

**VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS AND POLITICAL CULTURE
IN POST-GADHAFI LIBYA**

A Thesis
Presented to the Faculty
Of
The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy
By

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Dissertation Committee:

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EDUCATION

The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University **Medford (MA), USA**
PhD 2010 – 2016

- Fields of study: International Security Studies, Human Security
- