Local Governance and the "Arab Spring": A Guide to Libya's Political Transition

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While it has been fairly easy to state that the political transitions emerging from the "Arab Spring" will substantially impact the political trajectory of the region, accurately assessing the extent and characteristics of this impact has proven a far more difficult task. No more is this the case than in Libya, where, in a relatively short period of time, unarmed protests gave way to armed resistance, international military intervention and the removal of the Qaddafi regime. Since taking power in 1969, the Qaddafi government had managed to co-opt or violently suppress opposition to the regime. In 2011, the Qaddafi government's efforts to summarily quell large demonstrations through out the country prompted the formation of armed opposition groups. The most prominent of these groups, the National Transitional Council (NTC), declared itself the "sole representative on March 5th 2011 (NTC Libya).

Chronology:

The conflict in Libya can be segmented into four distinct stages: the suppression of peaceful protests by the Libyan military (starting on the 15th February), the formation of armed opposition groups and the outbreak of armed conflict between these groups and the Libyan military (dated as beginning on the 24th of February although armed conflict in Misrata and Zawiya may have begun a few days before this date), the commencement of NATO military intervention under the authority of UN Security Council Resolution 1973 (which began on March 19th) and the post-Qaddafi period (marked by the taking of Sirte on October 20th) (PCHR 10-12).

Introduction:

This paper will attempt to outline the agendas, objectives, and interests of those who participated in the conflict and the ways in which their actions in the conflict have influenced Libya's post-Qaddafi political transition. The analysis presented in this paper predominately focuses on the following actors: the Qaddafi government, anti-Qaddafi forces (be they under command of the NTC or otherwise) and NATO. Particular attention is paid to the ways in which these actors have influenced and been influenced by the progression of the conflict within the framework of the previously outlined stages.

First this paper will explore the grievances held by actors in the conflict and the ways in which the conflict has lead to the development of new grievances which continue to influence Libya's political transition. This paper will then examine the ways in which identity has influenced the development of these grievances and the ways that these grievances are expressed. This requires analyzing the ways in which actors in the conflict instrumentalize identity. The following section then transitions from examining the tensions derived from this instrumentalization to examining the relationships between different actors in the conflict. Specifically, it critically examines some of the narratives produced as a result of the conflict and the interests that these narratives advance. Next, the paper shifts from analyzing the interests of actors through the lens of these narratives and applies the framework provided by the study of political economy. The previously outlined dynamics of the conflict are present in both the NTC's approach to Libya's political transition and the international community's contribution (predominately in the form of the assistance and recommendations) to this transition.

Structural Weaknesses of the Libyan State:

The initial outbreak of the conflict in Libya can be attributed to grievances that developed in response to the structure of the Qaddafi government. The protests that characterized the first phase of the conflict were inspired by the upsurge of popular discontent occurring through much of the Middle East (ICG 12/14/2011 1). While the context of the "Arab Spring" offers insight with regard to the expression of these grievances, their source can be found in the structural weaknesses of the modern Libyan state. The process of informalization, that occurred within Libyan politics under Qaddafi's "Jamahiriyya", is primarily responsible for the infirmities of the Libyan state (Vandewalle 138-139). The progression of the conflict from peaceful protest to armed opposition was accompanied by the development of tensions between the NTC and armed anti-Qaddafi groups outside of the NTC's command structure (ICG 12/14/2011 2). NATO's intervention strengthened the NTC but did little to alleviate these tensions (Svendsen 51, ICG 12/14/2011 2).

Prompted by the conservative policies and "political immobility" of the Sanusi monarchy, in 1969 Qaddafi led a military coup which overthrew King Idris al-Sanusi and abolished the monarchy (Vandewalle 62). Once in power, Qaddafi pursued a strategy that consolidated political power while promoting an informalization of Libyan politics (Vandewalle 141). Once in power the new regime set out to replace the old system of royal patronage, redistricting Libya's local and municipal governments to marginalize those who held power during the monarchy and nationalizing Libya's oil industry and banks to fund the creation of a number of "popular/peoples" congresses and committees (Vandewalle xxiv, 69). Rather than providing a venue for political representation or encouraging political participation these committees have primarily functioned as an instrument of top-down patronage (Ronen 142).

The informalization of Libyan politics blurred "the dichotomy between state and civil society" and fostered widespread corruption (Chabol and Daloz 17, 106)[1]. Qaddafi's control over the country was extended beyond the state to Libyan civil society, through placing family members and close supporters at the head of Libyan charitable societies and business associations (PCHR, Ronen 139). Within the Libyan economy companies are controlled or owned by members of Qaddafi's inner circle (many of whom are members of Qaddafi's extended family). These companies have received preferential treatment, typically acquiring heavily subsidized financial assistance from the Libyan government in addition to political support (ICG 06/06/2011 2). Elements of this favoritism are also present on a macroeconomic level. Areas which had been at the center of opposition to the Qaddafi regime subsequently received disproportionately lower levels of economic assistance from the government (Pargeter 1036). The lack of government assistance and investment "followed a deliberate policy of punishing" these areas in the country for the perceived role that they played in fomenting opposition to the regime "by keeping them in a perpetual state of underdevelopment" (Pargeter 1036).

Political Participation in Libya:

The product of these policies was a population who for the most part were alienated from Libya's political structures and a government which failed to exert institutionalized control over the country's economy (Obeidi 163, Vandewalle 140). The inefficient structure of the Libyan state under Qaddafi and the regime's violent suppression of political parties and actors who could potentially challenge Qaddafi's hold on power substantially inhibited political participation (Obeidi 163, PCHR 14). These factors impelled many Libyans to participate in protests and demonstrations against the Qaddafi regime prior to the 2011 "Arab Spring". It even prompted some to engage in armed struggle against the Qaddafi regime. During the 1990s a small scale Islamist insurgency broke out in parts of eastern Libya (Anderson 44). In the years preceding the "Arab Spring" there were a number of demonstrations in Libya which "focused on socio-economic issues" although these demonstrations were "localized in nature" (ICG 06/06/2011).

In relation to these localized demonstrations the overthrow of Ben Ali in Tunisia in January of 2011 and the removal of Mubarak in Egypt in early February of the same year acted as bellows. Fanned by the early success of the "Arab Spring" the previously localized expressions of discontent rapidly spread throughout much of Libya (ICG 06/06/2011 3). The informalization of Libyan politics allowed Qaddafi to officially distance himself (at the time of the uprising Qaddafi did not hold a formal position or office within the Libyan state) while simultaneously reaffirming the

perception that Qaddafi and his inner circle held absolute power in Libya (PCHR 13). The uprising in Libya developed within the context of this contradiction. Prior to the "Arab Spring" the regime allowed for some limited criticisms of state institutions. The 2011 demonstrations, calling for the removal of the Qaddafi regime, constitute a continuation and expansion of the earlier demonstrations protesting socioeconomic issues.

The same contradiction also partially accounts for the failure of the Qaddafi regime to redress the grievances of protestors. While national protests were being organized for a "Day of Rage" on the 17 February[2] the Qaddafi government made efforts to appease potential protestors and mobilize supporters (ICG 06/06/2011 2). In a speech given shortly before the outbreak of protests, Qaddafi encouraged the country's youth to mobilize around the issue of housing shortages (ICG 06/06/2011 2). Seeking to "co-opt popular unrest" Qaddafi then called for an anti-government rally (to be headed by himself) (ICG 06/06/2011). Qaddafi's failed efforts to co-opt popular discontent by funneling it towards government officials (not to mention the absurdity of attempting to place himself at the head of movement whose overarching objective was to remove him from power) are indicative of the extent to which Libyans had become estranged from their government as a result of the process of political informalization.

Political and Military Legitimacy:

The failure of these efforts ensured that Qaddafi would have to rely almost exclusively on his security forces to put down the demonstrations. The response of the security services during this period (starting around 15 February) led to the formation of organized armed resistance (PCHR 19). Sporadic fighting between Libya's security services and anti-Qaddafi forces first broke out in Misrata and Zawiya around the 19-20 February. Around 24 February, the fighting between Libyan security forces and anti-Qaddafi forces had spread beyond Misrata and Zawiya to encompass a number of Libyan cities, particularly in the east (PCHR 11). The fighting led to formation of the Libyan National Transitional Council on the 5 March, in Benghazi, which attempted to provide a centralized leadership for anti-Qaddafi forces (NTC Libya). The rapid escalation of violence in Libya resulting from continued fighting between anti-Qaddafi forces[3] and the government's security forces prompted the League of Arab States to call for international intervention (Bellamy and Williams 838).

While the grievances predating the formation of the NTC and international intervention (in the form the UN's authorization for NATO's involvement in the conflict) remain politically salient in post-Qaddafi Libya, to focus exclusively on these grievances neglects the manner in which the dynamics of the conflict itself have impacted Libya's political transition. A number of the obstacles to Libya's political transition are the product of grievances generated during the country's civil war. This is not to say that the development of these issues only occurred after February 2011. Although the current manifestation of these grievances are a direct result of the conflict which ousted Qaddafi, they are rooted in the historical development of Libya.

The majority of the grievances developed during this period of the conflict (February to October 2011) concern issues of political legitimacy and the debate over the structure and composition of the post-Qaddafi Libyan government. Within this context arguments over the perceived contributions of specific groups (such as the local militias or the National Transitional Council) to the Libyan revolution are not inconsequential boasts, rather they are arguments either affirming or disputing the political legitimacy of certain actors. Since these grievances may be held by multiple segments of Libyan society and that within these segments the political salience of these grievances varies, this portion of the paper will examine the most commonly held grievances as they apply to the National Transitional Council (NTC). These grievances concern perceptions of the NTC's participation in the revolution, the NTC's inclusive approach to former members of the Qaddafi regime, and the influence that international actors are perceived to exert over the NTC.

While the NTC's success in cultivating international support for the uprising in Libya is widely acknowledged inside Libya, the manner in which the NTC utilized this support during the conflict is becoming increasingly controversial (ICG 12/14/2011 1). In the words of one Zintani commander, "the NTC performed well in terms of building international recognition for us…but it was never a government for us here in Libya" (ICG 12/14/2011 1). The most frequent accusation of local militias and local councils, which established themselves throughout Libya, is that the NTC was either unable or unwilling to commit support to these militias or councils (ICG 12/14/2011 3). Additionally

many members of these militias complained that even as these militias were engaged with pro-Qaddafi forces the NTC would only sell the weapons to these militias (ICG 12/14/2011 3).

Reinforcing these complaints concerning the NTC's lack of participation in defeating pro-Qaddafi forces is the sporadic manner in which the fighting in Libya spread through out the country (ICG 12/14/2011 2). There was no central singular front where forces advanced or retreated, instead "Libya was liberated in piecemeal fashion" (ICG 12/14/2011 1). For the most part, anti-Qaddafi forces were mobilized on a localized basis, at times engaging pro-Qaddafi forces without the assistance of the NTC (ICG 12/14/2011 2). When engaging pro-Qaddafi forces, the NTC also benefitted greatly from the local militias and councils as these local forces acted to guide NTC forces into cities and villages as well as pushing pro-Qaddafi forces into areas vulnerable to NATO airstrikes or the NTC's heavy weaponry (ICG 12/14/2011 5).

