

The Role of the Islamists in the Maghreb
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The Role of the Islamists in the Maghreb

The main focus of the Maghreb reports will be to examine the role of the Islamists in Tunisia, Algeria, and Libya. With a crackdown in Algeria, the sweeping win of Ennahda in Tunisia, and the discussion of the Islamists in Libya, there is a clear role that each party plays in their respective countries. Using the Arab spring as a focal point, we will examine how these parties have affected the Maghreb, and what they have stood for historically as well as where they stand today. We will discuss what particular objectives the Islamists have in each country, as well as how the population receives them. Each group member has been assigned a country and will examine the history of that country leading up to the development of the Islamist parties.

A Brief Look at Shari'a Law

To understand the roles the Islamists have traditionally played, as well as what their objectives are today, it is important to understand Shari'a Law. While Sharia Law is not implemented in Tunisia, Algeria, or Libya, there is fear that it will play a part in future politics.

Within the governments of Algeria, Tunisia and Libya, Islamic law is based off the idea of *Shari'a*; which means that it is based off customs and teachings of the Qur'an. Though this word has multiple meanings, it is the way that jurists find truth through exploration and analysis. It is ethics and moral rulings using five levels: *wajib* (obligatory), *mandub* (commendable), *mubah* (permissible), *makruh* (reprehensible) and *haram* (forbidden). In Algeria, Shari'a law is regionally based which means that local governments choose whether or not (or how much to incorporate) into their laws.¹ In Tunisia, Shari'a law is blended with state law, although Ghannouchi has said there is "no place" for it. In Libya, the first declaration by Mustafa Abdul Jalil, Chair of NTC, said that Libya would be ruled by the Shari'a Law (an obvious usurpation of the right of Libyans to freely decide the type of state they want to install) and was considered a mistake. The interim president softened his declaration the next day. Nevertheless, it made a bad impression in the West. Today, most political forces in the country expect religion will guide the future of the country, although it is still unclear how Islamic Law will be implemented.

¹ Dahlén, A. (2003). *Islamic Law, Epistemology and Modernity: Legal Philosophy in Contemporary Iran*. Routledge.

The Jasmine Revolution: The Role of the Islamists in Tunisia

Introduction

The Jasmine Revolution, which sparked the Arab Spring, started in a small country located in North Africa. Tunisia neither had the geostrategic importance of Egypt, nor natural resources of Libya, but yet maintained lasting relations with Europe and the West.² Tunisia was even thought to be the most “European” country in North Africa, with its beautiful beaches, which heightened their status as a tourist destination. Though underneath this façade, Tunisia was suffering from high unemployment, food hikes, government corruption, and an authoritarian ruler who oppressed the Tunisian population.

Gaining independence from France on March 20, 1950, Tunisia was headed by former President Habib Bourguiba. Bourguiba set to secularize Tunisia from Islam, and prove that it was a country that could keep up with its European counterparts. Tunisia maintained good relations with France, and sought to set itself apart from its Arab neighbors. Bourguiba established the Personal Status Code which enabled women the right to vote, be an elected member of parliament, earn equal wages to men, divorce, and require their consent to marriage. (MEI) Though eventually Bourguiba outlasted his time when he established himself president for life. Slowly, Tunisians became discontent with Bourguiba, this paved the way for Zine El Abidine Ben-Ali. Ben-Ali not only ruled with an iron fist, but also ruled with a one party system eliminating opposition that could potentially threaten his presidency.

² Ryan, Y. (2011). Revolution and political transformation in the Middle East . *The Middle East Institute, III*, 12-15. Retrieved from <http://www.mei.edu/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=QnpP0vmNOX8=&tabid=541> (p. 12)

Ben-Ali remained Tunisia's only president for 23 years, and though he maintained women's rights and a secular government, Tunisians were oppressed, and political opposition was nonexistent. Ben-Ali imprisoned those who he believed to be a threat to Tunisia's political status quo, and exiled Rachid Ghannouchi, head of Tunisia's recent victorious political party, Ennahda.

Ennahda, formally known as the Islamic Tendency Movement (MTI), has been a major player in the politics in Tunisia. Though it was an "illegal" party under Ben-Ali, and Bourguiba kept them at bay, Ennahda has had a vast majority of support throughout the years and this can be seen in their victory during the most recent elections. The following report will examine the role of Islam in politics in Tunisia, while also understanding the most recent revolution that has taken place in Tunisia, and taken off in the rest of the Arab world.

The Rise of Ben-Ali

Under former President Bourguiba, Tunisia transformed into a state that detached itself from the bonds of clans, villages and regions. Bourguiba felt that these attachments stunted the development of Tunisia, and did not fit with his vision to redefine the country where habous lands and sharia law did not exist.³ Though Bourguiba championed women's rights, improving economic and social conditions in the 1980's proved to be a difficult task. According to Alexander Christopher, author of *Tunisia: Stability and Reform in the Modern Maghreb*, over 20% of the population still lived below the poverty

³ Alexander, C. (2010). *Tunisia: Stability and reform in the modern Maghreb*. New York, NY: Routledge (p. 37)

line, and in 1975 17% of the Tunisian population lived in one bedroom apartments; this figure climbed to 26% by 1980.⁴

It was through these hardships that MTI came to being. Headed by Rachid Ghannouchi, MTI rejected violence and pledged support for democratic and multi party political institutions. In 1981, Bourguiba agreed to hold elections though the government rejected any pleas from MTI to become a legal political party. By July of 1981, Bourguiba had 61 MTI activist arrested, and charged them with forming an illegal organization.⁵ For the next several years, Bourguiba struggled with the Islamists within MTI, and Bourguiba himself struggled with health issues. In March of 1987, Rachid Ghannouchi, leader of the MTI was arrested for delivering a speech, and by early November Ben-Ali, who had been Bourguiba's Interior Minister for the past year overtook Bourguiba's spot as president.⁶

Under Ben-Ali, Ghannouchi and several other MTI activists were released. Several members who had been issued the death penalty had their sentences reduced to life in prison. In his initial stages of presidency, Ben-Ali abolished the term "president for life" and allowed for the formation of other political parties. Ben-Ali not only discussed the opportunity for competitive elections and equal rights for women, but he talked about individual rights and liberties.⁷ Under Ben-Ali, MTI once again tried to appease the government by changing their name to Ennahda in order to become a legal political party. Abiding by the rules that no political party may reference religion, Ennahda continued to pressure Ben-Ali for the rights to run as a political party. Again,

⁴ Ibid. (p. 49)

⁵ Ibid. (p. 50)

⁶ Ibid. (p. 52)

⁷ Ibid. (p. 53)

their bid was rejected as Ben-Ali realized that Ennahda had been gaining support throughout Tunisia. Under immense pressure from the government and escalating tensions, Ghannouchi left Tunisia in 1990 to continue his leadership abroad, first from Algiers, then London.

Once again in the 1990's Tunisia experienced protests as the population once again became dissatisfied with Ben-Ali and the government. Ben-Ali believed in a deregulated free market to make Tunisia more attractive to buyers. While his policies were similar to those of the West, unemployment continued to increase in Tunisia adding to the discontent within the country.

Ben-Ali and the Country Behind the Mask

Behind the guise of equal rights for women, laid an ugly truth inside Tunisia. Even though Ben-Ali spoke of individual rights and liberties, freedom of press was strictly limited, and opposition to the regime was restricted. Ben-Ali initially began his presidency stating that opposing voices would not be punished, though as time progressed, and as groups such as Ennahda started to gain ground, Ben-Ali began arresting activists.

