



AFTERMATH OF THE ARAB SPRING ON DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION IN TUNISIA AND LIBYA¹

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ABSTRACT

The MENA was for a very long time termed as a region that is incompatible with democracy mainly due to Islamic culture. The political system in the region has generally been the same, with almost all its countries ruled by dictators until the outbreak of the Arab Spring which challenged the status quo and the general assumption held by many analysts and observers regarding the region. The ousting of long serving dictators such as Zine Ben Ali, Hosni Mubarak and Muammar Gaddafi ignited strong hopes that these countries would fully democratize. Tunisia was the only country that democratized fully following the Arab spring, however the political development in these countries a decade since the popular uprising has shown signs that these countries are struggling to consolidate their democracies where attained.

Keywords: Arab Spring, Tunisia, Libya, Democracy, Democratic Consolidation.

ARAP BAHARI'NİN TUNUS VE LİBYA'DAKİ DEMOKRATİK KONSOLİDASYON ÜZERİNE SONRASI

ÖZET

MENA, çok uzun bir süre, esas olarak İslam kültürü nedeniyle demokrasiyle bağdaşmayan bir bölge olarak adlandırıldı. Bölgedeki siyasi sistem, statükoya ve birçok analistin ve gözlemcinin bölgeyle ilgili genel varsayımına meydan okuyan Arap Baharı'nın patlak vermesine kadar neredeyse tüm ülkeleri diktatörleri yönettiği için genel olarak aynı olmuştur. Zine Ben Ali, Hüsnü Mübarek ve Muammer Kaddafi gibi uzun süredir hizmet veren diktatörlerin devrilmesi, bu ülkelerin tamamen demokratikleşeceğine dair güçlü umutları ateşledi. Arap Baharı'nın ardından tam anlamıyla demokratikleşen tek ülke Tunus'tu, ancak bu ülkelerdeki halk ayaklanmasının üzerinden on yıl geçen siyasi gelişme, bu ülkelerin ulaşılan yerlerde demokrasilerini pekiştirmek için mücadele ettiklerinin işaretlerini verdi.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Arap Baharı, Tunus, Libya, Demokrasi, Demokratik Konsolidasyon.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Over a decade ago, the Arab World witnessed an unprecedented uprising which surprised and shocked many. Beginning in the small Tunisian city of Sidi Bouazizi, the protest spread like wildfire to other neighbouring countries like Egypt, Libya, Syria, Bahrain, Algeria and Morocco. It was remarkable in that it shook the very roots of Arab political history. Challenging and seeking to overthrow Authoritarian regimes in a region regionally known for its authoritarian and repressive political nature believed to be almost impossible in the region until the outbreak of the wave of popular uprisings commonly referred to as the “Arab Spring” “Arab Awakening” or “Arab Revolution” by many regional and international observers (Souza and Lipietz, 2011).

The self-immolation of a young Tunisian street vendor in front of a municipal building ignited the protest that changed the faith of many Arab citizens. His decision to set himself ablaze was a form of protest against the humiliation he faced in the hands of municipal officer for refusing to pay bribe. His goods were eventually confiscated by the authorities, who refused to hear his complaint. Some days later, he died in a hospital from the injuries he sustained. His death and plight resonated with many youths not just in the remote village of Sidi Bouazizi, but with many young Tunisians, thus explains the magnanimous nature of the uprising in Tunisia. His death was not just an individual act of protest, but a reaction to the frustrating political and socio-economic situation in Tunisia. The faith of many Tunisians who took the streets were the same as Bouazizi. Dealing with economic issues such as unemployment, inequality and corruption while the governments indulged in living the fancy and extravagant life (Anderson, 2011). Three weeks later strongman Ben Ali was successfully ousted from power following a series of popular protests. The fall of Ben Ali’s regime was a watershed moment for the Arab publics, as it demonstrated that long serving authoritarian governments were not as sturdy as generally believed and that change could actually be achieved. The outbreak and success of the protest snowballed to other neighbouring countries like Egypt and Libya (Turan, 2018).

In Egypt, Egyptians also took to the streets and gathered mostly at Tahrir square demanding the end of Hosni Mubarak who was in power for over two decades. Libya followed suit successfully ousting Gaddafi after eight months with a NATO led intervention. All countries that witnessed the protests were able to do that internally except Libya. External powers were in collaboration with militia groups were involved in ousting Gaddafi who had been in power for over four decades. Following the unseating of dictators in these countries, talks of transition to democracy began to trend (Turan, 2018). Each of these countries began designing and building their individual roadmaps to transition into democratic societies. In Tunisia, the actors involved in the transition were able to compromise negotiate which made them earn a remarkable legacy amongst all the countries that experienced the Arab Spring (Turan, 2018). Tunisia is celebrated as the only country to that successfully transitioned to democracy, following its adoption of a new inclusive and progressive constitution, holding free& fair elections and its general democratic improvement under freedom house rating. Notwithstanding, Tunisia also experienced acute setbacks during the early phase of its transition (Turan, 2018). Libya on the other hand descended into chaos, which until the time of this writing remains unresolved. The country descended into a series of civil war that has ravaged the country and undermined its democracy, with many different internal, regional and international actors. The dynamics of the transition that changed into a conflict has also been evolving since the outbreak. Both Tunisia and Libya had transition plans which involved actors such as civil societies, Islamist and secularists and in Libya’s case international actors such as the United Nations mainly through its support mission in Libya. As stated above, it’s been over a decade since the uprising emerged yet talks of becoming a fully-fledged democratic nation are yet to be realized in Libya due to a number of factors. Tunisia which has been celebrated as the only success story of the Arab Spring, currently has its democracy put to test. With the recent political development and economic situation in Tunisia under current President Kais Said. In consideration of the vast literature a comparative case study analysis shall be adopted to understand the reason for the divergence of outcomes in consideration of the transitional



mechanism as well as establish whether the desire to establish a consolidated democracy in Libya and Tunisia ten years after the Arab Spring has been achieved. The thesis shall challenge or support the famous assumption “Arab/Islam Exceptionalism”.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Exploring democracy in the middle east

The Acronym MENA stands for Middle East & North Africa. Geographically, the region is located on two continents namely Southwest Asia and North Africa. Almost everything surrounding the Middle East ranging from its politics economy, religion, social livelihood and even the countries that make up the region are contentious. The United Nations and World Bank considers the regions that are horizontally located between Iran in the East and morocco in the west and a vast majority of countries the Maghreb as constituting Middle Eastern Countries. According to the world fact book, nineteen countries namely Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Gaza Strip, Georgia, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, West Bank and Yemen geographically make up the Middle East & North Africa. Majority of the countries found in the Middle east are Muslim /Arab countries. The MENA boundaries are mainly geographic rather than socio religious, however the countries still share some general commonalities. According to The United Nations Human Rights Office in the Middle East and North Africa (ROMENA), nineteen countries belong to the Middle East & North African region namely Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen. The region, its politics and economies attract enormous global attention. The predominant language in the region is Arabic spoken by almost all the countries except for Turkey, Israel and other countries where the Hebrew language is spoken. The dominant religion in the region is Islam. Economically, the region generally records a low GDP of approximately \$3.3 billion equating to 4.5 % of global GDP. The GDP level of the individual countries differ significantly due to certain factors such as the presence or absence resources. In 2022 Qatar and Israel account for the highest GDP with 54,184.97 and \$44, 181.17 respectively, while Lebanon and Yemen account for the lowest GDPs of 2784.42 and 580.22 respectively (country economy, n.d). With the exception of few countries, many of the nations are endowed with natural resources such as oil and gas. Many of the countries especially Arab speaking countries share common cultural social and political similarities by virtue of geographical closeness. Notwithstanding, unique cultural, economic and political attributes exist within them. Islam is the dominant religion in the MENA region however, different sects, languages and ethnicity exist between and amongst nations in the region.

The MENA region is a highly controversial and turbulent region, which has attracted both scholarly and international attention. The economic wealth and political realities of the region have made many actors both local and international to embark on a mission of redefining the regions status quo visible through both geo and international politics. One of the most significant issues that has attracted substantial attention is the status ever since the infant days of the region is the place Democracy in the region. Numerous interventions have occurred in many middle eastern states by western powers and international organization, most of which have been justified on liberal grounds of promoting democracy and human rights. This has prompted scholars, authors and even the citizens of this region to question if the trade-offs of the region by colonial powers in the previous century is still an ongoing quest (Zenko, 2021). An important example was the United States invasion of Iraq in 2003, under the pretext of waging a pre-emptive war and an intention of promoting democracy in Iraq. US troops occupied many regions in Iraq, especially Baghdad since the end of the war, with withdrawal of its troops beginning in June 2009, and finally ending in 2011 under Obama’s Administration (Zenko ,2011). The legacy and status of democracy in the middle east is an interesting topic, which would



make little sense on its own without briefly delving into a review of the concept of democracy. The goal behind this is to build a premise or foundation upon which the arguments regarding democracy in the Middle East shall follow.

Democracy is one of the most contested concepts in both political science and international relations. The term has no globally accepted meaning and applicability as it is highly subjective. The use and definition of the term democracy has been a subject of debate ever since its emergence. The oldest understanding of democracy can be traced back to ancient Greece. “Demos” means people “Kratos” means power or rule derived from two Latin words, which put together means rule by the people. Another Classical definition of the term democracy was given by Abraham Lincoln. He stated that “*Democracy is the rule of the people, for the people and by the people*” (Heywood, 2013). The term has ever since been generally understood in this context, as many refer to a government or regime where power and decision making generally resides with the people as democratic, in addition to political equality amongst all citizens. However, the weaknesses identified in the classical definitions, is defining who constitute the people. In ancient Greece, for example the people comprised of few adult males who participated in a direct form of democracy.

Huntington, (1991) considers a political system to be democratic as long as the highest decision makers are elected through a fair competition in the form of periodic elections in which all adults in the population constitute the suffrage. His definition lays particular emphasis on both competition amongst eligible candidates and participation by the general masses. His definition also emphasizes the presence and respect for both individuals and group political and civil rights in a democratic dispensation. Works on democracy usually feature Robert Dahl’s influential piece ‘polyarchy’, which means rule by many. He opined that democracy qualifies only as an ideal but not a regime or political system, as he believed there is more room for democratic improvement. Dahl’s polyarchal regime is a pluralistic and an all-inclusive form of governance which guarantees competition, and one where power resides with multiple actors such as interest groups and political parties. Dahl, (1971) advanced eight minimal conditions which he argued are necessary for a system to be considered a polyarchy and plural, and these are as follows; The right of all sane adult citizens to partake in voting during elections, the equal right of every individual within the suffrage to compete for public office, the conduct of elections both freely and transparently, the ability of citizens to freely and openly criticize a regimes ideologies or policies without fear of intimidation , the availability of other sources of information free from government influence , the rights of individual to group association and organization such as the formation of political parties and civil society Organization’s, and finally a government with high respect for voters and the outcome of elections.

Democracy thus means power of the people, or a system of governance where the wishes and desires of the people are channelled directly or indirectly through their representatives, which constitutes the basis of decision making. Democracy requires a pluralistic atmosphere which gives the people power and choices, there is no single polity that meets all the requirements of democracy, but countries that conduct periodic free, fair and transparent elections (electoral democracy) are generally perceived as democratic (Grugel, 2002).

Democracy has grown to be the preferred form of government in almost all parts of the world, as citizens of many countries especially autocratic states struggle to install both democratic governance and institutions. The western countries like the United States, Great Britain, France, Germany Italy etc. are considered as both the pioneers or custodians of liberal democracy. The triumph of Liberal democracy over soviet communism as the ideology of the 21st century further strengthens this assertion. However, their practice of democracy can be considered as quite controversial, as it continues to attract criticism from other nations and regions (Heywood, 2013).



Boose, (2012), opines that prior to the Arab spring, the MENA region especially Arab countries generally had very similar leadership styles and political environments. The region was mostly ruled by autocratic regimes. This warranted inquisitive middle eastern scholars and analyst to delph into an explanation seeking exercise to account for such resilience. The pre-Arab spring regimes were either one party authoritarianism as was the case in Egypt, Libya, Tunisia and Syria, or established monarchies in the gulf states of Saudi Arabia, Morocco and Jordan.

Goldstone, (2011) however adds a third brand of authoritarian regime which he terms “Sulatnistic regimes”. Such regimes are more susceptible to disintegrating in revolutionary periods than the other two types. Such regimes begin when the leader prioritizes growth of his personal powers and authority at the detriment of the masses. They put up a democratic façade by allowing the existence of democratic institutions and practices such as elections, political plurality, a constitution, but in practice maintain overriding authority and power over such institutions and processes (Goldstone ,2011). Typical of such regimes too is self-aggrandizement from oil revenues, the remains of which they use to sway the public in their favour. The leader also grabs utmost control of the security/ military institutions, which are usually divided into different contingents who are all answerable to the leader. This accords the leader the opportunity to manipulate such institutions for its continuous survival (Goldstone, 2011). Another typical feature of such regimes is that they tend to isolate the public from having political influence by hegemonizing elections and controlling political parties. Their citizens are induced through subsidies on basic needs such as electricity food and gas. However, the leaders also engage in intimidation by undermining and controlling the media, surveillance of the citizens to keep them fearful and disenfranchised. Such explanations were indeed evident in Libya, Tunisia, Egypt and Yemen, and to large extent fuelled the protests against such regimes.

2.2 Arab exceptionalism

Arab exceptionalism features prominently in the democracy literature of the Arab world. It offers theoretical insights on why democracy lacks in the Arab world, while democracy continues to grow and exist in other parts of the world (Bellin ,2012; Huntington ,1991; Ross ,2012). The term Arab Exceptionalism has grown to be the mainstream explanation for what is considered democracies absence in the Arab World. It became significantly popular in the literature around democracies third wave when most regions including developing nations transitioned from some form of authoritarian rule to democratic governance (Boose, 2012). This was mainly because a great number of analysts believed that representative democracy grew to be a globally accepted ideal which had a huge possibility of thriving in any region, despite its culture, religion or politics. This idea was obviously refuted by the failure of MENA states to enter or adopt serious democratization during what Huntington (1991) termed the “third wave of democratization”.

Huntington, (1991) offers a classical approach to Arab exceptionalism which is deeply rooted in orientalist thinking. His work compares and draws out the parallel between the second and third waves of democratization and the reasons that account for the isolation of MENA from the global democratization trends. He argues culture is the main factor that accounts for this difference between the MENA region and the rest of the world. According to him the Islamic culture lacks tolerance and compatibility with democracy and its principles. Islamic culture in other words limits the desire of its leaders to support democracy and inhibits its chances of surviving in the Islamic world (Huntington ,1991). The teachings, principles and laws of Islam according to Huntington are completely contradictory to the values and principles of democracy adding that the very form of government or regime advocated or enshrined in Quranic theology is totally autocratic derived from the early Muslim governments/caliphates (Huntington, 1991)



According to Ross, (2012) exceptionalism can be explained away from the religious/ cultural points of view. According to his postulation the MENA nations enormous oil endowment can be considered exceptional to the region. The benefits enjoyed by oil income mostly in the form of aid or no/ low taxation lowers the desire of the citizens to challenge authoritarianism, while the government grows its guaranty of consolidating power. This according to him accounts for the robust resilience of autocracy and a low desire to challenge the autocratic status quo regime in the MENA region. Another explanation that can be used to justify the exceptionalism of the Arab world and its resistance to democracy. Democracy, is the autocratic regimes manipulation and use of the security apparatus, precisely the military to entrench the regime. (Ross, 2012). Military's loyalty to the regime offers the assurance of longer self-perpetuated rule. The government utilizes oil revenues to recruit and fortify the military in a bid of achieving significant military loyalty to the autocratic regime. However, this activity is not unique to just oil rich nations, as countries such as Gambia which lacks oil have been able to sway the military's loyalty to former President Jammeh's twenty-two-year tyrannical regime. On a similar note, Stefan & Robertson, (2004) advanced the argument that Arab societies are resistant to democracy and not Islam as a religion. According to their postulations, countries with over half of its population as Muslims but not predominantly Arabs (Non-Arab Muslim Majority) are more electorally democratic as opposed to Arab Muslim majority countries. Electoral democracy according to them is a government that emerges from a competitive free and fair elections. The Arab majority countries lack electoral democracy which constitutes an integral and essential aspect of democracy although its existence itself does not really mean democracy. Their argument is further substantiated with the further argument that all Arab countries that form the Arab league do not practice or uphold electoral competitiveness (Stefan & Robertson, 2004).