Political Transition and the Post-Qaddafi State

Despite the collaborative efforts between these local militias and the NTC, tensions between these groups increased during the course of the conflict. The NTC often appointed or designated councils which rivaled local self-established councils that had already begun to tend to the matters of local governance during the early stages of the conflict (ICG 12/14/2011 8). Debates concerning the role of the state in the post-Qaddafi political transition are shaped by the historical development of the Libyan state. Predominately due to Libya's experience under Italian colonialism and the lack of strong state institutions that defined Libyan politics during the period of the monarchy (1951-1969) and Qaddafi's rule (1969-2011), many Libyans favor strong decentralized local institutions (Vandewalle 80). In other words, the historical legacy of the Libyan state may impede the development of powerful state institutions. The local councils are an expression of this preference, which ultimately prevented the NTC from "establish(ing) a substantial physical or governmental presence in much of the country (ICG 12/14/2011 1).

The composition of the NTC and the organization's inclusive approach to former members of the regime have also acted to impede efforts by the NTC to integrate localized political and military organizations within its structure. The NTC leadership is dominated by elites of the former regime (including diplomats, senior military officers, and reformists who held high level positions under Qaddafi) and members of families who held significant power under the monarchy but were exiled by Qaddafi (Lacher 142). In contrast to the leaders of the NTC, the leadership of the local militias obtained political prominence by way of their military successes (Lacher 148). For many of these commanders, political legitimacy is seen as deriving not from a previous position under Qaddafi or the former monarchy, but rather from contributions to the military campaign against Qaddafi (Lacher 148). As noted earlier, many members of these militias question the extent and impact of the NTC's contribution to the military campaign (ICG 12/14/2011 5).

As the NTC struggles to consolidate its rule, many commanders of these local militia have linked the issue of disarmament and demobilization (of their militias) to guarantees of representation in the provisional government (Lacher 148). What this emphasis illustrates is a shift away from "military legitimization" where political legitimacy is predominately derived by one's military role in a conflict and towards "legitimization by representation" (Giustozzi *Empires of Mud* 12-13). This is not say that within Libya's political transition military legitimization is becoming irrelevant. Rather it is indicative of the relationship which exists between the political legitimacy of the NTC and the military legitimacy of those outside of the NTC's authority. The NTC's ability to adequately recognize and represent the interests of local actors (outside of its current authority) will play a large role in determining the effectiveness of the institutions of state that the NTC is establishing.

In the period leading up to the 2011 conflict, grievances were mostly expressed through non-participation. Despite initiatives such as the Ideological Preparation Camps[4] Qaddafi's "Jamahiriyya" failed to politically mobilize the "masses" (Obeidi 150). While active opposition to the Qaddafi regime occurred, until the events of the "Arab Spring" such activity was for the most part expressed in localized or socioeconomic terms. During the course of the conflict, grievances were typically expressed by anti-Qaddafi forces through criticisms of the NTC's leadership and the actions of the organization. After Qaddafi's death, these grievances became increasingly expressed via nonparticipation, specifically the reluctance of former anti-Qaddafi militias to dissolve or become integrated within the

structure of the NTC.

The reluctance of local militias and councils to disband or fall under the control of the NTC without guarantees of political representation is indicative of a general feeling of unease and uncertainty regarding the motives and intent of the NTC. The transition of the conflict (from protests to armed resistance) coupled with composition of the NTC, has inhibited the organization's efforts to fully lead the uprising. Subsequently, this has undermined the NTC's ability to ensure its control over the country's political transition (Lacher 141). Additionally, the international community's almost exclusive focus upon the organization has worked to exacerbate these tensions (ICG 12/14/2011 5). In order to assess the significance of these tensions (as they relate to Libya's political transition) its sources must properly be examined. To do so not only requires analyzing the ways in which issues of identity factor into the conflict, but also critically evaluating contemporary commentaries on the political salience of identity (specifically in regard to tribes and tribalism).

Tribal Tropes:

Some commentators, such as Thomas Friedman, have argued that the impetus for Libyan involvement in the uprising has been "tribalism" (Friedman). *The New York Times* is not alone in publishing articles which articulate this position, similar arguments can be found in the *Huffington Post*, the *Guardian* and the *Foreign Policy* journal (Benkato). Often invoked although rarely explained, the trope of tribal conflict is not reverted to without some basis in reality. There were some elements of tribalism present during the uprising. That being said, when compared to other factors it becomes apparent that tribalism played a limited role during the course of the conflict. This is predominately due to the ways in which tribal identities have been instrumentalized in Libya.

In Friedman's article, tribal identity is seen as an obstacle to establishing a post-Qaddafi national political structure and extending the authority of the NTC (Friedman). These concerns fail to accurately analyze the manner in which anti-Qaddafi forces mobilized during the uprising. They ignore the fact that tribal identities are more politically salient within the NTC than they are outside it.

Armed opposition to Qaddafi was organized on a local rather than tribal basis (ICG 12/14/2011 8). To understand why local rather than tribal factors predominately determined anti-Qaddafi mobilization it is useful to examine the role of tribes in relation to the development of the modern Libyan state. The monarchy which controlled Libya from 1951 to 1969 relied heavily on the country's tribes for political support (Vandewalle 62). Despite the monarchy's creation of the Cyrenaican Defense Force (the CYEDF was a tribal militia loyal to King Idris which was established to offset the power of the Libyan army) the 1969 military coup led by Qaddafi faced no armed opposition from the CYDEF or other armed tribal groups (Vandewalle 62). To consolidate his power, Qaddafi redrew the country's districts, effectively re-staffing the local governments with pro-Qaddafi supporters and marginalizing the political importance of the tribes (Vandewalle 63). In the 1990s, Qaddafi began to reverse his policy of undermining the political importance of Libya's tribes (Obeidi 118). Qaddafi pressed tribal leaders to publically certify their allegiance to Qaddafi and to use their position within the tribe to pressure or punish tribal members who opposed Qaddafi (Obeidi 118).

The political marginalization of Libya's tribes during Qaddafi's rule worked to push tribal notables outside of the country (Lacher 142). As a consequence, "many of the independent or opposition figures who joined the NTC are scions of the aristocratic and bourgeois families who had dominated Libya during the monarchy" (Lacher 142). This is consistent with research examining tribal identification and socioeconomic status. As Obedidi's study of Libya's political culture illustrates, those who are most likely to emphasize their "tribal identity" are educated and middle class Libyans (Obeidi 120).

Despite the fact that the mobilization of Libyans during the conflict was predominately determined by localized factors, both Qaddafi and the NTC made efforts to gain the support of Libyan tribes. During the uprising the NTC and Qaddafi's government organized conferences for tribal leaders, competing to secure their loyalty and support. The result of these entreaties and conferences was at best mixed. During the course of the conflict neither Qaddafi nor the NTC were substantially strengthened or weakened by alliances or agreements brokered at these conferences. In some cases it was the defection of senior military commanders (who left Qaddafi's government to join the opposition)

rather than the conferences which prompted Libyans from the same tribe to join the opposition. In other cases, public denouncements of Qaddafi by tribal leaders failed to produce defections or substantial support for the opposition (Lacher 145).

The extent to which tribal loyalties strengthened opposition forces remains unclear. In declarations of allegiance to the NTC, claims of solidarity and support are made on behalf of the population of Libyan cities, not tribes (NTC Libya). In addition to tribal ties, the eastern portion (specifically around Benghazi and Darna) of Libya had also served as a base for the armed Islamist opposition group, the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG), during the 1990s (Anderson 44-45). Qaddafi's violent suppression of the LIFG was followed by discriminatory economic policies which acted to punish eastern Libyans for their perceived support of the Islamist group (Pargeter 1033). While tribal ties played a role in the formation of the NTC and in the decisions of individuals who joined the opposition, there is little evidence to suggest that it has acted as a determining factor. The economic and political marginalization experienced by eastern Libya suggests the presence of overlapping motivations for those who joined the opposition.

At first glance it would appear that tribal ties played a significantly larger role in determining the composition of Qaddafi's supporters. A number of the cities which were able to hold out the longest against the anti-Qaddafi forces, Bani Walid, Fezzan, and Sirte, are mostly populated by tribes which have been supportive of Qaddafi's regime. While the tribes from these cities (the Warfalla, the Magarha, and the Qadhafa) have generally supported Qaddafi, this support has not been uniform. Early in the conflict, a prominent member of the Warfalla tribe called for Qaddafi to leave the country and adding that Qaddafi was "no longer a brother". Despite this denouncement of Qaddafi, many members of the Warfallan tribe continued to fight for Qaddafi. Attributing their loyalty to Qaddafi to tribal ties would not be accurate. Their support was not due to the cultivation of tribal loyalties, rather it was an expression of the manner in which Qaddafi favored specific regions in Libya when selecting and promoting individuals within the country's security apparatus (Lacher 145).

While tribal identities have played a role in Libya's conflict and will undoubtedly exercise some influence over Libya's post-Qaddafi transition they should not be viewed as the determining factor in Libyan politics. This is demonstrated by the failure of both the NTC and the Qaddafi government to mobilize significant support along tribal lines. This does not mean that political actors in Libya will not attempt to utilize issues of tribal identity to gain support. Rather it simply means that issues of tribal identity will most likely be interwoven with regional and local political issues. While tribal identity has played a role in the formation and composition of forces, currently it does not constitute a major component of political legitimacy.

Conflicting Narratives:

NATO's intervention in Libya and the organization's relationship with the NTC has increased rather allayed suspicions surrounding the NTC. Understanding the manner in which the NTC's reliance on NATO and NATO's intervention may undermine the political legitimacy of the NTC requires an examination of the factors which enabled the intervention. NATO's relationship with the NTC and its intervention in Libya are in large part due to the NTC's ability to wage a successful campaign for the "hearts and minds" of the international community. The success of this campaign is also partially due to the negative repercussions of the Qaddafi regime's efforts at psychological warfare. Both the NTC's success and Qaddafi's failures are due to the ways in which the doctrine of "Responsibility to Protect" (R2P) has been utilized by international political actors and non-state actors (Bellamy and Williams 825).

Neither the conflict in Libya nor the response of the international community occurred instantaneously. Despite the spread of fighting during March, "none of the world's existing genocide/atrocity risk assessment frameworks identified Libya as being at risk, despite some of those lists extending to 68 countries" (Bellamy and Williams 838). Previous to the imposition of the no fly zone, the NTC had reached out to the international community in the hopes that international recognition would bolster the organization's legitimacy and garner political and material support (NTC Libya). The majority of calls for international intervention were prompted in mid March as Qaddafi's troops began recapturing cities held by anti-Qaddafi forces (Bellamy and Williams 839).