In February of 1991, three Islamists attacked an office in Tunis belonging to the Rally for Constitutional Democracy (RCD), Ben-Ali's party.⁸ Ennahda leaders immediately denounced the act and denied that any of their members were related to the attack. Between 1990 to 1992, more than 8,000 individuals had been arrested due to a plot that was uncovered to assassinate Ben-Ali in May of 1991.⁹ Ben-Ali used this as further leverage to attack and harass members of Ennahda and other Islamists, even

⁸Ibid. (p. 60)

⁹ Ibid. (p. 60)

though Ennahda continued to preach against the use of violence. In an interview taken with Rashid Ghannouchi in December 2011, he stated that, “ The prosecution of al-Nahda movement could have led us to violence, and this is what Ben Ali wanted. But our experience in prison has deepened our belief in freedom and democracy, and Ben Ali failed to drag us into violence”.¹⁰ Ghannouchi and Ennahda continued to denounce violence even after continual harassment.

A separate Islamist organization developed in the Maghreb called the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GPSC). GPSC had broken from the Armed Islamic Group in Algeria. In April of 2002, GPSC attacked a synagogue on the island of Djerba. Djerba was an important tourist destination for Tunisia, and the drop in tourism afterwards cut Tunisia’s growth in 2002 to the lowest it had been in a decade.¹¹

Aside from the struggles felt by political parties, particularly those of Ennahda, Tunisia was dealing with increasing unemployment, food hikes, and corruption within the government. The World Bank estimates that from 1996-97 to 2008, the number of unemployed graduates from the higher education system in Tunisia more than doubled from 121,800 to 336,000.¹² In 2008, the World Bank statistics revealed that 14.2% of the labor force was unemployed, and little was being done as unemployment continued to increase in the country.

¹⁰ Lynch, M. (2011, December 5). Rached ghannouchi: the fp interview *Foreign Policy Magazine*, Retrieved from http://lynch.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/12/05/ghannouchis_advice

¹¹ Alexander, C. (2010). *Tunisia: Stability and reform in the modern Maghreb*. New York, NY: Routledge (p. 61)

¹² For a better integration into the labor market in Tunisia. In (2008). *The World Bank* Retrieved from <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/MENAEXT/TUNISIAEXTN/0,,contentMDK:21671683~pagePK:1497618~piPK:217854~theSitePK:310015,00.html>

Mohammed Bouazizi – The Man who Started a Revolution

As unemployment in Tunisia increased, so did dissatisfaction with Ben-Ali. Tunisian's had been unable to elect another leader, opposing political parties were kept to a minimum, Ennahda was illegal, freedom of press did not exist, and corruption plagued Ben-Ali's presidency. Earning an income became extremely difficult, leading Mohammed Bouazizi to set himself on fire as an act of desperation and defiance.

Mohammed Bouazizi was just 26 years old when on December 17, 2010 he set himself on fire. Mohammed sold fruits and vegetables from a stall in the town of Sidi Bouzid, where he often experienced harassment at the hands of local officials. This harassment continued when a fine of 400 dinars (\$280) was sent to Mohammed's house for having an illegal fruit and vegetable stall.¹³ The produce and scales were later confiscated, and local officials refused to hear Mohammed's plea to have his belonging returned. This incident set the stage for Mohammed when he lit himself on fire outside of a municipality building.

Mohammed's story soon spread across Tunisia where protests ensued. Earning a living in Tunisia had become increasingly difficult, and efforts to appease the population had come too late. By December 22, 2010, another young man who was only 22 years old, committed suicide amongst the protest of high unemployment.¹⁴ Tunisia's development minister had promised a \$10 million unemployment program, and Ben-Ali

¹³ Yasmine, R. (2011, January 20). The tragic story of a street vendor. *Al-Jazeera English*. Retrieved from <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2011/01/201111684242518839.html>

¹⁴ Rifai, R. (2011, January 23). Timeline: Tunisia's uprising. *Al-Jazeera English*. Retrieved from <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/spotlight/tunisia/2011/01/201114142223827361.html>

promised 300,000 new jobs. Protestors remained unabated, as the programs were not sufficient to cripple the issues that had ignited the revolution across Tunisia.¹⁵

The Jasmine Revolution

Following the death of Mohammed Bouazizi, protestors took to the streets demanding that Ben-Ali step down. Once again, Ben-Ali met his opposition with violence, where according to the United Nations, 219 people were killed.¹⁶ In hopes to regain the country, Ben-Ali promised new elections, and vouched not to run for president in 2014.¹⁷ In addition to this, Ben-Ali pledged to introduce new freedoms and reforms, as well as launching an investigation into the killings of protestors.¹⁸ Unable to gain further support, on January 14, 2011, Zine al-Abidine Ben-Ali resigned as president.

From January 14, 2011 to October 23, 2011 when the official elections took place, a power void was filled with an interim government declaring Tunisia in a state of emergency. Initially, Prime Minister to Ben-Ali, Mohamed Ghannouchi took office as the interim President, though he was met with opposition as being too closely connected to Ben-Ali's regime. Beji Caid Essebi, soon took Mohamed Ghannouchi's place as head of the interim government.¹⁹ Though he was met with daily protests, Essebi promised new elections. Originally scheduled for July, the elections were postponed due to the lack of organization and registered voters in Tunisia. Many new political parties were still developing, and Essebi felt that more time was needed if they were to compete with long

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ryan, Y. (2011). Revolution and political transformation in the Middle East . *The Middle East Institute, III*, 12-15. Retrieved from <http://www.mei.edu/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=QnpP0vmNOX8=&tabid=541> (p. 12)

¹⁷ Rifai, R. (2011, January 23). Timeline: Tunisia's uprising. *Al-Jazeera English*. Retrieved from <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/spotlight/tunisia/2011/01/201114142223827361.html>

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Tunisia. (2011, October 28). *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/international/countriesandterritories/tunisia/index.html>

standing parties such as Ennahda who had been banned under Ben-Ali.²⁰ Ennahda was able to reappear after the revolution, and form a legal political party after decades of opposition from the president.

The Rise of Ennahda

On October 23, 2011, Tunisia's first elections in 23 years revealed that Ennahda had won majority of the votes, signaling to some that an Islamist takeover would negatively change the outlook of the country. With a sweeping 40% of tallied votes going towards Ennahda, they still did not win outright majority. This forced them to accept a coalition formed with other political parties to rewrite the Tunisian Constitution.²¹

Though Ennahda won in the elections, questions surfaced as to why the other political parties trailed so far behind. Ennahda's direct competition, Progressive Democratic Party, was thought to have closely followed behind Ennahda in their victory. Though as polling suggests, they failed to win much support. PDP was a harsh critic of Ennahda, and considered themselves to be Ennahda's chief rival.²²

Ahmed Nejjib Chebbi founded PDP in 1983. Though PDP was not an illegal party, it presented itself as opposition to Ben-Ali and therefore PDP was oppressed under Ben-Ali's regime.²³ Instead of confronting PDP in the coalition process, Ennahda has engaged

²⁰ Tunisia. (2011, October 28). *The New York Times*. Retrieved from

<http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/international/countriesandterritories/tunisia/index.html>

²¹ Karon, T. (2011, October 24). As Tunisia counts its votes, can the west stop worrying and learn to love the islamists? read more: <http://globalspin.blogs.time.com/2011/10/24/as-tunisia-counts-its-votes-can-the-west-stop-worrying-and-learn-to-love-the-islamists/>

²² Kirkpatrick, D. (2011, October 24). Moderate islamist party heads toward victory in Tunisia . *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/25/world/africa/ennahda-moderate-islamic-party-makes-strong-showing-in-tunisia-vote.html?_r=1&pagewanted=1&sq=Tunisia&st=cse&scp=4

²³ Tunisia's political parties. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from http://image.guardian.co.uk/sys-files/Guardian/documents/2011/10/19/Tunisian_Parties_2010.pdf

two other secular parties known as the Congress for the Republic *and* the Democratic Forum for Labor and Liberties, which is known in Arabic as Ettakatol.²⁴ Recently, Congress for the Republic's leader, Moncef Marzouki, has been named president of Tunisia. One of Marzouki's first tasks will be to formally designate Ennahda's Hamadi Jbeli as Prime Minister.²⁵ Marzouki is a well-known human rights activist who was exiled to Paris under Ben-Ali. This is a huge win for the center-left parties.²⁶

Ennahda's victory has been viewed with speculation because many fear that the party will abandon certain rights, especially those of equality for women. Examining how Ennahda was able to waiver so much support in Tunisia is best understood through their role in the country's history. Under Bourguiba and Ben-Ali, Ennahda remained a prominent opposition to both leaders even though they were constantly being politically dismembered. Rachid Ghannouchi was a political prisoner that remained strong willed while his party and other activists were subjected to harassment and imprisonment. Throughout this time, Ennahda maintained steady support from Tunisians but also maintained a presence and a familiar name. When the elections were held in October of 2011, voters were not only familiar with Ennahda, but had grown to recognize them as a legitimate political party. They had played a major role in the opposition of Ben-Ali, and appeared to be a polar-opposite of what Ben-Ali's regime stood for.

While Ennahda is aware of the questions surrounding their ability to govern Tunisia, Rashid Ghannouchi has worked tirelessly promoting a positive image of the

²⁴ Kirkpatrick, D. (2011, October 24). Moderate islamist party heads toward victory in Tunisia . *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/25/world/africa/ennahda-moderate-islamic-party-makes-strong-showing-in-tunisia-vote.html?_r=1&pagewanted=1&sq=Tunisia&st=cse&scp=4

²⁵ Tunisian activist, moncef marzouki, named president . (2011, December 12). *BBC News*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-16149119>

²⁶ Tunisia's political parties. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from http://image.guardian.co.uk/sys-files/Guardian/documents/2011/10/19/Tunisian_Parties_2010.pdf

party. In trying to reassure the people who are not confident in Ennahda, Ghannouchi said,

“...we are serious about our projects in establishing democracy and assuring development...the people who do not trust us, it's normal, because for 22 years they have been subject to propaganda from Ben-Ali which as discredited us, and made people fearful of us”.²⁷

Ennahda has promised that they will that they will not harm tourism through a ban on alcohol, or force women to wear the veil. Ennahda has said that they will respect women's rights, and will remain a progressive moderate party, with a socioeconomic model that would appear Scandinavian.²⁸ By working to assure the Tunisian population, Ennahda has also been working on assuring the Western World.

A View from the West

As the elections in Tunisia unfolded and Ennahda claimed victory, Western countries looked on with uncertainty. Fearing that the Islamist would monopolize on their power, the West remained skeptical on whether or not the intentions behind Ennahda's victory remained genuine. Though, since the elections, Ghannouchi has continued to articulate a moderate stance, suggesting that they inherit a similar model of Turkey. Ennahda has stated that their priorities are achieving, “stability, conditions for a dignified life, and the building of democratic institutions”.²⁹

²⁷ Lynch, M. (2011, December 5). Rached ghannouchi: the fp interview *Foreign Policy Magazine*, Retrieved from http://lynch.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/12/05/ghannouchis_advice

²⁸ Shadid, A. (2011, October 19). Islamist imagines a democratic future for Tunisia. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/20/world/africa/rachid-al-ghannouchi-imagines-democratic-future-for-tunisia.html?pagewanted=1&_r=1&ref=tunisia

²⁹ Karon, T. (2011, October 24). As Tunisia counts its votes, can the west stop worrying and learn to love the islamists? read more: <http://globalspin.blogs.time.com/2011/10/24/as-tunisia-counts-its-votes-can-the-west-stop-worrying-and-learn-to-love-the-islamists/>

Having perused a coalition, Ennahda believes that this will help lessen the fear of the Islamists to the Western World. Ennahda has promised to respect personal rights, and continue to let the wearing of the veil be determined by the woman.³⁰ In addition to this, Ghannouchi has stated that he does not want his party to be referred to as Islamist because it usually suggests theocracy in Western Eyes. Instead, he would prefer his party be an *Islamic* party.³¹

Though Ennahda has worked to assure those skeptical of their party, one incident highlighted the fears held by Tunisian secularists the West. Ennahda's Hamadi Jbeli, the Secretary General, called Tunisia the 6th Caliphate. This has been cause for many people to fear that Ennahda has a hidden agenda. Ennahda members have said that Jbeli's comments were taken out of context and that they will continue to champion moderate views.³²

As the history of Tunisia has shown, by continued oppression of the Islamist parties, their support grew stronger and their appeal strengthened. Ben-Ali's efforts to diminish the role of Ennahda has only made the party that much stronger. The ideologies behind secularism have been tarnished under Ben-Ali, thus suggesting to some Tunisians, that the Islamists will form a better government.

Tunisia's Effect on the Maghreb

Tunisia's influence on other countries is not limited to the spread of revolutions across North Africa and the Middle East. Tunisia has now successfully completed their

³⁰ Muasher, M. (2011, November 2). The overblown islamist threat. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/03/opinion/the-overblown-islamist-threat.html?_r=2&hp

³¹ Kirkpatrick, D. (2011, October 24). Moderate islamist party heads toward victory in Tunisia . *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/25/world/africa/ennahda-moderate-islamic-party-makes-strong-showing-in-tunisia-vote.html?_r=1&pagewanted=1&sq=Tunisia&st=cse&scp=4

³² Amara, T. (2011, November 15). Tunisia islamist causes outcry with "caliphate" talk. *Reuters*. Retrieved from <http://www.reuters.com/assets/print?aid=USTRE7AE1ZD20111115>

first elections in 23 years, and by many accounts the elections were considered free and fair. Now, as the Muslim Brotherhood has won the first round of elections in Egypt, one can't help but think about the influence Tunisia has had in the region. Tunisia's elections suggested that it was possible to elect an Islamic party while continuing to acquire support. Tunisia is also out to prove that democracy and Islam can go hand in hand, which has born influence in Egypt.

While Tunisia is proud of their electoral outcome, Ghannouchi, and other Ennahda members are aware of the implications that their victory could have in the region. It is for this reason that Ghannouchi has stated that they hope their example of championing Western-style liberal democracy would lead other Islamists in a "similar liberal direction".³³ Ghannouchi also said that he hopes the Muslim Brotherhood forms a coalition similar to Tunisia's so that all voices, including the secularists are heard.³⁴

Currently, Tunisia and Egypt are the only countries where elections have occurred. Having said this, one can assume that they will have a lasting impact on future elections in the region.

Conclusion - The Future of Tunisia

For 23 years Tunisians were forced to accept the rules dictated under Ben-Ali's regime. Opposition was forcefully dealt with and could lead to imprisonment. As Ben-Ali's regime came to an end, increasing unemployment plagued Tunisia, which was a

³³ Kirkpatrick, D. (2011, October 24). Moderate islamist party heads toward victory in Tunisia . *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/25/world/africa/ennahda-moderate-islamic-party-makes-strong-showing-in-tunisia-vote.html?_r=1&pagewanted=1&sq=Tunisia&st=cse&scp=4

³⁴ Lynch, M. (2011, December 5). Rached ghannouchi: the fp interview *Foreign Policy Magazine*, Retrieved from http://lynch.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/12/05/ghannouchis_advice

leading factor behind The Jasmine Revolution. Democracy's development occurred over a course of a few months in Tunisia, and Ennahda has come out on top.

Throughout this report, it has been stressed that Ennahda views itself as a moderate progressive party and will remain so as the majority party in Tunisia. Ennahda's decision to form a coalition with secular parties suggests that they are speaking honestly about the position they are assuming. Though some issues have been raised, such as the statement regarding Tunisia to be the 6th Caliphate, Ennahda and Ghannouchi have tirelessly worked to promote a good name for the party around the world.

Though it is too early to tell what lies ahead for Tunisia, writing off the Islamists as a negative influence would be a mistake. They were democratically elected, and the best way to let Tunisians find their way is through trial and error of the democratic process. If democracy is properly upheld in Tunisia, then any dissatisfaction with Ennahda can be swiftly dealt with. I believe that through the formation of a coalition the chances for success in Tunisia will be greater. While disagreements between Ettakatol, Congress for the Republic, and other parties are expected, the opportunity to give voice to secularists and Islamists paints a brighter future for Tunisia.