From the scholarly arguments cited in this paper, it is evident that numerous scholars agree on the resilience of authoritarianism in MENA, and the regions failure to democratize during the waves of democratizations, particularly the "third wave" which saw many third world regions slide into democracy. There is also consensus on the presence of authoritarian regime and repressive political culture in MENA since the post-independence era. Cultural/Religious, political and economic factors such as the presence of oil in the region have been advanced by scholars as reasons. It is important to note that all the explanations offered by the scholars mentioned above held utmost importance and relevance until the outbreak of the Arab uprising in 2011, which challenged general assumptions about the region's incompatibility with democracy. Such uprising surprised scholars and analyst alike, and the very different democratic outcomes for the countries that witnessed the Arab Spring puzzles democracies faith in the MENA region. Interrogations have risen amongst scholars and analyst with the goal of establishing whether the unprecedented Arab uprisings can bring about the long-awaited desire for democracy in the region, or whether democracy will only remain a dream in the MENA. Through the review done on democracy in MENA, a gap has been identified in determining where democratization and democracy stand in the MENA. With the Arab spring ushering in new democracies in Tunisia and Egypt, and maintaining dictators in countries like Syria and Bahrain, this thesis will contribute in filling the gap by using the selected country cases to determine where democracy stands in MENA.

3 METHODOLOGY

The methodology that will be adopted in this study shall be a Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA), since the aim of the study is to compare the outcomes of the Arab Spring on democratic consolidation in relation to the processes and methods adopted by Libya and Tunisia during transition (Marx et al ,2014). It was developed by Ragin Charles, but gained popularity as a social science research methodology in the previous two decades. The methodology allows for comparison in an orderly and systematic manner. It also incorporates the strength of case studies (Marx et al, 2014). Case Study otherwise known as case research is defined as a "method of intensively studying a phenomenon over



time within its natural setting in one or a few sites” (Bhattacharjee, 2012). Case study allows a researcher to study, understand and intensively analyze a particular phenomenon or context in depth. Due to the in-depth nature of the study, it allows the researcher to understand how and if a particular variable affect the outcomes of a research. It also guarantees a high level of internal validity. A comparative method on the other hand helps the researcher to uncover the empirical connection among variables. Satori, (1991), argues that comparison is the greatest means of achieving deeper understating. A comparative study is imperative to understand the fundamental factors behind the difference in democratic outcomes of Tunisia and Egypt as it studies the context and realities of the transitions in the two countries by analyzing a set of identified variables.

The article shall therefore investigate the triggers of the Arab Spring uprising, the direction of the political transition and how the methods or transitional processes have affected outcomes. As such, the two techniques are consolidated to get an inside out near investigation with an undeniable degree of logical ability to uncover the factors that account for the dissimilarity in outcome between the transitions of both countries. In terms of data collection for this research work, secondary data will be the source of all data. Newspapers, journal articles, Magazine, articles, reports from non-governmental organizations and thinktanks such United Nations, World Bank, Amnesty International, Freedom House, Human Rights Watch as well as Newspaper articles and bulleting.

4 DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Political and economic history of Tunisia

As mentioned earlier, Tunisia is the cradle of the Arab Spring which broke out in late December 2010. The North African country fell under French colonial rule, until it gained Independence in 1956, under President Habib Bourguiba. According to Central Intelligence Agency (2021), the population of the country stands at 11.82 million with a GDP of \$3319.82. Tunisia’s Socialist Destourian Party was a party formed to end colonialism and dominated Tunisian politics during both Bourguiba and Ben Ali’s tenure. Bourguiba was more of a reformist and implemented reformist policies including restructuring and liberating the Tunisian economy which at the time was structured to serve nothing but French interests. Bourguiba embarked on a holistic nationalization campaign which included both institutions and the civil service to be more Tunisian. Agriculture, mining and food processing constituted the main backbone of the Tunisian economy. Public utilities were extensively nationalized and the public sector was also significantly broadened. Towards the end of the 1960’s inefficient economic management coupled with corruption, low productivity and unemployment ultimately led to a failure of the economic policy adopted by Bourguiba. A new economic policy called ‘*Infitah*’ was adopted, and this policy allowed for the coexistence of both public and private sector. The new economic policy was designed to attract more foreign direct investment. However, the state under this policy controlled major economic activities such as utilities, transport and industries (Bellin, 2012). In the 1970’s the country registered a bloated public debt mainly due to the economy’s heavy dependence on oil export and foreign debt as the main source of the country’s investment. The Tunisian economy experienced an even worst decline due to failure to develop and grow domestic and export competitiveness. The economic decline was also worsened by the fall of oil prices and drought disasters of 1982 and 1986 negatively affected income from tourism which also affected the yearly growth rates (Murphy, 1999). The economic downturn had a surging effect on unemployment. The policies adopted by the government to cope with the economic downturn, restraining consumption and cutting down the governments expenditure ignited political issues and instability. The violent ‘bread riots’ ensued in 1984 as a reaction to the government’s austerity measures on grain products (Rupert, 1984). Tunisia opted for the Economic Recovery and Structural Adjustment Policy which many other countries adopted at the time. The measures and policies that came with the adjustment program including cutting down on government subsidies, massive privatization, minimizing imports and



cutting personal taxes and a devaluation of the country's local currency. The policies were able to salvage the country's foreign debt and inflation.

Zine Ben Ali came to the political scene in 1989 through a coup. Ben Ali introduced very effective economic reform policies. Since 1996 Ben Ali's economic policies encouraged privatization, and reinforced it to make it even more globally competitive (Perkins, 2014). Since the 1990's Ben Ali registered significant developments in various sectors of the economy. There was a massive growth in labour and productivity, which had a rapid growth effect on the GDP when compared to the previous decade. Ben Ali's regime was able to curb inflation, attain macroeconomic stability, reduce its public debt, and its GDP per capita was also at par with many European countries (Murphy, 1999). The country continued experiencing steady economic growth, as Ben Ali had a political economy approach with the belief that economic growth is a requirement for political legitimacy. The country also moved towards modernization. Since his accession to power, the country bragged as the Maghreb region's healthiest economy and recognized as second to none in terms of economic liberalization in the MENA region by both investors and creditors. The country was marked far ahead of its regional neighbours. The economic success reached by Ben Ali during the period was mainly driven by Tunisia's economic growth during the latter periods of Ben Ali's tenure, were mainly attributed to the promotion of the regime private sector as well as a diversified economy unlike its neighbours. Foreign investment significantly grew during this period stemming from its pro-western economic policies and liberalization of the Tunisian economy. The macro economic development failed to benefit ordinary Tunisians contributing mainly to the outbreak of the protests in 2010. The masses felt little or no benefit of the economic growth, and privatization was mostly economically beneficial to few elites. The lion share of Tunisia's economy was owned by family members of Ben Ali controlling 21% of the private sector. Other Socio-economic issues included unemployment and inequality especially during his last decade. Privatization was also partly under the government's control, and the sector was only able to provide low skilled labour. University graduates had to settle for lower jobs as in the case of Bouazizi. The government policies also undermined regional equity and reinforced the economic underdevelopment of the poor interior regions that housed a little less than half the population. Contributing only 20% to the country's overall GDP. Inhabitants of the interior participated in protests in the years that preceded the Arab Spring over drop in people's standard of living. The middle class also experienced a fall in living standard due to the high unemployment, rise in food prices, and a high living cost thus contributing to the Arab spring. Politically Tunisia prior to its uprising, wasn't different from many of its Arab neighbours. It was under the rule of autocrats since independence till the Arab Spring. Bourguiba was the country's first political leader, assuming office right after independence. Bourguiba was a reformist who focused on secularizing and modernizing and economically developing Tunisia. His secularization project imitated its former French colonizers. Under his leadership, Bourguiba struggled to maintain strong socio-economic development, including improvement in the education, and literacy. Education was both modernized and made widely available (Cook, 2017). He embarked on a nationalization process which was at the heart of all his policies. Military was strictly relegated to their external defence role, unlike in many other neighbouring countries. Bourguiba's Tunisia until the coup that ousted him, was based on a single party-political system dominated by the Neo Destourian party which he founded. The post-independence constitution of 1959 extensively empowered the president, virtually putting all other institutions and top government personnel including the prime minister, bureaucrats and other government officials under the president's direct control (Alexander, 2013). Bourguiba ruled with an iron fist and declared himself at some point during his rule lifetime president. Bourguiba was an autocrat who repressed all forms of opposition to his rule and policies. During the latter years of his rule, he violated political & human rights which coupled with economic stagnation led to general dissatisfaction amongst Tunisians. His failure to effectively address economic and political issues coupled with his declining health condition paved the way for Ben Ali to stage a constitutional coup in 1987.



Tunisia began to adopt democratic political changes in the wake of Ben Ali's rule. His accession was seen as a new feasible opportunity for Tunisia to embark on a full democratic journey. He made some changes such as electoral law reforms, allowing multi parties to operate, and expanding the press freedom. He banned the presidency for life decree, freed political prisoners and expanded the rights of women. Ben Ali however gradually turned into an authoritarian leader. The multi-party system which he initiated soon became a facade, as his party dominated the politics. His government oversaw and managed elections. He allowed for the existence of only few oppositions political parties. Parties which were real opposition to his rule such as Ennahda and UGTT, were seriously repressed by the state. Corruption was the order of the day during Ben Ali's rule. Wealth and state revenue was massively under the control of the ruling family and its close associates. Corruption was also rampant in the public sector and institutions such as the police, security sector and the civil service (Henry, 2011). Ben Ali limited the exercise of freedom of speech in Tunisia. The media, press and ordinary citizens, were brutally suppressed and jailed for speaking against the ruling elite and its ill practices. Ben Ali put up a facade of democratic governance but in reality, suppressed rights and limited the practice of democracy. Ben Ali used the security forces to eliminate opposition to his tyrannical rule. The economic and political situation in the country which had been simmering for years, became an unbearable reason to protests following Bouazizi's death (Henry, 2011).

4.2 Tunisia's revolution and its aftermath

The self-immolation of Bouazizi was the trigger of the Arab Spring, underlined by economic, social and political factors which also frustrated many of protestors. After the successful ousting of Ben Ali. transition talks began. Many local actors were involved, but most notably the Islamic Ennahda party which had been silenced in Tunisia's politics by Ben Ali. The local parties including notable civil society organizations like UGTT, etc played a fundamental role in Tunisia's successful transition to democratic rule (Deane, 2013). The level of compromise reached by the opposing actors, was very fundamental to the adoption of a progressive constitution and reformation of Tunisia's political dispensation. The civilian led interim government was charged with the responsibility of leading the transition by reforming repressive and unfair electoral laws, as well as adopt a new inclusive, progressive and a more democratic constitution. Tunisia's transition just like many other transitions from autocracy, was characterised by controversies and extreme polarisation between the different actors especially secularists and Islamists parties like Ennahda at different stages of the transition. Protests continued to erupt even after the ousting of Ben Ali over issues such as the incorporation of former statesmen during Ben Ali to the interim government., which many Tunisians were bitterly against. Forer, many of these people, they believed welcoming such a move would open up chances for the return of strongman Ben Ali. (Alexander, 2016). Civil society organisations were included in the transition phase, and they played an exceptional mediating role during moments of extreme polarisation between the actors. Tunisia made some remarkable electoral reforms and drafted many progressive electoral laws. The significant role played by youths during the revolution was recognised, and therefore catered for in the new electoral laws which required the inclusion of candidates below the age of thirty in their party list. A gender dimension to the electoral reforms, required an alternate system in the party listing which would allow for greater equality and women representation. The new electoral system adopted in the reform process adopted a proportional representation system allowing for greater pluralism, and cut down the chances of single party dominance in the transition (National Democratic Institution, 2011; Carey, 2013). The PR electoral system adopted by Tunisia was very important to the transition, as it boosted the legitimacy of the transition through its inclusive and pluralistic nature. Following the electoral reforms, the Libyans voted a body known as National Constituent Assembly, comprising of 217 members responsible for the drafting and adoption of a new constitution, electing an interim body to lead the transition (Freedom House, 2015). The body was directly elected by Tunisians in October 2011(National Transitional Council, Carey, 2014). Ennahda the main Islamist part dominated the election occupying 89 seats equivalent to 41% of the overall seats. The PR system ensured the inclusion of smaller parties, and that negotiation and compromise



were adopted by parties through put the process (Alexander, 2016). Other key political parties that acquired seats included Ettakatol, Congress for the Republic (CPR), Popular Petition, Progressive Democratic Party. The leading Ennahda party was compelled to form a coalition government with other parties such as Ettakatol, and CPR known as Troika. The coalition government had moments of heated controversies and high polarisation during the transition period. However, they were also able to reach negotiations and compromise on so many key issues including key positions, articles of the constitution etc. The process of drafting the new constitution began in 2011, and many progressive outcomes were registered despite moments of deep polarization amongst the drafters The process gained significant support both locally and internationally. -The constitutional drafting process was of cause a challenging and daunting process. With the process taking over two years, some of the most controversial articles that sparked heated debates amongst the often-opposing drafters included the role of religion in politics, blasphemy laws, and women's role (Associated Press in Tunis, 2014). The process passed through many different stages before reaching an agreement. Ennahda being the leading party in the process, held very critical position on the role of Islam and women in the new state. A more radical group of Islamist MPs demanded for Sharia to be the source of Tunisia's laws, while Ennahda also held a position which would have limited women's equality with their male counterparts (Cherif, 2021). However, a striking compromise was reached which allowed for a more moderate role of Islamic laws in Tunisia as well as allowed constitutional equality between Tunisian men and Women. With series of heated debates and moments of high polarisation, the opposing actors were able to reach an admirable level of compromise and consensus, which helped the country achieve one of the most progressive constitutions in the Middle East. The constitution promotes greater pluralism and equality and broadened the enjoyment of fundamental human rights enshrined in its articles. The constitution also allowed for greater transparency, separation of powers, and decentralization and opened up democracy in the political space. The progress made in this regard, can however be attributed to the political actors who set aside their interests, and made negotiations, compromises reaching consensus on controversial matters for the greater good of Tunisia (Cherif, 2021).