The statements released by the NTC illustrate the organization's tendency to simultaneously urge external intervention while simultaneously warning against unwarranted interference. An example of this can be seen the organization's founding document, which (early in the conflict) declares the NTC the "sole representative of all Libya" (NTC Libya). The statement urges "the international community to fulfill its obligations to protect the Libyan people from any further genocide and crimes against humanity", while expressly rejecting "any direct military intervention on Libya (sic) soil" (NTC Libya). While calls for international protection and rejecting an external military occupation are by no means mutually exclusive, the NTC's emphasis of these two points is indicative of the constrained political position that the group found itself in.

The statement by the NTC is illustrative of the ways in which the organization attempted to mobilize the support of international actors while ensuring that any such support would transmitted through the NTC. To do this, the NTC promoted a narrative which simultaneously emphasized the vulnerability of Libyan civilians and the strength of the rebel organization. This is evidenced by the discourse which goes at great length to describe the composition of the NTC and its appointment of a unified military command, while describing the civilian victims of the conflict in a slightly distant manner (NTC Libya). The statement describes these victims as "defenseless protestors" (the statement describing the NTC's military command excludes the organization from being categorized as "defenseless") and requests the international community to "protect the Libyan" people (NTC Libya). This allows the NTC to describe the balance of power in Libya as being "uneven", without directly admitting or commenting on the weakness of itself (NTC Libya).

To appeal to international actors the narrative furnished by the NTC indirectly references R2P. In contrast, the statements made by the Qaddafi government were targeted towards the Libyan public with very little regard for the ways in which international political actors would interpret them. While the Libyan security forces had committed systemic human rights violations, including the use of heavy weaponry against peaceful demonstrations, it was the rhetoric of the Qaddafi government which played the biggest role in enabling the passage of UN Security Council Resolution 1973 authorizing NATO's intervention within the conflict (Bellamy and Williams 838, PCHR 26).

The rhetoric of the Qaddafi regime, as opposed to its actions, prompted international (NATO) intervention. This is supported by the statements made by American and European policy makers. When referencing the justification for NATO's intervention, US President Barack Obama, in addition to a number of American and European policy makers who supported the intervention, consistently refer to the "threat" commit of a massacre in Benghazi made by Qaddafi (Obama, AJE *Endgame*). This is consistent with the diplomatic record which describes how the perception that Qaddafi's forces were preparing to advance on Libyan cities with the intention to commit atrocities (Bellamy and Williams 842).

The overwhelmingly negative consequences resulting from these statements calls into question the rationale of those who made them. While many have commented on the mental health of Qaddafi, this article will refrain from making such assessments, instead examining the wider military and political context in which these statements were made. As noted earlier, the estrangement of the Qaddafi government from the majority of the Libyan people led the government to rely on violence as its primary means to suppress the demonstrations. The statements of Qaddafi, threatening to "sanitize Libya an inch at a time, a home at a time…an alley at a time, one by one until the country is rid of the filth" constitute a component of the government's strategy to quash the protest movement and burgeoning armed opposition groups (PCHR 26). The statements made by Qaddafi and similar threatening statements made by other members of the Qaddafi regime, were designed to intimidate Libyans. The strategy pursued by Qaddafi against the armed opposition groups, is in line with "enemy-centric" counterinsurgency strategies which attempt to suppress insurrections and guerilla groups though military offensives (focused on killing the enemy) and employing punitive measures "to deter the civilian population from supporting" these groups (Khalili).

Illustrating the function of these threats should not be construed as an evaluation of their validity or creditability. At the time when these statements were made, Libyan security forces were responsible for killing approximately 755 Libyans (PCHR 26). The number of deaths during this period do not indicate that a genocide or mass atrocities were imminent. These numbers do however indicate an escalation in the use of violence and deadly force by Qaddafi's security forces (PCHR 26). Other cities which were briefly recaptured by Qaddafi's security forces were not

subjected to the atrocities that many feared would take place in Benghazi (PCHR 26). While the prominent role that the city has played in relation to opposition to the Qaddafi government, could have potentially lead to such atrocities, there remains no definitive evidence either confirming or denying such an assessment.

The narrative produced by the Qaddafi regime's program of psychological warfare allowed actors within the international community to push for intervention within the framework of R2P. Qaddafi's narrative of fear and intimidation dovetailed neatly with narratives advancing militarized "humanitarian intervention". Advocates of militarized "humanitarian intervention" stress the "urgency" of any response and often over simplify the context (Seymour 232). With the invocation of R2P (in response to the threat of atrocities) as grounds for a military intervention, many commentators and policy makers oversimplified the conflict in Libya[5], This is because much of the doctrine of R2P has been constructed upon "prescriptive assumptions" (de Waal and Conley Zilkic). These assumptions are based on "analysis of genocides past" (de Waal and Conley Zilkic). Subsequently, the response "conventionally fall(s) into a pattern of simplified representation…in favor of a certain knowledge that had international military intervention occurred (or occurred earlier, or with more conviction) that genocide would not have resulted" (de Waal and Conley Zilkic). As a consequence, the "prevention of genocide is typically constructed using the same assumptions of predictability, but with an idealized ending" where international military forces arrive and "the people are saved" (de Waal and Conley Zilkic).

As an organization, NATO has a vested interest in associating with R2P and as portraying itself as an instrument of humanitarian intervention. NATO's intervention in Libya occurred at a time when the organization's credibility was diminishing due to its continuing occupation of Afghanistan. NATO's intervention in Libya reflects a desire by policymakers to bolster the organization's credibility. An example of this dynamic can be seen in NATO's intervention in Kosovo, which was prompted by concerns over the organization's "credibility" in a changing geo-political environment (Chomsky 28).