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Algeria

Introduction

The Arab Spring movement in Algeria has stripped down the façade that the country is completely fair and transparent since the civil war. The complaints brought to the table have included the rampant corruption in government (and the question as to legitimacy of the elections held in 2009), the suppression of the state of emergency and rising food costs and unemployment. The movement did not have a particular leadership, but rather, different groups of ages and unions who were protesting. However, this is not the first time the rapidly changing state has seen rebellions against the ones in charge. In this country report, I discuss the French colonial history and movements that sprung from it, the civil war and the recent uprisings. This report will shed some light on the state that has attempted to find the best paths towards democracy, transparency, stability and leadership.

French Colonization of Algeria and Early Rebellions

France had a special attachment to Algeria, and it invested a lot in the region: establishing the three largest cities as municipal units, investing in the agriculture and manufacturing sectors, building infrastructure and encouraging European immigration in the area. It was considered a “department” but the locals and the *colons* fought over administrative power (although the French military was the one in most control (Library of Congress, 1992; Ruedy, 2005). In this section, I will discuss the history of French colonization and rule in Algeria, and the struggle towards independence.

During the height of the colonial era in the 1800's, France, along with Britain, Spain and Portugal, sought to occupy territories in the Americas, Africa and Asia. After the successful colonization by the Spanish and Portuguese, France began sending ships to the "New World" of Canada and the Caribbean while setting up trading posts in West Africa, the Indian Ocean and South Asia. Algeria was the main conquest in French colonization in North Africa with plans originating during Napoleon's reign.

The French monarchy was very unpopular after the Revolution with a series of revolving kings. During that time in Algeria, the dey were having problems keeping an organized government. The French consul in Algiers was insulted by the dey, and the French monarchy decided to blockade Algeria. After three years, in 1830, the French army invaded the territory. With an army of 34,000 soldiers, the French defeated the Arab dey who summoned a total of 43,000 in about three weeks while also destroying the cities and people. In 1834, France officially annexed Algeria and approved of a "general governor" or high-ranking military official to preside over the land. Waves of "colons" or "pieds noirs" from France settled into the area to make a profit on the newfound territory. What took the most toll on the land was the abundance of French farmers who decided to take the land and crops from the native farmers and use them for cheap labor (Library of Congress, 1992; Ruedy, 2005).

After the French successfully kicked the Ottomans out of Algeria, jailed resistance leaders were freed from that rule. Seeing how Algeria rule suddenly changed leadership hands, Muslim resistance fighters grouped together to form the

Muhyi ad Dinm, or a Muslim brotherhood, led by the young Abd al Qadir. By 1839, he was able to set up local governments under his regime where the French had not yet conquered (mainly the tribal and interior parts of Algeria, almost 2/3 of the modern country). His army continually fought with the French, making and breaking negotiations. Eventually, in 1847, Abd al Qadir surrendered after the weakening of his regime, but his legacy was an important resource for the later Algeria War for Independence (Library of Congress, 1992; Ruedy, 2005).

In 1848, France absorbed three areas of Algeria, Algiers, Oran and Constantine, as part of their “departments” which are regional administrations (France is divided into numbered departments, and colonies were considered extras). French colonists decided to divide governance into three categories: Colon-majority, mixed and indigenous. In colon-majority areas, mostly the major cities and coastal areas, the French kicked out Arab influences in the government. In mixed and indigenous areas, Arab leaders had limited authority and were mostly used as a “buffer” between local resistance and the colons. Laws were in effect for colons to be able to run for office and vote freely while others had to be elected only for certain lower positions. Napoleon III visited in the 1860s, prompting him to create the “Arab Kingdom” with himself as the king. In this kingdom, he tried to completely reorganize Algeria into three separate purposes (French, Arab and military). However, he was captured in 1870, and local colons gained leadership again. They decreed that Arabs and indigenous were allowed to live in Algeria but were not fully fledged citizens unless they chose to abide by French legal code and denounce their religion (Islam was severely affected by these French legal codes).

In 1871, another uprising occurred when pastoral farmers' grains were emptied onto the market and drove up prices. They sold their crops and were left for starvation when they could not afford to eat grain products. They revolted over the loss of thousands, but the government decided that instead of helping them, they enforced strict rules of conduct which imprisoned and punished them. In during the next couple of decades, Algeria economically flourished despite marginalization of Arabs and indigenous peoples (Library of Congress, 1992; Ruedy, 2005).

Although most Muslims lived in abject poverty and in low social status, some families were able to work up to colon standards, sending their children to French universities and working within bigger businesses. These educated Muslims started small political movements (starting with the Young Algerians), mainly during the 1920s and 1930s, in order to empower the poor and better social reforms. Splinter groups formed, and depending, focused on Islamic movements, democratization or communism of the Algerian state. This also tied in with the new spread of Pan-Arab Nationalism in North Africa. The colon governments suppressed the groups as best they could (Library of Congress, 1992; Ruedy, 2005).

After WWII, the process of French assimilation begun. Muslims of important social importance (veterans of WWII, professors, doctors, students, etc.) were given French citizenship, but there was an even better issue to be resolved: how to incorporate Algeria into France, and how much independence it would be given. The players were French themselves (under de Gaulle), the colons, the French Muslims and the marginalized, many of which sided with resistance movements. In 1947, the Algerian Assembly was established, but once again, colons ruled, and they decided

against a statue to include Arabic as an official language, give more power to Muslim women, etc. Mohamed Ahmed Ben Bella, a revolutionary, organized resistance groups, but reformed and create the “Front de Libération Nationale” or FLN, and its military sector, the ALN. This is the group that officially started the Algerian War of Independence (Library of Congress, 1992; Ruedy, 2005).

In 1954, the FLN attacked many public offices and buildings to signal their start, and on Egyptian radio, they announced their plans to create an independent, democratic and Islamic Algeria. The FLN was successful in that they were able to convince many to join their cause including local groups, students and farmers. The use of violence was extreme and encouraged as -the- way to oust the French. After a massacre in Philippeville, warfare spread to other cities and towns, maybe taking place in the “casbah” or Muslim sections. Many of the attacks and bombings were considered terrorist (in cafes, known as cafe-wars) and many casualties were of civilians and suspected supporters (Library of Congress, 1992; Ruedy, 2005).

In 1955, the French military intervened in order to restore peace, and by 1956, National Council of the Algerian Revolution convened to organize the war and the FLN. The FLN, now with a revolving door of leaders and drops in support, weakened by 1957. In 1958, de Gaulle was elected to deal with the situation which was now widespread. He appealed to the colons and Muslims by implementing better reforms within the Algerian government (which was still under France). However, the FLN saw this as an act of neo-colonialism and enacted the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic to counter the French. However, many Muslims and colons voted for de Gaulle’s referendum, but this time of relief did not

last. The colons (who formed the significant vigilante group Organisation de l'Armée Secrète, or OAS) had lost faith in the French and Muslims did not see immediate changes they had hoped would be delivered. The FLN did not let up, and the French military did not see an end to the struggle. In 1962, after eight years, the French declared a ceasefire and another referendum which allowed Algerian independence and full citizenship for Muslims and colons who wished to remain. An overwhelming vote pushed this through, and a truce was formed between the OAS and the FLN. A huge percentage of French and Jewish populations emigrated from Algeria to France, and elections were held in 1963, Ben Bella was announced the first President of Algeria (Library of Congress, 1992; Ruedy, 2005).

Post-Independence Struggles

This section explains the struggles to form a government after a long war.