4.3 Democracy in Tunisia consolidated or not

Few years following the jasmine revolution the launching of democratic initiatives such as constitutional and electoral reforms were rolled out, Tunisia became recognised as the only democratic country out of all the countries that experienced the Arab Spring (Tielens, 2020). Politically, Tunisia has been a unique country out of all the countries that witnessed the Arab Spring. Its uniqueness lies not in the fact that it birthed one of the most remarkable events in recent Arab History, but lies on the evolution of its democratic journey ever since the outbreak of the 2010 Arab Spring. This is mainly attributed to the fact that Egypt fell back to authoritarian rule barely two years after their Arab Spring, and both Libya and Syria continue to experience protracted civil wars as an aftermath of the Arab Spring. This was also manifested by its Freedom House rating which changed from partly free to free in 2015 due to the adoption of the new progressive constitution, the conduct of successful presidential and parliamentary elections, positive progress in its governance, as well as the improvement of political rights (Freedom House, 2015). Power has been peacefully transitioned between different regimes which were often fierce oppositions. The country made quite some substantial moves in trying to consolidate its new democracy by engaging in institutional and security sector reform, as well as have a tight grip over the country's security and establish democratic state institutions. However, these registered progresses have not been accompanied by economic progress, and have recently been challenged following the recent moves of President Kais Said. Tunisia's post Arab spring period has dealt with terrorism and security issues. The borders especially in 2015 was vulnerable to terrorism, as terrorist groups penetrated its borders and operated in the country. Terrorist attacks were mainly targeted on tourist areas such as museums and beaches leading to the death of many tourists in 2015 (Serrano, 2020). Anti-terrorisms laws and campaigns have been heavily criticised by human rights



defenders, and many Tunisians who believe that it's a weapon for the Libyan state to oppress and repress Tunisians.

The once unique position enjoyed by Tunisia as the only Arab democracy, has been seriously challenged by the recent moves of President Kais Said. President Kais Said committed what many local opposition groups including Ennahda and international observers term a coup. In July 2021, President began his power seizure by suspending the parliament and passed a proclamation of ruling by decree. President Kais Said contested and won the 2019 Tunisian elections decisively. He enjoyed popularity amongst many Tunisians, but was however limited by the power sharing system in Tunisia's semi presidential system (Al Jazeera, 2021).

Economically, the country ever since the ousting of long-term leader, has remained stagnant, and has failed to register significant economic growth. Economic issues such as corruption, unemployment, and inflation continue to adversely affect the lives of a significant number of Tunisians. Successive governments following the end of Ben Ali's rule, pledged to wipe out the existing economic issues, but failed to do so despite designing measures. This can be evidenced by the level of corruption which has been on the increase (Al Jazeera, 2021). According to Transparency International as highlighted in table1, Tunisia's corruption ranking has increased since the outbreak in the dawn of the uprising in 2010. The constant disagreements on policies and other essential state issues, between speaker Ghannouchi and prime minister Mbechichi undermined reaching tangible solutions in dealing with issues such as the Covid 19 pandemic, therefore further glooming the political and economic setting. His unprecedented power grab, which includes seizing executive, legislative and judicial power is seriously undermined democracy in Tunisia (Al Jazeera, 2021; Freedom house, 2022)). His power grab also includes the suspension of the 2014 Tunisian constitution, and ruling by decree, putting forward the justification of restoring economic and political stability. His legal justification for his actions according to him is acting under article 80 of the Tunisian constitution, which gives the president the right to seize extra powers for 30 days in the face of threats to the state. Critics, however point to the fact that such a move should constitutionally approved by both the parliament and the PM which Said failed to do. The absence of a constitutional court makes matters even worst, as it would have been the independent and sole body to give a verdict on the issue. Tunisians are divided in their opinions on Said's move. Whiles some support his move, believing it's the right way to restore Tunisia's economy, others including Ennahda and other political parties, reject his move. His opponents and criticisers believe his legitimacy has been lost Prime minister Mbechichi was replaced by he first ever female prime minister in the Arab world (Human Rights Watch, 2022). Security institutions including the military have acted in favour of Said, by obeying his commands to disperse protestors and enforce his rules. Many Tunisians and international analysts have assumed that the country is returning back to autocracy. Democracy's faith in Tunisia is seriously being questioned by many. Said promised to rewrite a new constitution, but has made his intentions of not involving other political parties and civil society organisations in the process. The fight against corruption following the departure of Ben Ali lacked serious determination to punish culprits and reduce the practice. Officials who were found wanting of corruption failed to be legally prosecuted. Many corrupt civil servants remained in the government, and failed to face justice despite being guilty of corruption. A survey conducted by IRI in 2017 supports this evidence, as it suggests that corruption at the time of the survey was more rampant than in the past. The Survey also revealed that 89% of Tunisians were of the belief that corruption coupled with other degrading economic conditions, are the main causes of increased dissatisfaction by Tunisians against their government, in turn causing a feeling of disenfranchisement. Corruption is ever present and rampant in Tunisia, a justification President Kais Said as a justification of his recent power grab.

**Table 1.** Tunisia Corruption Perception Index

DATE	CORRUPTION RANKING	CORRUPTION INDEX
2021	70	44
2020	69	44
2019	74	43
2018	73	43
2017	74	42
2016	75	41
2015	76	38
2014	79	40
2013	77	41
2012	75	41
2011	73	38
2010	59	43

Source: Country economy.com. (n.d). Tunisia -Corruption perception index. Retrieved 15 April 2022 from, <https://countryeconomy.com/energy-and-environment/crude-oil/production/libya>.

Away from corruption, unemployment, and inflation have soared especially in recent years. The very primary triggers of the Arab spring especially amongst the youths, still exist and continues to frustrate the lives of many young Tunisians. The percentage of unemployed people according to Saleh (2021), increased from 13.05% in 2010 to 16.69% in 2020 reaching 18.33% in 2011, the highest it's been since the outbreak of the Arab Spring. The failure of the post Ben Ali to usher in a new era, has been heavily criticised for failing to deal with the economic situations that triggered the Arab Spring which has in fact worsened. The Inflation rate has also been on the rise in Tunisia post Arab Spring till date. In 2021 inflation in Tunisia stood at 5.73% compared to 3.34%. Many Tunisians still struggle to meet their basic essential needs due to the degrading economic conditions in Tunisia. The poor economic conditions in Tunisia are also compounded by the country's alarming level of public indebtedness. The country's national debt percentage stood at 84% in 2021, with the overall economic decline of 8.8% in 2020. The public debt as a result of the governments acquisition of loans from IMF to finance public debts (Teyeb, 2021). The country's GDP also crashed from 3.5% in 2010 to -8.6% in 2020. Overall, successive governments that emerged post Arab spring, have failed to address socio economic issues especially when considering the overall decline in the people's standard of living (Abouooun, 2019). In 2018, Tunisians launched a massive protest which later turned out violent, as a result of a financial act passed by the government to curbing inflation and high indebtedness. The law entailed increasing the prices of essential commodities such as fuel and a VAT increase on basic utilities such as internet phone calls, accommodation and vehicles, which Tunisian's felt was unfair and economically disadvantages them. Following the protests, the government was saddled with responsibility of effectively managing the country's declining economy.

The findings of an afro barometer round six survey, suggests that many Tunisians view democracy from an economic point of view. Tunisian's hold the believe that there is a strong relationship between economic progress and democracy, with democracy depending on the country's level of economic growth. The survey also revealed that over half of Tunisia's population believes that the country's main and greatest problem is the economy. Over 18% of the respondents suggesting corruption, and majority suggesting the lack of committed and serious efforts to curb corruption by the state. The survey equally questioned Tunisians as to whether they believe in the existence of a strong correlation between the provision of basic needs such as shelter, food and clothing to democracy. Whiles 46% stated there its essential to democracy, another 28% expressed that is fairly essential. The country's admirable electoral democracy has fallen short of attaining significant economic growth.