Founded during the early Cold War, NATO was designed to meet the needs of "old wars" (Kaldor 31). In her critique of NATO's intervention in Kosovo, Kaldor argues "humanitarian intervention is different from airstrikes and…is more like policing than war fighting" (Kaldor 142). NATO's campaign in Libya could be perceived as completely contradicting Kaldor's more "cosmopolitan" theoretical model. NATO's campaign in Libya does not reflect a wholesale refutation of Kaldor's concept of humanitarian intervention. Rather it is NATO's lack of success pursuing a counterinsurgency strategy along the lines of Kaldor's more "cosmopolitan" or "new war" model in Afghanistan which simultaneously prompted NATO to reassert itself as a more credible actor (on the international stage) and limited the strategic options with which it could pursue this end.

NATO's campaign in Afghanistan has exposed weaknesses within the organization's structure. Its continued inability to defeat or significantly weaken the insurgency against the Afghan government calls into question the efficacy of large conventional military alliances and forces. The prolonged counterinsurgency in Afghanistan strains the resources of NATO member states (Giustozzi *Koran, Kalashnikov, and Laptop* 97). The deaths of NATO personnel undermine domestic support in member states, and the financial costs have been staggering (Giustozzi *Koran, Kalashnikov, and Laptop* 98). While the conflict in Afghanistan has raised domestic pressures, it has also illustrated the limited cost effectiveness of NATO. In 2006 the insurgents in Afghanistan were receiving roughly $20 million a year (Giustozzi *Koran, Kalashnikov, and Laptop* 98). During this same period the US alone was spending $1.3 billion a month, amounting to $7-8 million per insurgent killed (Giustozzi *Koran, Kalashnikov, and Laptop* 98). Within the context of the conflict in Afghanistan these figures are actually quite low, in 2005 the US expended $15-16 million per insurgent killed (Giustozzi *Koran, Kalashnikov, and Laptop* 98). NATO's failure to effectively counter the insurgency has exacerbated tensions within NATO (Giustozzi *Koran, Kalashnikov, and Laptop* 165). The different approaches to counterinsurgency and varying commitments to provide human and material resources has meant that NATO's counterinsurgency strategy has become incoherent and inconsistent (Giustozzi *Koran, Kalashnikov, and Laptop* 165). Prior to NATO's interventions in Kosovo and Libya, the organization's capabilities and relevance to international political affairs appeared to be diminishing. After its intervention Libya, NATO's stock may yet again be on the rise.

The Political Economy of Intervention:

The narratives constructed by the NTC and the Qaddafi government during the early stages of the conflict offered NATO an opportunity to reaffirm its importance within the international community. They also illustrate the ways in which both the NTC and NATO derive legitimacy through their relationship with each other. The relationship between NATO and the NTC is underpinned by strong economic interests. While the international economic dimensions of the conflict have been obscured by a focus on humanitarian concerns, it is evident that these economic issues have significantly influenced the manner in which NATO conducted its operations and its strategic considerations in Libya. Specifically, NATO's strategy in Libya reflects a deep concern for the negative economic consequences that a protracted civil war in Libya could have on the global economy. For the NTC, the uprising also presented members of the organization an opportunity to engage in rent-seeking as the organization gradually captured the state apparatus[6]. Upon gaining access to the distribution of rents, the NTC did not radically alter the structure of public sector patronage. Instead, it took measures to ensure that as the NTC gained access and control over new territory, it simply replaced the Qaddafi government at the head of such patronage.

The context surrounding Qaddafi's efforts to improve his country's economic ties illustrate how Qaddafi's willingness to make liberal economic concessions was linked to issues of domestic security. While Qaddafi had improved Libya's economic relationship with much of Europe and the US (for the purpose of securing his rule in Libya) there remained an economic impetus for NATO military intervention in Libya.

During the 1990s the growing costs of UN and US sanctions pushed Qaddafi to improve relations with a number of European countries and the U.S. (Anderson 45). The sanctions cost Libya an estimated $30 billion in economic losses (Anderson 45). Despite the large economic costs, it was regional developments which reinforced the importance of improving Libya's relations with the "West". Both Libya and Algeria faced armed Islamist opposition groups, although the fighting between the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) and Libyan security forces was mostly contained to the mountainous region of eastern Libya (Anderson 44). Observing the "military and security cooperation with the West that…the Algerian regime had enjoyed", Qaddafi reoriented Libyan foreign policy to improve his country's relationship with the US and much of Western Europe (Anderson 45).

While the violence in Libya during the 1990s did not reach the same level as in Algeria fighting between the Libyan government and the LIFG went on for several years (Anderson 45). Beginning around the early 2000s both the LIFG and Qaddafi recognized the importance of American support. After the September 11 attacks, both Qaddafi and the LIFG[7] publically condemned the attacks (Anderson 45). In jockeying for American support and sympathy, the self-styled anti-imperialist Qaddafi supported the US invasion of Afghanistan and offered the assistance of Libya's intelligence services for the US "War on Terror" (Anderson 46).

Spearheaded by Qaddafi's son, Saif al-Islam, a widely publicized campaign of economic liberalization was undertaken in Libya (Ronen 139). Saif al-Islam was presented to Libyan and international audiences as a progressive reformer, frequently articulating the importance of liberal economic policies and emphasizing (in Saif al-Islam's words) "a shared Libyan-American strategy against an international enemy" (Anderson 46). Despite the fact that the Qaddafi government perceived its domestic security requirements as being linked to its economic relationships with the US and Western European countries, it fundamentally misunderstood the implications of this linkage.