After the war, the emergence of the FLN as the main government party prompted the rise of opposition and the need for political, economical and social organization. Ben Bella was the president of the party, and he drafted a constitution that gave him executive powers without a legislative body. He added/removed those who either supported or rejected him as a autocratic leader. Revolts started from different parties in 1965 including the Communist Party, the Socialist Party and the National Committee for the Defense of the Revolution. Boumediene, Algeria's minister of defense, swiftly captured the leaders of these groups and either sentenced them to death, life imprisonment or exile. However, Boumediene began to grow uneasy with Ben Bella's need for control. In June 1965, he and his military

cronies deposed Ben Bella in a military coup (Library of Congress, 1992; Ruedy, 2005).

The exodus of many colons meant there was a dent in higher management and administration in government, businesses, public works, etc. As a result, the Algerians left were unable to fill these positions (due to colonial restrictions in education and experience) and the economy was at a standstill. What is worse that colons did not share their knowledge before they departed, leaving much of the work undone. Algerians, who were able, tried to take over abandoned houses and businesses, and the government, now under Ben Bella/FLN, declared public property part of the state. Eventually, organization emerged, and towns and cities were able to resume ordinance. The agricultural sector also tried to work under independently owned enterprises (autogestion), but this system failed to stay afloat amid corruption (Library of Congress, 1992; Ruedy, 2005).

Once he reached office, Boumediene rid of the programs that Ben Bella enacted and created a more-militarized approach towards governance. Before the constitution was finished, the Council of the Revolution (a group of 26 members, mostly friends of Boumediene) were in charge of the state. However, this stalled economic and social growth, and many were upset that the constitution was prolonged. In 1976, the constitution was finally finished, and Boumediene was officially elected president as a sign of delivery. Unfortunately, he passed away in 1978, and there was a rush to see who the next FLN leader would be. Bendjedid, a close ally of Boumediene, was elected in 1979 (Library of Congress, 1992; Ruedy, 2005).

During this time, despite Boumediene's Islamist agenda (further marginalizing the Berber and other populations), there was already trouble brewing within the marginal sectors. Islamist groups formed in retaliation of the government, mainly upset with their broken promises a better post-colonial Algeria. What is also interesting to add is the pull between Arabization programs and the Berber movement. While Berber populations were trying to gain more recognition within the state (through inclusion programs, education of their languages, etc.), Islamists found them to go against their beliefs (Library of Congress, 1992; Ruedy, 2005).

After he came to office, Bendjedid's government created the Five Year Plan to liberalize the Algerian economy. However, prices still rose on basic goods, and unemployment soared. Bendjedid decided to privatize services which also did not help as oil prices continued to plummet. In 1988, there was a student and worker walkout which was followed by riots and destruction of government property. The government decided to enact a state of emergency. Bendjedid made reforms and in 1989, created a new constitution that eliminated FLN and socialist from the vocabulary, hoping to spur the political ideals and freedoms of the Algerian state. Later that year, the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was created despite the law that political parties could not have religious overtones. They challenged the government reforms which prompted FLN beef up their political power. FIS and their followers resisted and protested, and martial law was declared in 1990. FIS leaders won elections in 1991, but the president and FLN claimed that the elections were void. Government and FIS loyalists rioted, and there was a military

intervention trying to suppress the spread to more cities. Another state of emergency was enacted as a result, and the FIS was banned from elections. Guerrilla movements started, as these were groups splintered from the FIS, and massacres took places throughout northern Algeria (Library of Congress, 1992; Ruedy, 2005).

Civil War, Unrest and Hope

This section details the civil war and the conflict between political parties, one of which, the FIS, was greatly influenced by Islam.

Negotiations took place, led by General Liamine Zéroual, between imprisoned FIS leaders as well as other political leaders of other groups. However, the negotiations fell through as the strongest guerrilla group, the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), refused any sort of peace talk. Elections were held again in 1995 with Zéroual winning although he was at the mercy of military leaders to end the war and voluntarily stepped down in 1999. Even though the groups started to dismantle after tensions within the leadership roles, deaths and struggles for power, they were still around until 2003 (Library of Congress, 1992; Ruedy, 2005). (The Al-Qaeda Organization in the Islamic Maghreb (GSPC), which was a faction of the GIA, was given the final blow when the U.S. decided to help the Algerian government with the War on Terror.)

Another round of elections took place, this time with Bouteflika spearheading a campaign to restore peace in Algeria. He succeeded and won elections in 1999. He established the a reconciliation program for the civil war and the Support Plan for Economic Recovery which boosted Algeria's exports and economic growth, and he

became very close to other international leaders to create political relationships. Amnesty was granted to FIS leaders, and Berber groups were given more recognition within social policies, including teaching their languages in local schools (Library of Congress, 1992; Ruedy, 2005).

The Arab Spring Movement

This is a date-by-date look at the Arab Spring as it happened in Algeria. While there were protests already occurring in smaller portions throughout the country, they came to head right before the rest of the Maghreb and Middle East.

December 29, 2010: Protests began in Algiers with resistance from police, leading to injuries and arrests. The protests had been ongoing, ranging from the rising unemployment (mainly among university graduates) and corruption within the government. President Bouteflika had amended the constitution in 2009 to allow another election term to the current president in which he won. Food prices also soared with an increase of imports of basic provisions.

January 2011: Protests spread to other cities and towns throughout Algeria, and riots a couple days later sparked arson and looting in local business, government buildings and town halls. Over 800 people were injured, over 1,100 arrested and 3 were dead. After a man set himself on fire in Tunisia (in which is considered the technical start of the Arab Spring), Algerians also participated in self-immolation and suicide. The police and tried to suppress the protests, riots and marches by claiming that they were not authorized by the government. Demonstrations flared

more when Ben Ali from Tunisia fled, and Algerians waved the Tunisian flag to show their success.

Political parties tried to rally and make claims as to why the protests were occurring. One party extremely urged the government to lift the 19-year state of emergency which severely limited freedom of the citizens.

February 2011: University strikes started when students claimed that they were given poor education. Paramedics were also on strike. After the resignation of Mubarak, protests in Algiers intensified. Police cordoned off the borders of Algiers to contain the demonstrations, and protesters could not reach the main square by being fired with tear gas and water cannons. Similar demonstrations also cropped up in Oran, Constantine and Annaba. Finally on the 22nd, the government officially lifted the state of emergency ban and began to allow demonstrations as long as there was a fair notice.

March and April 2011: Protests continue against unfair wages and pension packages, but they are met with pro-Bouteflika supporters who tried to lynch another democracy group leader. President Bouteflika released a statement saying he planned to “reinforce representative democracy” and create changes within elections, the government and the press.

While there are still sporadic protests and demonstrations throughout the country, it looks as though there hasn't been a collective action against the state unlike the other Arab Spring movements. While the state is still plagued with problems, the government has taken some serious steps to mending the situations (making peace with Morocco, holding new elections, etc.) (Al Jazeera, 2011).

Governance in Algeria

It is key to understanding how the structure of the current government in Algeria was formed after their independence from France and subsequent discourse with the challenges that came with starting their post-colonial governance.

Algeria's government and constitution has faced many revisions since the country's independence and is constantly evolving. It was initially drafted following the Algerian War and independence in 1963, but it had many changes. Initially, the constitutional assembly was thrown aside when then President, Ahmed Ben Bella, bribed his way into office. Unfavorable with Algerians, he modified the constitution as a "one party state" and overthrew any challengers (Ruedy, 2005: 206). There was a military coup in 1965 in which the constitution was suspended for two years. With the change in political power following the independence, a second constitution materialized in 1967 under Colonel Houari Boumédiène who moved the authoritarian military power over to political institutions (which were to be elected by the citizens). What is important to note is that the socialist FLN (*Front de Libération National*) generally oversaw many of these changes, as they were affiliated with the presidents, Parliament and elected officials. The FLN was an important actor within the government's structuring and influenced much of the activity (therefore having more control). In 1988, a new constitution was introduced (under President Chadli Bendjedid) which allowed for free-market reforms and a multi-party system (which, in turn, dismantled FLN's authoritative power).