A 2020-2021 Afro barometer survey revealed suggest that many Tunisians believe to be living in degrading economic condition, with their low incomes barely being enough to meet their needs. Seeking employment has also been shunned at by many youths due the worrying level of unemployment. The survey findings also suggest that economic decline has worsened. Only 6% held a positive view about the country rating it as “good” or “very good” in the survey, which stood at 7% in 2018, and 14% in 2016. World Bank (2021) has stated that the Tunisian economy is experiencing an alarming economic decline especially when compared to its regional neighbours. The Bank suggests that the austerity measures adopted by successive post Ben Ali leaders including currency devaluation, subsidies cut down, a more liberal economic approach, the country still deals with economic hardships such as inflation, unemployment, decline in living standards and trade deficit

4.4 Libya’s revolution and civil war

The revolution did not stop in Tunisia, its effects were felt in other neighbouring Arab countries, to which Libya was not an exception. Few weeks following the successful ousting of Ben Ali and Mubarak, protests against Gaddafi’s long-time rule began in the eastern city of Benghazi, but later reached other Libyan cities. The protest in Libya began in February 2011, and spearheaded by armed groups, Libyans demanded the end of Gaddafi’s aging and repressive regime (El katawaneh, 2013). Libya’s uprising lasted for eight months and ended only after the murder of Gaddafi by the rebels. Libya’s uprising was the most violent out of all the Arab spring countries that ousted their dictators. The National Transitional Council, a body that served as the main opposition group to work towards ousting Gaddafi, was very instrumental in bringing together different groups in a bid to end Gaddafi’s rule (Johnson, 2017). Gaddafi’s reaction to the protests against his rule was absolutely heavy handed and violent, as he suppressed and brutally cracked down on protestors. Gaddafi was resistant and swore to protect his regime at any cost. Violence fuelled up between pro Gaddafi forces and rebel groups causing huge violations of human rights, and the UN was therefore compelled to condemn the violations. The violence meted out by Gaddafi towards Libyans, attracted international condemnations by international actors such as the Arab league, African Union and Human Rights Council. Barely a month into the protest, over three hundred civilians were reported dead. Libya was the only country that had the involvement of foreign powers in ousting Gaddafi (National Transitional Council, 2014). Due to surge in civilian deaths, the UN issued resolution 1973 declaring Libya a no-fly zone, as well as a step towards saving civilian lives. Air strikes were launched causing the death of about 60 civilians and 55 wounded. Following months of violent confrontations, the rebels through the NATO bombing were able to capture and kill Gaddafi in October 2011, in his home town of Sirte (The Guardian, 2020). France, United Kingdom and the USA spearheaded NATO’s intervention in Libya through their land, air and sea offensives against Pro Gaddafi forces (Davidson, 2013). The anti Gaddafi protest ended following his death, but the country has been in chaos and violence ever since Gaddafi’s death making it a devastating Arab spring outcome for Libyans.

The interim government in Libya was formed during the protests period. The Interim NTC body coordinated and managed the anti Gaddafi protests and movement consisting of different groups including businessmen, civil societies and rebel groups. Following the successful ousting of Gaddafi, the NTC assumed the role of interim government, with the mandate of writing a new constitution, electing a new government making many analysts term it as a self-proclaimed government (Hennerberg, 2021; Yurtsever & Abdulkarim, 2018). The council gained international recognition from countries like France, Italy and Spain during its early formation. The United States and The United Kingdom ultimately recognised the body a little later (El Katawneh, 2013; National Transitional Council Libya, 2014). The NTC sought and gained United Nations representation. The defacto leader pledged to step down once Gaddafi’s rule ended. Following the death of Gaddafi, he announced the plans of the council which included the formation of a caretaker government to be elected in a month, followed by the election of constitutional drafting members and then presidential and parliamentary elections the following year (Anadolu, 2011). He was replaced by Ali Tarhouni



who served until the appointment of the new caretaker government. The body faced many internal challenges which earned it a lot of criticism. Internal division and the challenge of harmonising the interest of many different groups. The council was dissolved after the successful election of the General National Congress. The primary mandate of the GNC, was to elect constitutional drafters, and parliamentarians. The transfer of power from the NTC to GNC is often credited as the only successful and violent free transfer of power ever since the Arab Spring (Cherif, 2021). The GNC fulfilled its mandate of conducting elections barely two years into its mandate, however it refused to hand over to the elected House of Representatives. This was precisely the beginning of the division and the emergence of two opposing governments in Libya. The HOR moved to the east where it began its operations. The division caused the resurfacing of opposing rebel factions each taking sides (Henneberg, 2021).

4.5 Constitutional and electoral reforms

Libya's transition also included plans of adopting a new constitution, and reforming the electoral laws on their journey to democracy. Since the outbreak of the conflict in 2011 to date, Libya has failed to elect a new president. Since the 2012 election of the GNC, the country has been unable to hold peaceful elections, which marked the first election in about five decades (Barakat, 2018). During the early phase of the transition. The reforms made to the electoral system includes banning of Libyans with dual citizens from contesting in elections, reintroduction of multiparty politics which was banned by Gaddafi, banning former Gaddafi officials from contesting for public office (The Carter Centre, 2012). The draft electoral law system also forbade individuals who sabotaged or aimed at ending the revolution from contesting. The revised draft however, entailed a First past the Post system for the first 120 candidates, with a PR alternating system to be used for the remaining 80 seats, which would allow smaller parties representation, and increase women's representation to 20%. The election of the HOR, was marred by a significantly low voter turnout, due to the violent and chaotic security environment at the time. The refusal to hand over power, ignited the conflict that has ravaged Libya and Libyans over the years. Since the election in 2014, the country has not been able to successfully elect a new leader and parliament, as a means of ending the conflict and restore peace and unity to the Libyan state. The United Nations, has been involved in the conflict, and has made numerous efforts aimed at attaining peace and unity in Libya. The recent agreement meant at holding an election in December of 2021, was seen and believed by the United Nations as the only solution to end the legitimacy battle between the rival governments, and to finally end the violent conflict (Brahimi, 2021). However, the Electoral commission announced some hours to the election, of its postponement due to some legal and technical issues surrounding certain candidates most notably Haftar, Dbeibah and Shaif Al Islam son of Gaddafi who is wanted by the ICC for his role in suppressing the protest back in 2012. The country is till date yet to conduct both presidential and parliamentary elections (Barhimi, 2021).

The National Constitutional Declaration since its initiation in 2011 serves as the supreme laws of the land in the absence of a new constitution. Libya has gone through the process of adopting a new constitution, but has however failed to adopt a new constitution since 2011 (Johnson, 2017; Cherif, 2021). Adopting a new democratic and progressive constitution is quite fundamental for a country like Libya. A constitutional Drafting Assembly was elected by Libyans in February 2014 to draft a new constitution. The election of the National Constituent was termed free and fair by international observers, however concerns such as constitutional drafting period, issues concerning women and minority groups, emerged even before the election (International Commission of Jurist, 2015). The Drafters divided into subcommittees each responsible for looking into specific issues began their role in April 2014. The process encountered some challenges both internally amongst the drafters and externally. In October 2015, a draft constitution was drafted in 2015 and a revised was issued in 2016, and a final draft was passed just two months. The adoption of a new constitution required voting by Libyans through a referendum. The drafting process generated certain articles especially on very controversial articles including the role of women, sharia as a source of laws, dual citizenship the



national anthem & flag, women and minority rights. The process took three years of heated arguments and debates between drafters, members of the public, forty three out of sixty drafters voted in favour of adopting a new constitution. The civil war and division in Libya have severely undermined the chances of adopting a new constitution.