International sanctions had marginalized the importance of Libya in the global economy. The lifting of these sanctions rapidly reversed this process. Due to Libya's geographic proximity to Europe, Libya was propelled from international economic exclusion to a vital energy supplier for European countries[8] (St. John 83). Anxiously observing the growing presence of European companies, American petroleum companies quickly took advantage of Libya's economic liberalization project (St John 84). The removal of trade and foreign investment restrictions produced a large increase in foreign investment. Despite US restrictions on investment in Libya, "foreign direct investment in Libya totaled $4 billion….up six-fold from the previous year" (St. John 84).

While the UN Commission of Inquiry dates the beginning of fighting between armed opposition groups and Libyan security forces to 24 February, fighting between the Libyan military and armed opposition groups in cities such as Misrata and Zawiya took place four to five days before this date (PCHR 11). The international global economy

reacted quickly to the fighting, "oil prices moved above $100/b" on the 21 February "for the first time since September 2008" (Aissa et al). On the 19th of March, UN Security Council Resolution 1973 authorized "all necessary measures" to protect civilians and shortly thereafter (the 31 March) "NATO assumed control of all international forces" (PCHR 18). Despite NATO's mandate stipulating the protection of civilians, if one views NATO strategy solely through the lens of "humanitarian intervention" a number of inconsistencies emerge. The first regards the rapid increase of NATO air missions in Libya after the establishment of the initial "no-fly zone" (ICG ii). The second regards NATO's uneasy relationship with Libya's armed anti-Qaddafi forces (Achcar).

To say that the presence of substantial US and European foreign investment in Libya did not deter NATO's military intervention in Libya is not to argue their irrelevance to the conflict. Shortly after assuming control of international forces and imposing a "no-fly" zone, NATO's military operations in Libya escalated rapidly (ICG 06/06/12 ii). NATO's Secretary General commented that NATO's operations in Libya occurred with "unprecedented speed, scale, and pace of execution" (Rasmussen). NATO's rapid military escalation and its incongruity with the parameters of its UN mandate did not go unnoticed (ICG 06/06/12 ii). During this escalation the International Crisis Group think-tank remarked that "only an immediate ceasefire" would be "consistent with the purpose originally claimed for NATO's intervention" (ICG 06/06/12 ii). The rapid escalation of NATO strikes targeting Qaddafi and his supporters should be viewed as the product of economic imperatives rather than an extension of humanitarian concerns. While a rapidly paced war, heavily predicated on NATO's air superiority may result in more civilian casualties, a quick war would minimize the losses of companies heavily invested in Libya's oil sector. Even with NATO's aerial bombardment of Libya, the country's oil infrastructure remained largely intact, with assistance from Qatar, a portion of the anti-Qaddafi forces were even able to export limited amounts of oil to help finance the uprising (AJE*The Cost of Libya's Revolution*).

While the pace of NATO's air operations are indicative of a desire to shorten the duration of the conflict, at first glance, NATO's reluctance to arm the Libyan rebels appears to contradict such a preference (Achcar). Despite emphasizing the Libyan character of the uprising, NATO and its allies did not make any substantial deliveries of arms to the Libyan rebels (Achcar).

While currently there is no one definitive explanation of why NATO did not substantially arm anti-Qaddafi forces, the academic literature examining the impact of resources on the dynamics of rebel groups offers several explanations. One explanation is that the delivery of arms and other material aid may have provided an incentive for anti-Qaddafi forces to prolong the conflict (Weinstein 600). It is also possible that NATO planners feared that supplying the NTC would fuel factionalism within the group, a dynamic that often occurs when rebel groups are suddenly flooded with material assistance (Weinstein 600). While NATO planners may have voiced similar concerns, it is more likely that the most pressing concern for NATO planners revolved around ensuring that NATO's campaign would not become a quagmire similar to the US invasion and occupation of Iraq.

The relatively short duration of the Libyan conflict, may in hind-sight obscure the significance of these concerns. This does not diminish the fact that during the conflict there were numerous concerns that after the initial flurry of NATO airstrikes, a "military deadlock" would ensue (ICG 06/06/2011 28). During the conflict, the perceived "deadlock" was occurring led some to caution that "a protracted war" in Libya was "a strong possibility" (ICG 06/06/2011 28). A protracted or prolonged conflict would have been severely detrimental to the economic interests of NATO member countries. It would have encouraged groups to target Libya's oil industries. In Iraq, armed groups were able divert billions of dollars of Iraqi oil wealth away from "the central (Iraqi) government" and "into private networks, and religious, tribal and partisan interests" (Kaldor et al 9). This concern may explain why NATO was reluctant to increase the offensive capabilities of even its allies on the ground in Libya.

Within two weeks of the founding of the NTC, the organization had established the Libyan Oil Company, which based out of Benghazi was tasked with acting as "supervisory authority on oil production and policies" (NTC Libya). In addition to international material assistance, during the conflict the NTC was able to export limited amounts of petroleum. Despite these sources of income, many Libyans who participated in the uprising have criticized the lack of assistance and practical support they received from the NTC (AJE *The Cost of Libya's Revolution,* ICG 12/14/2011 2). Much of the finances of the NTC went to pay the salaries of public sector employees in areas that the NTC had

captured from Qaddafi's forces. In early May the NTC estimated that it was currently paying the salaries of 140,000 employees. The NTC pursued a strategy of amassing technocrats to gain access to the banking and financial data necessary to make such payments in addition to paying "returns on financial investments" (NTC Libya). The NTC's efforts to ensure that public sector wages continued to be paid recognizes the importance of distributive networks in rentier states (Vandewalle 171).