After another military coup in 1992 and during the Algerian Civil War (which was against the radical rebels and Islamist groups), the constitution was revised again to not allow political parties that, "...are hostile to the basic identity, liberty, or security of the nation. Furthermore, no political party could be founded on a, 'religious, linguistic, racial, sex, corporatist, or regional basis'" (Ruedy, 2005:268). The state of emergency that was also set in place in 1992 to suppress the groups has since been lifted during the current uprisings in North Africa and the Middle East. After continued protests since December 2010, the state of emergency was lifted after it was seen to, "have barred peaceful protests, limited constitutionally granted political freedoms and allowed for what many described as arbitrary detentions" (Al Jazeera, 2011).

Currently, Algeria is considered a presidential republic, and there is universal suffrage. The President is elected for five-year terms and is the head of the state; the President appoints a Prime Minister who is the head of the government. The Prime Minister chooses the Council of Ministers, and this whole group is considered Algeria's Cabinet. The Parliament features two chambers which are the People's National Assembly and the Council of the Nation. All of these representatives are associated with the many parties in Algeria, the largest ones are the FLN, RND (National Rally for Democracy), MRN (Movement for National Reform), MSP (Movement of Society for Peace), Workers' Party, FNA (Algerian National Front), Ennadha (Islamic Renaissance Movement), PRA (Party for Algerian Renewal), MEN (Movement of National Understanding), MNJA (El-Infintah Movement), FFS (Front

for Socialist Forces), RCD (Rally for Culture and Democracy), MDA (Movement for Democracy in Algeria) and the ARN (National Republican Alliance).

While the military is not officially part of the electoral or political process, it still has a lot of control in the affairs (especially since the coup in 1992) (Ruedy, 2005).

Political Participation in Algeria

It is interesting to view the differences in which citizens of both countries actively engage in the countries' politics. Algeria thrives on its political parties; in 1987, political pluralism was allowed (despite the FLN's still strong control in the government). The parties (and civil society movements in general) have been supported and funded oftentimes by the EU and USAID because they are seen as "democracy assistance" with which donors are attached (Liverani, 2008:109). However, even within the parties, there is some hierarchy. The parties typically work around a strong, central figure, which is usually the leader (though many parties are very secular). Algeria also has numerous overlapping political parties (hyperpluralism). This has been seen as a downfall; when one person or people are dissatisfied with one party, another is created (Liverani, 2008). With the recent protests against the state of emergency, civil society and political participation is alive in Algeria. The state has taken the steps towards liberalizing and decentralizing the government structure in order to make it more transparent. The political parties keep the state in check (Bouandel, 2003).

Conclusions

The role of Islam will continue to play an important role in Algeria and politics as Islam has been a way to unify an Arab population that has tightly held onto their country throughout the many that have entered and left. Unfortunately, it has been with great destruction that has socially crippled the country. With the recent success of Islamist parties in the Tunisia, Moroccan and Egyptian elections, it may be interesting to see if there will be a larger revolution brewing with Islam.

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Libya Country Report

Libya will probably prove the most challenging country in transition in the Arab revolutions. It is the country that has experienced up to now the most violent uprising ending in the killing of General Muammar Qaddafi. During his 42 years of repression, Qaddafi outlawed any institutional form of organized collective participation in the public space. In terms of religion, the revolution left little room for Islam keeping it under tight control of the authorities. Though at the beginning of his rule, Qaddafi tried to do without the tribal system, he soon realized they were too powerful, and instead, accepted them into a sort of partnership which in some ways substituted for civil society although rejecting any formal political role for them. In my essay, I will explore how the monarchy under King Idris, and later on, under Colonel Qaddafi, used the tribal structure and regional divisions to their advantage in order to retain power. As Lisa Anderson rightly points out, “[...] ragtag armed rebels in the eastern provinces ignited the protests revealing the tribal and regional divisions that have troubled the country for decades.” (The New Arab Revolt, CFR, p.321.) I will attempt to touch upon key questions on how these divisions will either hamper or help advance the new Libya. I will begin with a brief introduction of the country’s demographics, its history and foreign intervention. I will then turn to the role of Islam in modern Libya, followed by its tribal structure, regional divisions and the uprising. After discussing the role of oil in the country’s history, I will end my essay with the new challenges and rebuilding tasks the new nation faces ahead.

Libya's estimated total population in 2011 is 6.6 million out of which 1.7 million live in Tripoli, the capital. The country is the fourth largest country in Africa by area (1.8 million square kilometers) of which 90% is covered by the Sahara desert. Climatic conditions and poor soils severely limit agricultural output resulting in Libya's need to import about 75% of its food consumption. It has the ninth largest oil reserves in the world and it is the 17th highest petroleum producer. Its economy depends primarily on revenues from oil, which was discovered in 1959, contributing about 95% of export earnings, 25% of GDP, and 80% of government revenues. The country's main export commodities are crude oil, refined petroleum products, natural gas, and chemicals. 2009 figures reflect main exports partners to be, in descending order, Italy, Germany, France, Spain, Switzerland, and the United States. It imports food, machinery, semi-finished goods, transport equipment and consumer products. Main import partners are, in descending order, Italy, China, Turkey, Germany, France, Tunisia, and South Korea.

High revenues from the energy sector coupled with a small population give Libya one of the highest per capita GDPs in Africa. Unfortunately, little of this income flows down to its citizens in general. Its official currency is the Dinar with an exchange rate of 1.26 Dinar per \$1USD. Its recorded gross national income per capita is \$17,068 USD with a gross domestic product purchasing power parity per capita of \$14,000 USD (2010 estimate). It is the fourth highest per capita country in Africa behind Seychelles, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon. Libya ranks 53 out of 169 in the Human Development Index, the highest in Africa, with an adult literacy rate of 86.8 ranking 112 out of 179, and 7.3 mean years of adult schooling. In terms of health, its life expectancy at birth is 74.5 years. Gender inequality index is 0.5, zero being equal. Its main language is

standard Arabic. Islam is the predominant religion with 97% of its population associating with the faith, the majority being Sunni Muslims. Libya's native population is mainly composed of Arabs with a small minority of Berber speaking tribal groups and small black African non-Arab groups such as the Tuareg, in the west part of the country, and Toubou tribes found in the southern part.

The country is composed of three regions: Tripolitania, Cyrenaica, and Fazzan. Tensions among regions have existed since the beginning of times, especially between Tripolitania and Cyrenaica. It is important to note that the Cyrenaica region is known as the east's eternal spirit of rebellion. It is the region where Italians colonizers found the most resistance; the region where King Idris used to reside in the nearby city of Bayda, and as a consequence, Benghazi, its main city, enjoyed a sort of joint-capital status; and where this past February riots began. On February 21, Benghazi was taken by Qaddafi's opponents who founded the National Transitional Council days later. It was the site of the turning point of the 2011 Libyan civil war.

The country is to a large extent structured along tribal lines. The major tribal groups are:

Tripolitania: Warfalla, Tarhona, Al-Fwatir, Awlad Busayf, Zintan, Al-Rijan.

Cyrenaica: Al-Awagir, Al-Abaydat, Drasa, Al-Barasa, Al-Fawakhir, Zuwayya, Majabra.

Sirte: Qadhadhfa, Magarha, Magharba, Al-Riyyah, Al-Haraba, Al-Zuwaid, Al-Guwaid.

Fezzan: Al-Hutman, Al-Hassawna, Toubou, Tuareg.

