there are really few national actors in Libya. Most actors are local, some of whom are nationally relevant while representing the interests of their region or, in most cases, their own city or tribes. Many important players are outside of the largest cities and have strong tribal allegiances (Toaldo, 2016).

## 6. Libyan Militias and Proxy War

Under the rule of King Idris, Libya did not play an important role in Arab world politics, according to Abadi (2000) this was due to Libya's close ties with the West (especially the US government) that supported Israel in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. After Gaddafi's 1969 coup, Libya's ties with the Soviet Union were strengthened, instead, Libya's relations with the West became increasingly strained, until the US government nominated Libya as a state sponsor of terrorism on in 1979 (Mary, 2012). After 11 September 2001 Gaddafi, worried about the repeat of the fate of Saddam and the Taliban for himself, tried to improve his relations with the West by fulfilling some the West stipulations, but with the onset of the armed struggle against the regime in 2011, in which Gaddafi attempted first to crush protests to stay in power, NATO launched a decisive military operation against the regime on Libyan soil.

Through resolution no. 1970 (26 February 2011), the United Nations began a weapons embargo on Libya and the Gaddafi family's assets abroad were frozen. After 20 days, France, the United Kingdom and the United States launched a military intervention, setting in motion a multinational force. On 17 March, the UN approved a second Resolution (No. 1973) envisaging the implementation of a no-fly zone for the protection of the civilian population (Operation Odyssey Dawn) (UNSC, 2011). On March 31 that year, NATO quickly took over the leadership of multinational forces and launched operation *Unified Protector* (Ceccorulli et al, 2015: 7).

Once a multiple rebellious armed groups in a developing country, with prepared conditions for insurgency against the ruling regime, get over the threshold of military feasibility and stability, preventing or ending the civil war can be extremely difficult (Fearon, 2017: 24). Wrecking a tyranny does not automatically make for a democratic government. In Misrata, Libya's third largest city, as many as 236 distinct combating bands appeared immediately after the 2011 revolution (McQuinn 2012). Turkey's weapon shipments are largely conveyed to Misrata militia, who is interested in supporting and empowering GNC's Islamists. Although most of the Misrata militias have an Islamist tendency, recent offshoots suggest that the smaller Misrata groups support the GNC and prefer the national unity government and integrated army (Nesic & Showaia, 2018).

ISIS also has activities in Benghazi, Sierra, Tirpoli, and southern Libya. Benghazi turned into a battleground between ISIL, Shoot, and the Haftar and other militias. The Libyan Sahwat (Awakening) is a group of irregular forces fighting against the Haftar forces and ISIS. There have been long conflicts between the Haftar and Sahwat on the one hand and ISIS on the other. Even ISIS blamed these two groups for the destruction of Benghazi (Engel, 2015: 3). However, direct participation of external actors in Libya not only displays itself in different ways during the current post-Gaddafi transition stage but can be traced back to the early phase of upheaval, when Qatar, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Turkey started to carve out their own roles from 2011 onwards (Mühlberger, 2018: 71).

The UAE, Saudi Arabia and their allies issued a sanctions list of 12 groups and 59 terrorists claiming sponsored and funded by Qatar. One organization and five individuals from this list are Libyan, embracing the militia commanders and the Benghazi Defense Brigade, whose fighters directed by General Khalifa Haftar, who has the backing of Egypt and the UAE. The UAE is trying to strengthen one side of the conflict, namely Khalifa Haftar and his supporters, in order to allow his complete military victory achievement and establishing an absolute rule in Libya thus emulating the Al-Sisi model in Egypt. (El Gamaty, 2017).

The jihadist group has expanded by exploiting the political and military situation resulting from the fall of former Libyan dictator Moammar Gaddafi. Libya's borders were so long and porous so dominance of the Islamic state in February 2015 was not the result of his enormous power, but because it faced no real resistance. It was then that was numerically grown and more experienced fighters and executives joined it with from Syria (El Amrani, 2016).