Despite the lengthy period of sanctions imposed on the country, the economic importance of Libya (and its vast oil reserves) to the global economy has not subsided (St. John 84, Yergin 510). In this environment the concept of the "Security Dilemma" has shaped the policies of the NTC. The "Security Dilemma" facing the NTC can be seen as representing the organization's concerns regarding a post-Qaddafi Libya. While support for the various anti-Qaddafi forces and brigades that sprang up throughout Libya reduce the threat posed by Qaddafi, such support may also lead to the development of organizations capable of challenging the NTC. While some may argue that the "fog of war" limited the capacity of the NTC to extend support to various anti-Qaddafi forces, this argument fails to examine the NTC's political composition. The manner in which NTC assistance was provided to anti-Qaddafi forces, and the relationship the NTC has with members of the international community, may undermine the political initiatives of the NTC.

Political Transition and the Security Dilemma:

The composition of the NTC has pushed the organization to adopt a fairly conservative political trajectory. Before being pressured to announce that he would eventually step down, the NTC's "Prime Minister" Mahmoud Jibril (who was mostly known for his association with Saif al-Islam's "reform efforts") repeatedly emphasized that the struggle against Qaddafi was limited in scope (ICG 12/14/2011 8). Jibril allegedly reassured Western diplomats the conflict against Qaddafi "is not a revolution! This is an uprising" (ICG 12/14/2011 8). The NTC's failure to provide adequate support to the spontaneous civilian-led anti-Qaddafi brigades remains a source of tension between the two groups (ICG 12/14/2011 3). The "Security Dilemma" which heavily influenced the decisions of the NTC, the perception that strengthening anti-Qaddafi forces would undermine the organization's position in post-Qaddafi Libya, has effectively prevented the NTC from integrating these militias and forces on an institutional basis. Further exacerbating the issue is the manner in which the international community has largely ignored the development of this dynamic. The way in which NATO and other multilateral organizations deal almost exclusively with the NTC neglects the "Security Dilemma" facing the leaders and members of the localized militias (Svendsen 57).

Through evaluating the previous factors, one can begin to outline the contours of the current political environment. The prominent role of NATO's military assistance led to the development of the NTC's strategy which prioritized integrating the governments distributive network of economic rents over the militias and localized committees which formed during the conflict. While these issues are currently at the fore of Libya's political transition, they emerged through a process of historical development. This process has ultimately shaped the ways in which social grievances and factors of identity are expressed and recognized within Libya's current political environment.

Policy Directions:

It is outside of the scope of this paper to analyze in aggregate the mass of policies and interests being advanced by members of the international community. Rather this paper will briefly outline some of the more prevalent misconceptions underlining policy recommendations regarding Libya's political environment and economic conditions, the first of which consists of arguments urging the NTC to refrain from "de-Baath-ification" (Pack and White). Such arguments neglect to analyze the structure of Libyan politics under Qaddafi and may ignore a number of political developments which occurred as a result of the conflict.

The second regards the economic programs outlined by international institutions such as the International Monetary Fund, which advocate fiscal discipline on the part of the NTC (IMF). The push for macroeconomic stability in Libya must be complemented with development initiatives. Due to weak structure of the Libyan rentier state, asserting control over portions of the Libyan economy will prove difficult (Vandewalle 188). Furthermore there is substantial evidence that these economic and political policies have already been embraced by the NTC during the course of the

conflict.

The U.N. Development Programme (UNDP) possesses unique capabilities critical to Libya's political transition and post-conflict recovery. The UNDP's practices, which link human development to security and transparency (as articulated in its Human Development Report) allow the organization to take a multifaceted approach to post-conflict Libya. Such an approach must be utilized to reduce tensions between the NTC and local militias. Development initiatives need to be formed in collaboration with local municipalities and communities.

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[1] In the book *Africa Works* Chabol and Daloz apply this framework exclusively to sub-Saharan Africa (Chabol and Daloz). This article applies their framework to Libya, as the dynamics of patronage and informalization in Libya closely resemble models of patronage and informalization commonly found in sub-Saharan Africa.

[2] The 17th of February marks the anniversary of protests which broke out in Libya as a reaction to cartoons published by a Dutch newspaper depicting the Prophet Muhammad. It should be noted that while these demonstrations were in response to the publishing of cartoons depicting the Prophet, due to the influence of the anti-Qaddafi Islamist movement and the regime's violent suppression of the protests they were increasingly characterized by opposition to the Qaddafi government (ICG 06/06/2011 2).

[3] For the purposes of this paper the use of the term anti-Qaddafi forces describes both the NTC and forces engaged against Qaddafi's security apparatus that fall outside of the NTC's authority or command structure.

[4] Theoretically compulsory for Libyan university student, the camps consisted of two weeks of political and cultural lectures designed to encourage political participation within the structure and constraints of the Qaddafi regime (Obeidi 150).

[5] For examples of this oversimplification, refer to Richard Seymour's *The Liberal Defence of Murder* (Seymour). An example of this over simplification specific to in Libya, are in the documentary *State of Denial: Gaddafi the Endgame* (AJE).

[6] For analysis concerning the dynamics of economic rents and rent-seeking refer to *Oil Wars* (Kaldor et al).

[7] It should be noted that more than a few members of the LIFG had actually fought in Afghanistan during the 1980s as anti-Soviet "mujahideen" (Anderson 44).

[8] To cite one example, during this period "Libya was expected to provide some 30% of Italy's energy needs" (St. John 83).

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