Kufra: Zuwayya, Toubou. (Wikipedia)

Libya was under the Arab Islamic Rule from 642 BD to 1551. Then under the Ottoman Empire from 1551 to 1911 followed by the Italian colonization from 1911 until 1951. Libyans suffered greatly under the Italian colonization. It was a traumatizing first encounter with a modern state leaving very deep scars in Libyans's collective conscience,

and a clear rejection of the modern state model to follow. On December 24, 1951, Libya's independence was announced in Beghazi. The Kingdom of Libya was ruled from 1951 to 1969 by the Sanussi Sufi Brotherhood leader, King Idris, grandson of the Grand Sanussi, founder of the Sanussi order, a Muslim political order. The country had passed from colonialism to independence under the command of the Great Powers (Britain, France, the United States) who felt that for Cold War purposes it was better to have an independent Libya where military bases could be established. The Western region of Tripolitania resentfully agreed to be pushed by the Great Powers into a single political entity ruled by a monarchy with its roots in Cyrenaica. The country's political independence arrived suddenly and unexpected, the same way economic independence arrived eight years later in 1959 with the discovery of oil beneath Cyrenaican soil. To the chagrin of the Great Powers, with the discovery of oil, Libya changed abruptly from being dependent on aid and rent from U.S. and British military bases to being an oil-rich monarchy. The country under King Idris adopted a federal system giving lots of powers to the provinces and thereby creating a very complicated administrative structure with two capitals: Tripoli, in Tripolitania region, and Beghazi, in the Cyrenaica region. This together with the King's reluctance to be more engaging in politics beyond Cyrenaica where he resided proved detrimental to his success. In 1963, the federal formula was abandoned in favor of a unitary state. Nevertheless, the monarch failed to create a national political identity with effective state institutions. Idris would last until September 1, 1969 when it was overthrown by a military coup headed by General Qaddafi.

On September 1, 1969, the country became the Libyan Arab Republic ruled by Colonel Mu'ammarr Qaddafi. In 1977, it changed its name again to The Popular Socialist Libyan Arab Jamahiriyya, that is, the Country of the Masses. During his 42 years of repression, Qaddafi outlawed any institutional form of organized collective participation in the public space: political parties, trade unions, professional associations, community development associations and other interest groups. He penned the infamous Green Book which served as a guideline for the revolution. Its first volume appeared in 1975. It contains a compilation of Qaddafi's utopian ideas on what Libya's social, political, and economic organization should look like. It refers to a political community where citizens supposedly own the country's resources, they exercise authority and directly manage the country's administration through a system of popular congresses and committees. Interestingly, during these committees's meetings, citizens were able to discuss just about anything except petroleum and the armed forces. In essence, the Green Book contains the idea of statelessness and of people managing their own affairs without state institutions.

In terms of religion, the revolution left little room for Islam. Qaddafi felt he could keep the Ulamas happy enough by prohibiting alcohol and imposing the Muslim calendar, in addition to the Julian calendar, while restricting their role. According to the Green Book, Islam, in the doctrinal sense, is about affirming the complementarity and compatibility of the revolution. This position infuriated the Ulamas to whom Qaddafi denied the monopoly to interpret the Coran. According to him, each Muslim had the right to make their own interpretation of the sacred text and was not up to the Ulamas to impose such interpretation on them. In 1978, Qaddafi openly declared against polygamy which he

felt was illegitimate according to his reading of the Coran. He based his arguments recalling that polygamy is authorized in the Coran under the condition that there is an equal and fair treatment among espouses. If it is impossible for an espouse to respect such condition then the legitimacy of polygamy should be altogether suppressed. From the legal perspective, this was expressed in the “Great Green Charter of Human Rights” adopted in 1988 which confirms, in theory, the principle of equality between men and women stipulating that marriage is a free association among two parties and that nothing can constraint a marriage or divorce without the consent of the husband and/or wife. This positioned Qaddafi oftentimes as a “feminist.” To nurture this position, he created a women’s military academy, allowed women be admitted in the police and be trained as pilots. The Green Charter, however, was not legally binding. In 1987, Qaddafi introduced in legislation, sentencings such as hands amputation of thieves and lapidation in case of adultery, as suggested in Sharia Law, but these were only applied once in 2002. Islam was under tight control of the authorities. Education was provided by the university of sciences and religion, Al-Asmariya in Zliten, east of Tripoli. The Imans of small mosques were accredited by a an establishment analogous to a kind of Ministry of Religious Affairs after being notified by security services and revolutionary committees. The important mosques were provided with Madrassas in charge of children’s religious education and Manaras, for older ones which were created in 1990. There are about half a dozen of such schools in all Libya. Today, most political forces in the country expect religion will guide the future shape of the country, although it is still unclear how Islamic law will be implemented. With Islamists groups taking control in Egypt and Tunisia, we should expect they will have a major role in the post-Qaddafi era. A couple of weeks

ago, a statement from 250 Imans and other clerics gathered at a conference in Tripoli, the first of its kind since the fall of the regime, asked the new government to speed up the process of disarming former rebels. Imans were also demanding that the country's planned constitution be based on Islamic Sharia Law. Many Libyans are of the opinion that Islamists seem to be very influential because they are extremely well organized but that in reality, they don't enjoy wide support.

The country's tribes fared better than Islam under Qaddafi. At the beginning of his rule, he tried to do without them but soon realized they were too powerful and instead accepted them into a sort of partnership which in some ways substituted for civil society although rejecting any formal political role for them. He later on turned to them for political support. In the process, tribal affiliation became extremely important. "As the tribe is a large extended family, the tribe provides its members with the natural benefits and social advantages that the family provides for its members, for the tribe is a secondary family." (The Green Book , Al Gathafi, Muammar). For Libyans, a tribe is a group that belongs to a common ancestry, descendants from the paternal side. The group represents a space for solidarity, debate and mediation. The representative of the group, the sheik, generally belongs to a family that transmits the title from father to son. He has moral authority but does not hold the power to give orders and make others obey him. In effect, he has the authority to settle, through consensus, differences between members of the same tribe or represent the tribe in case there are differences with other tribes while relying on customary law. In the political camp, he is the privileged interlocutor of local or central power. This tribal structure is particularly strong in the Cyrenaica region.

Such structure has no longer to do with the Bedouin lifestyle. The myth, which Qaddafi carefully held onto, of a Libya which would have essentially been populated by Bedouins more or less nomads before oil was discovered, does not correspond to reality. In 1945, only 25% of Libyans lived under a tent. Upon Qaddafi's arrival in 1969, there were less than 10%, and today that way of life is anecdotal. The tribal structure has nothing to do with nomadism. In the city of Benghazi, the Al-Awagir tribe is very influential. Originally from the region of al-Marj and al-Agouriya, in the rural area fifty kilometers from Benghazi, the Al-Awagir hold a strong collective identity. Its members arrived in Benghazi to work and regrouped themselves in neighborhoods according to their region of origin maintaining solid networks of solidarity. They are very proud of their Bedouin origins. The Al-Awagir, the same as other tribal members of Bedouin origin, make sure to differentiate themselves from other citizens of Benghazi who are for the most part businessmen from Misrata in the Tripolitania region. In the past, those in power, relied on the tribes structure to administer the country. The Ottoman Empire integrated the local tribal elites in their administrative structures. The Italians did not associate them with their local administration but manipulated the tribes for security reasons. Under the monarchy of King Idris, tribalism was institutionalized. The dominant place King Idris gave to the representatives of the tribes from Cyrenaica in the federal system, contributed to the resentment and jealousy among those from Tripolitania who felt left out. During the first years of Qaddafi's revolution, 1969-1975, tribes did not have a prominent place. These first years were devoted to the Arab unity, the revolution and social reforms. It was only in 1975, at the time the Green Book's first volume was published that tribes are given a place. In the book, Qaddafi dedicated a whole chapter on its importance. During

the Ottoman Empire, as under the monarchy, the tribes felt it was necessary to be represented at different levels of the ruling power structure so as to be able to guard and defend their collective interests. Today, it is about ensuring access to oil rents. The newly formed government has to carefully watch the distribution of oil rent paying attention to and respecting the subtle balances between tribes, and therefore, between regions. Any imbalance will hamper the unity of the country. Colonel Qaddafi, after more than forty years at the helm, learned very well how to deal with the tribes using the tools of constraint, threat, retribution and negotiation. In 1994, immediately after the uprising of officials from the Warfalla tribe in the Tripolitania region, Qaddafi put in place the Popular and Social Commands to represent the tribes and clans. Present in every region of Libya, the Popular and Social Commands were partly made up of tribal leaders. Their role was to broaden the tribal front supporting the government.