Over time, the significance of foreign fighters within in the hierarchy of IS has even increased. Of the about 700 members of IS in Libya, almost 80 percent are of foreign origin according to AFRICOM sources, with fighters joining not only from Maghrebi and Sahelian countries, but also from countries like Eritrea and Ghana. The southern Libya is also increasingly important for IS in terms of recruitment (The operational revival and geographic dispersal of IS suggests that the group remains up and running in the country—although driven by

different strategic and tactical paradigms compared to those during its first rise to prominence (2014-2016) (Cristiani, 2018).

Qatar was the first state in recognizing the National Transitional Council as the real representative of the Libyan people and played a key role in expelling Gaddafi's representatives from the Arab League and insisted on the UN approval of a no-fly zone in this country (Nassar, 2013). But gradually, Qatar persisted to proffer mainly political and maybe financial support to mainstream Islamists and even to some of their ideological rivals.

Warring parties have struggled to assert their authority over the country's most significant economic institution, the National Oil Company, and to control the "oil crescent," in which oil production is concentrated. In early 2017, forces associated with General Khalifa Haftar, who opposes the internationally recognized Government of National Accord (GNA) based in Tripoli, seized control of the region. Reflecting the dire implications of this move for Libya's recognized government; Haftar's actions have drawn sharp criticisms of the UN and Western governments to undermine GNA sovereignty. Meanwhile, Haftar extended its support to Russia to increase his claims to sovereign authority, using the control of Libyan oil production areas by its forces to bolster his bid for international recognition (Heydemann, 2018: 58).

## **7. Conclusion**

After Gaddafi's fall, the main feature of Libya's political scene has been the emergence of blocs of power as well as militias that sometimes merge sometimes clashes with each other, but never fade away.

Reconnecting the state and people under a shared national project will be the necessary precondition for a functioning democracy. Although there is serious controversy over the formation of a national government, the bigger task ahead of Libya is a draft constitution that will provide a framework for national policies.

Now, primordial loyalties form the nuclear of Libya's internal conflicts and their consolidation, or being the basis for the coalition between the conflicting identities will be equal to the continuation of instability and the rule of the small dictatorships in this country. Given the extreme dispersion of power and domination of militias, Islamist extremists and the prevailing of tribal social relations, one cannot expect the GNC or any other single institution to form a draft constitution. In fact, as long as the Libyan arena does not reach maturity for political and military stability, the formation of a national stable government in the country will be in serious doubt. So far, increasing polarization between tribal, regional and ideological paradigms is the reality that has happened in practice.

Inwardly the Libya appears not to enjoy democratic traditions so hardly possesses any of the political instruments of a civil polity. The political history of Libya provides adequate proof of the persistence of primordial ties in local and national politics. No national pact sustains its so-called multicultural-

multiethnic society, traditional, tribal or primordial identities with national and modern identities are rampant yet this sense of identity is neither national nor civic. Its politicians, masterminds at the art of flexibility and compromise, are local za'ims not national figures.

Using consensus politics to create the ethnic, tribal and sectarian balance of Libyan society the mediation of the neutral actor (UN) seems necessary then it will be possible to commence drafting of the constitution based on consociationalism to solve a problem of the real representation of the population.

Stabilization in Libya will be the highest priority. Considering factors such as the continuation of tribal structures, the weakness of civil society and state institutions that are Gaddafi's legacy, the project of democratization in will be a long-term project. In the near future, Libya will need a fair division of power among the ruling elites in order to achieve stability, but the reduction of political, military and tribal leaders' unchallengeable control over candidates in their constituencies, which is expected for an efficient consociational democracy, is both impactful and difficult to achieve.

The consociational system will guarantee the political, economic, and tribal rights of various Libyan communities, eliminating doubt between the various regions, and will ensure that all these communities belong to the larger Libyan community, but all of these drawing lines and divisions, power sharing between the struggling leaders that are currently in power are not compatible.

On the other hand, due to the relative balance of power between the ruling power blocks in Libya, which probably is not in favor of a unified state, as well as historical regionalism, which had intensified at least between Cyrenaica and Tripoli regions in the Gaddafi era, The unitary system is no longer viable and it should be replaced by a federal system. So the Libyan unity government ought to initiate a pre-referendum negotiation process to attain consensus with minority group representatives on constitutional provisions that touch upon their concerns, such as political representation, cultural and linguistic recognition, local autonomy, economic interests.



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