4.6 The political situation in Libya

Libya is evidently one of the Arab Spring countries that has had a devastating aftermath, especially when compared to Tunisia. Since the ousting of long-time dictator Gaddafi, Libya has descended in a series of unending chaos (Human Rights Watch, 2022). The power vacuum which emerged following Gaddafi's death, opened the door for many non-state actors such as rebel groups, local and international actors to be involved in a battle for political and economic control. The root of the current division which plagues Libya dates back to the Arab Spring, but was exacerbated after the 2014 elections which caused the existence of two authorities. The existence of two opposing governments, GNA which is internationally recognised by the United Nations, and The Eastern based Tobruk government affiliated with warlord General Halifa Haftar severely undermine the chances of attaining democracy in Libya (Al Jazeera, 2021). Other issues that stem from this conflict and seriously undermining the chances of democracy in the country, include decaying security conditions, legitimacy battle, economic instability and a general atmosphere of instability (Al Jazeera, 2021). The fighting and violence since the ousting of Gaddafi has been mainly between Eastern and Western based government. Key government officials and security personnel have been victims of murder and assassination. At a time when different militias and Islamist groups were fiercely battling to gain control or advance their objectives, General Haftar and his Libyan National Army launched an offensive called operation 'Karama' / 'dignity' to pushback and contain terrorist and Islamist groups operating in different parts of (Libyan Economic Monitor, 2021). The Government of National Accord under the leadership of Fayeze al Saraj, came into being in 2015 but was also seen as a rival government by the eastern based government. The GNA was a product of UN brokered political power sharing agreement through a presidency council headed by Prime ministers. The council members based on The Libyan Political Agreement were drawn from different constituencies and factions. The UN legally recognised government struggled to exercise legitimacy and authority, as the Eastern based government failed to recognise it throughout its period of existence. The ministerial positions offered by the GNA to the western based government, were turned down as part of their refusal to endorse the GNA. The two rival governments have ever since been battling for legitimacy and control over key government institutions such as the central bank, oil corporations Haftar launched an offensive in April 2019 to capture Tripoli from the western based government as part of his bid to gain full control over Libya. His offensive was supported by his major allies including Egypt and the Gulf states. The offensive was however, successfully quashed by the western based government of Tripoli, with the aid of Turkey. Haftar advanced the justification that his main objective is to free Libya from Islamist and armed groups. Following the failure of the of Haftar's offensive to take over Tripoli (Thibault, 2019). The UN brokered a cease fire deal which is still in effect. A new government was setup by the United Nations through the Libyan political dialogue forum. Its main purpose was to serve as interim leadership, and oversee the conduct of presidential elections in Libya scheduled for December 2021 (Eaton et al, 2021).

The scheduled elections failed to materialise due to issues surrounding the qualification of candidates and some other technical and legal issues (TRT, 2022). The controversies of candidates include three prominent political figures, namely Haftar, head of the Government of National Unity, and Saif Al Islam son of Gaddafi. The GNU is still the UN recognised government in Tripoli, but also suffers from endorsement by the eastern based governments. The Eastern based MPs appointed a new prime minister Fathi Bashaga to take over from Dbeibah following the failure of the GNU to conduct elections. The move by the east intensifies the already existing divide and parallel governments and institutions that have been in existence since 2014. The act equally jeopardises the peace and



reconciliation efforts by the United Nations in Libya (TRT, 2022). What can be deduced from the existence of two opposing authorities in Libya, is the fact that a legitimacy and power vacuum exist in Libya, making many political analysts term Libya as a failed state which lacks a central authority to exercise full legitimacy. None of the two governments exercises full control, and lack absolute legitimacy to steer the affairs of Libya. The UN holds a strong conviction that the main solution to the legitimacy problem in Libya, is to conduct national elections in Libya has really not changed in terms of human rights and Freedom rating, which has remained not free according to Freedom House (2022) ever since the pre-Arab Spring. This can be mainly attributed to the fact that the country remains fragmented between two opposing governments, and the security condition due to intermittent armed conflicts have further depleted the security conditions, undermining the chances of Libyans to enjoy their full human rights.

Aside from the obvious legitimacy gap in Libya, the country lacks rule of law, which stems from the legitimacy issue. None of the rival authorities is able to enforce domestic and international laws, due to their failure to recognise one another. Local political actors have failed to reach political agreements, as seen in Tunisia. Political actors in Libya adamantly hold on to their respective beliefs and agendas. Parallel institutions, as well as leaders still continue to exist in Libya. Moreover, none of the existing authorities has absolute monopoly over the use of force, a characteristic very fundamental to an effective state.

The involvement of foreign powers in the Libyan conflict has been cited by many as a driver of the conflict. Their heavy involvement ever since 2011 made many argue that the war in Libya is a proxy war for regional and international powers (Thibault, 2019). Both governments have the explicit support and backing of both regional and international powers, all of whom have a vested political, ideological or economic interest in Libya's conflict. The Tripoli based government's main allies are Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, while Tobruk based government and General Haftar are backed by Egypt, UAE, Russia and France (Allahoum, 2020; Hill, 2020). These foreign governments have extended support in the form of military, financial, logistical and diplomatic support (Hill, 2020). Ankara deployed fighters to help the Tripoli government quell Haftar's 2019 offensive. Turkey's support for the Tripoli based government is believed to be for ideological reasons in addition to securing its geostrategic interest in the Mediterranean, and its economic oil interest. Haftar's supporters including France and Moscow see him as a key anti islamist figure, instrumental in the fight against terrorism. Egypt as an ally of Haftar, has been offering both military and logistical aid, and even threatened to military invade by virtue of its proximity (Arab Weekly, 2020). Their various support to the warring parties has fuelled the conflict, making it quite difficult to end despite UN warning to withdraw support in the conflict (Hill, 2020)

The human rights conditions as documented by Human Rights Watch (2022) and Amnesty International reveals. Missing people, unlawful detention and imprisonment and, lack of access to basic essential needs such as education, health due to destruction of facilities, are sabotaging the enjoyment of human rights an attainment of democracy. The recent discovery of mass graves of unidentified bodies, believed to have been done by Haftar and his LNA forces is also a shocking threat to human rights. Migrants, asylum seekers and refugees suffer human right abuses in various forms including unlawful detention, sexual harassment, general ill treatment and forced labour by individuals believed to be affiliated with the GNU and its interior ministry. The lack of explicitly in the roles of the judicial arm of government due to the lack of constitution, makes the institution ineffective in carrying out its fundamental judicial role. The martial courts have been involved in trying individuals which is considered unlawful in many constitutional democracies (Human Rights Watch, 2022). Judicial officials like and other government officials have been victims and targets of assassination and intimidation by armed group. Libyan courts lack the mandate to preside over election matters, including registration and election results. Amnesty international reports that as at 2020 an estimated



270,000 Libyans remained displaced, while 900,000 are in need of humanitarian assistance, half of whom are women and children (Al Jazeera, 2020).

According to Freedom House (2022) Freedom of speech and association is not fully enjoyed in Libya as they are controlled by stringent laws, punishing individuals wanted by such laws. Defamation of public officials, the country and its flag and blasphemy are criminalised in Libya. Ordinary Libyans have little say in their internal affairs, as the politics and many of the decisions lie in the hands of the authorities and external powers. Individuals found wanting of disrupting the socio economic and political order face a death penalty. Journalists also suffer from threats and intimidation by armed groups, limiting their freedom and liberty to independently operate (Freedom House, 2022). The series of conflict seriously undermine the exercise of rights by many in Libya. Women's rights and status has not improved since the ousting of Gaddafi. Women are still victims of domestic and repressive laws. Women who go through online and physical abuse remain unprotected. The Libyan laws have failed to criminalise domestic violence and family laws seriously disadvantaging women in marriages, divorce and inheritance. Sexual abusers, and people who kill women adulterers are protected by the law (Freedom House, 2022).

4.7 The current economic situation

Libya is an oil rich country, whose economy is mainly driven by oil income ever since its discovery. The Libyan economy's dependence on oil, led to a low diversification of its economy (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Being 9th and the Africa's first in oil reserves, Libyans enjoyed a decent cost of living under Gaddafi through the rentier state. Libyans enjoyed oil income under Gaddafi through various welfare and subsidised packages on various utilities such as electricity, fuel, food supplies and health care. Gaddafi's ambitious socio-economic policies earned Libya the position of regional leader on the 2011 human development index, which measures living standards. Libya enjoyed a great position internationally, and attained enviable infrastructural development due to its oil income. The position once enjoyed by Libya and Libyans has been adversely affected by the outbreak of the civil war and instability.

Table 2: Libya's annual crude oil production

2020	408
2019	1,169
2018	1,027
2017	879
2016	445
2015	464
2014	530
2013	978
2012	1,432
2011	485
2010	1,710

Source: countryeconomy.com. (n.d). Libya-Crude oil production. Retrieved 15 April 2022 from, <https://countryeconomy.com/energy-and-environment/crude-oil/production/libya>.

**Table 3:** Production volume of crude oil in Libya

Characteristics	Production volume in thousands of barrels per day
2020	347.2
2019	1,035.7
2018	998.5
2017	792.1
2016	350.1
2015	288.4
2014	329.4
2013	836.1
2012	1,239.5
2011	299.5
2010	1,265.2

Source: Statista. (2021, November 29). Production volume of crude oil in Libya. Statista Research Department. Retrieved 19th April 2022 from, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1192076/volume-of-crude-oil-production-in-libya/>.

The conflict in Libya has a great economic dimension and impact. As mentioned above, Libya's economy depends on oil as the main backbone of its economy. As evidenced in the figures above the oil production and export of Libya dropped significantly due to the conflict, causing an overall decline of the economy. The periods of intense conflict like in 2014 and the immediate years that followed were the lowest periods of production and export. The once giant economy of Libya experienced a sharp shock and decline during the mentioned periods. Oil production only began picking up in 2017, during the period of relative peace. However, the production was obstructed by Haftar's closure of oil production. Haftar has control of many of Libya's major oil ports especially in the east and south, but does not exercise control over oil sales, which is done by Libya's National Oil Cooperation. The control of oil fields has given Haftar a leverage both over the western based government and internationally. The oil plays a fundamental role and a powerful bargaining tool, which has kept the violence alive as different factions including external powers, battle to gain control over Libya's vast oil resources. The nine months oil blockade imposed in 2020, blew Libya's economy once again. The oil production dropped in 2020 to less than one sixth of 2019 figures, making it the lowest GDP ever, and dropping the GDP from \$52.09 billion to \$25.42 billion compelling the country to cutdown on its expenses (The Libyan Economic Monitor, 2021). The blockade cost a huge income lost to the tune of \$6billion. Haftar capitalised on the oil blockade to make certain demands including a demand for oil wealth redistribution. The blockade also served the purpose of imposing financial pressure on the western based government as part of his plans to gain control of Tripoli.

Libya's oil sector is not open to local oil companies only, but to major western oil companies including Shell, Total Energies, Royal Dutch Shell and BP who all have major oil stakes in the Libyan oil market. British Petroleum BP is a major player in Libya's oil sector ever since its entry in the 20th century. The company withdrew and halted its activities for over three decades, due to the nationalisation policy adopted by Gaddafi at the time. Its return to Libya was announced in 2006 (Guardian ,2007). Since then, the country has gained lucrative energy deals in the sector, halting its activities again due to the conflict, the country, BP announced another re-entry into Libya following an agreement it reached in 2018. The company proclaimed its intention to grow and develop the oil and sector as well as broaden the country's gas market. The company has resumed its exploration and operational activities. French owned oil company, Total Energies is another key player in Libya's oil market which has been operating in Libya over six decades according to the company's official



website. The company has major shares in Libya's oil industry. It holds 16.33% in the Waha concession, and major stakes in El Sharara onshore blocks 19/130 (30%) and 130/131 (24%) in the Muzruk Basin. Their activities in Mabrouk were suspended due to the security crises.

The devastating effects of the conflict on the economy has grown unemployment, inflation, corruption and poverty in Libya. The economic downturn can be attributed to the decline in oil production. The existence of parallel institutions including two central banks, with the Eastern bank minting cash has inclined the inflation rate. The two governments also run-on different budgets. Attempts for reunification of parallel institutions. Corruption is a widespread issue in Libya. Observers believe that corruption in Libya's public sector takes many different forms including overstaffing in government institutions, duplicating and falsifying salaries, embezzlement and syphoning of public funds and squandering. Libya still holds a low ranking in terms of its corruption perception index from 160 in 2012, to 172 out of 180 in 2020 according to transparency international (Transparency International, 2022). Inflation has also been increasing in Libya reaching its highest in 2017 since the outbreak of the 2011 conflict. The inflation has caused an increase in the prices of food items. The main cause of inflation includes the devaluation of the Libyan currency, printing of Libyan Dinar, scarcity of major commodity supply chains (Libyan Economic Monitor, 2021). The effect of these economic downturn includes poor service delivery, increased economic and social marginalisation, and poverty. Libya has lost revenue from Foreign Direct investments since he 2014 escalation, with a negative figure of -24 in 2018 and 0.002 in millions of dollars. The Libyan oil economy still continues to rely on oil as its main supporter. The world bank predicts that Libya's non-oil sector will remain stagnant due to conflict and poor delivery of basic services such as power. Therefore, an everlasting solution to the prolonged conflict is very crucial for fundamental economic growth (World Bank, 2021).

5. CONCLUSION

The Middle East and North Africa region was a region generally believed to be incompatible with democracy. This was even more evident in the second and third waves of democracy, which saw many nations, including third world countries democratize. The Arab countries evaded the democratization trend, but few of them adopted economic liberalization policies. The Arab spring which began in Tunisia and spread to other countries such as Libya and Egypt birthed hopes that these countries would become the first Arab countries to democratise. Since the 2013 coup and the return to authoritarianism in Egypt, and the unending civil war in Libya, Tunisia was widely believed to be the only democratic Arab country. Although the Arab Spring was generally triggered by the same set of socio economic and political issues, the outcomes in each of the countries a decade later significantly differs. It is difficult to generalise the outcomes of the Arab spring. Each of the countries that experienced have had very different outcomes, which is still unfolding and evolving even in Tunisia. Whiles the political situation in Tunisia generally registered some positive outcomes making its freedom ranking change, from partly free to free in 2015, Libya has had a negative and adverse aftermath of the Arab Spring. The political atmosphere has been severely marred by intermittent violent conflicts since the end of Ghaddafi's rule, which undermines Libya's smooth transition to democracy talk less of consolidating. The economic downturn in the country with surging unemployment, Inflation and other economic situations put Tunisia's democracy and state of affairs at a very fragile juncture Tunisia became a democracy but struggles to consolidate its democracy due to the declining economic situation in the country. As presented earlier in this article the economic situation which prompted youths and Tunisians to protests to end Ben Ali's regime has grown worst, causing a dissatisfaction over the economic outcomes of the Arab Spring amongst Tunisians. From a political point of view. The gains registered by Tunisia and the legacy it once enjoyed as the Arab World's only democracy, has been seriously challenged by the recent political situation following President Kais Said's recent confiscation of judicial, executive and legislative powers. The move by



Kas Said might either bear positive outcomes for democracy as he has pledged to effectively manage the country's economic downturn and stabilise the political atmosphere. His move could also negatively affect the young democracy, if his power grab becomes more extensive and could return the country to authoritarianism which many people believe. Whiles democracy was unarguably achieved in Tunisia, Libya since the fall of Gaddafi enjoyed a short democratic period through the democratic elections in 2012. The conflict has marred all chances of democracy and democratic governance. The political divide and the general atmosphere of insecurity aborts all chances of reuniting the country and attaining lasting peace. The involvement of foreign powers is also a great factor impeding the attainment of democracy in Libya. Libya faces distinct economic and political challenges which has made the attainment of democracy far reach. The economic issues in Libya mainly due to a drop in the energy sector affects the general standard of living of Libyans who once benefited room Gaddafi's rentier state. Using Tunisia and Libya as case studies to assess whether democracy has been consolidated in the post Arab Spring Nations, this article based on the findings regarding the political and economic situation of these countries, it is safe to say that democracy is still fragile in the MENA, and is yet to be fully consolidated even in Tunisia. Libya is nowhere close to a democracy, as the country has not enjoyed democracy since the 2014 outbreak.

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