It is very common for members of a tribe to reach out to the solidarity of the tribal system at the local level in order to get a job, a promotion, credit, or housing. If it cannot be done at the local level, one only needs to arrange to meet with a 'cousin' in Tripoli to clear the way. The 'cousin' from the appropriate region would phone the one in Tripoli to get the number of the person who might be helpful and so forth. In short, the structure is extremely well organized and in matters of minutes one tribal member from afar can be connected to another member of the same tribe in central cities. The tribal system is tightly knit so that in times of crises, these links are quickly activated as witnessed during the uprising this past February. The security forces's personnel were composed of natives of specific regions, and thereby, of specific tribes and were able to swiftly rally the insurgents.

Oil has a prominent place in the internal affairs of the country. After World War II, European countries's demand for oil was increasing as they sought to expand their transportation network while seeking to replace their coal with a more efficient fuel. The discovery of oil in Libya in 1969 proved very beneficial to Europe for its proximity which meant lower transportation costs. But more importantly, Libya's oil pipelines, unlike the Arab Gulf states, could run across the country's own territory making them less risky to be damaged or closed down. The fine quality of oil deposits coupled with the right incentives to attract foreign companies to sign exploration contracts, resulted in very profitable arrangements. In 1955 the Libyan Petroleum Law was signed into effect proving to be one of the most progressive and creative laws in the Middle East to the advantage of the Libyan government. Through the 1960's, King Idris drew up legislation and signed policies which increased the control of the country's oil industry. The monarch's shrewd disposition to attract independent companies was significant leaving a thriving oil industry which later on Qaddafi would build upon for his own benefit. Oil prices increases between 1969 and 1973 put Libya in a very advantageous position. By the beginning of the 1973 October War, the country had accumulated enough oil reserves for at least four years in case of an economic embargo. Libya's next oil boom would occur in 1979 during the second oil crisis of 1979. "Ultimately, Qadhafi's entire Green Book experiment crucially depended for its implementation on the income from oil sales." (A History of Modern Libya, Vandewalle, Dirk, p. 108.) The largesse from oil revenues gave Qaddafi the green light to defy Western powers. In 1979, the US State Department put Libya on top of the list of state sponsors of terrorism. In May 2003,

Qaddafi approached Britain and the United States to discuss the issue of weapons of mass destruction. Later on in December of the same year, Libya announced it will abandon its pursuit of weapons of mass destruction. It was not until June 2004 that the two countries would resume diplomatic relations.

The Libyan uprising was inspired by events in Tunisia and Egypt. One important feature in the Arab revolutions is its indigenous character. Between January 13 and 16 protesters in the eastern part of the country unhappy about the delays in the building of housing units and political corruption broke into and occupied housing that the government had been building. By January 27, the government had responded to the housing unrest with a \$20 billion investment fund to provide housing and development. On February 15, protests began in Benghazi in front of police headquarters after the arrest of human rights lawyer Fathi Terbil who had represented some of the families of political prisoners the regime had slaughtered (including twelve hundred detainees in a single day) at the Abu Salim prison in 1996. The unrest spread throughout other cities in the eastern part of the country where Qaddafi had to some extent economically neglected. On February 21, the city of Benghazi was taken by Qaddafi's opponents who founded the National Transitional Council a few days later. NATO started air-strikes on March 19 to enforce UN Security Council Resolution 1973. As it happened, exactly sixty years ago, the unification of Libya took place again, as a result of the intervention of the international community. The fall of Sirte, the birthplace of Qaddafi, and his death on October 20 marked the beginning of a new era. A new Prime Minister was elected on October 31, Abdurrahim Al-Keib and on November 22, a new Interim government was announced. It

features several appointments that suggests the line-up was aimed at trying to soothe rivalries between regional factions. Former rebels received key appointments: the Defense Ministry went to Osama Al-Juwali, commander of Zintan fighters who arrested Qaddafi's son; and the Interior Ministry went to Fawzi Abelai from Misrata, whose fighters captured Qaddafi. Two other important appointments are: the Oil Ministry to Abdulrahman Ben Yezza, a former executive with Italian major firm ENI; and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Ashour Bin Hayal, diplomat from Derna. Human rights lawyer, Fathi Terbil received the Ministry of Sport and Youth, a clever appointment.

There is now a precise road map to a new Libya with a 20 month countdown to a general election:

Within 8 months the transitional government is to organize the election of a 200-member assembly, or "general national congress." Once this congress holds its first session the NTC will step down. Then the congress will have up to two months to name a prime minister. He will form a government that will be put to a confidence vote and form a commission to draw up a constitution. One month later, the constitution will be put to a referendum. If it is adopted, the congress has 30 days to draw up an electoral law. Elections are to be held within six months. The congress will have 30 days to approve the results of the election and another 30 days to convene an elected parliament, formally ending the transition period.

There is huge potential for divisions within the Libyan society which could potentially show not only in the composition of the government but in that of all other power structures:

- Tribal divisions that always existed but that Qaddafi used and misused in politics;
- Tripoli vs. Benghazi vs. Misrata;
- Returnees from Diaspora vs. those who stayed put;
- Those who served Qaddafi and/or Seif vs. those who never did politics;
- Civilians vs. military.

CHALLENGES AND REBUILDING TASKS

Some issues are post-war-specific:

- of immediate urgency is the demobilization and disarmament and/or putting the militias under some command. This past weekend, the rebel militias fired the convoy of General Hiftar, the highest ranking officer of the Libyan National Army, as the convoy sped through a checkpoint nearby the airport. Later on Colonel Mukhtar Farnana, head of the Military Council in Western Libya accused General Hiftar of trying to take over the airport , "[ridiculing] the national army as little more than a collection of militias from eastern Libya [...]" (New York Times, December 13, 2011).reunification between the different parts of the country, split along tribal lines, but also along new lines, as a result of the fighting (i.e. Misrata's prominence and its fighters' behavior);
- rebuilding of the damaged towns especially Misrata, Bani Walid and Sirte (probably the easiest, although the migrant workers employed in construction have departed in great part, some of the 60,000 Bangladeshis started to come back).
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Other issues are post-dictatorship-specific:

- redressing the damages that Qaddafi inflicted on his people – compensations to former prisoners, families of those murdered;
- assisting Libyans in learning or re-learning new ways of governance;
- reconciliation between those who defected early on, late or not at all;
- vetting of former regime employees many of whom may be politically neutral and were simply not courageous enough to defect before; the “transitional justice” approach along the lines of Eastern Europe more than Latin America or even South Africa;
- capacity building and teaching about how the free world works on the ground (not just on facebook, which is very popular in Libya and gives them an illusion of being part of the world).

In the rebuilding of a new Libya it will be interesting to see how events unfold and which competing priorities Libyans will decide on tackling first. The building of good and effective institutions is a very challenging task in a country that has lived in a statelessness society for so long. The restructuring of sound and inclusive economic policies where citizens have a fair share of the country’s natural resources will also take some time. Given its oil riches, it may well be that Libya recovers faster from the eight month conflict than other countries part of the Arab Awakening.

As political Islam gains terrain in the Arab Spring countries, it would be a mistake to isolate them or look the other way:

“The main reason for Islamists’ popularity is their hatred of corruption, the scourge of secular dictatorships throughout the region, and their promotion of justice and dignity, words that have resonated in the Arab spring even more than democracy. The Islamists appeal to the poor, often by providing a rudimentary welfare system via the mosque when state provision has been lacking. [...] Like people everywhere, Arabs may make bad choices. Political Islam comes in many shapes and guises. So far, the version emerging as predominant seems relatively benevolent. [...] Even mild-mannered Islamists may still prove narrow-minded on some scores. But that is no reason for the West to desert them, let alone bark nostalgically back to the era of secular strongmen. Democracy entails risks. It is often messy. (The Economist, December 10-16, 2011)

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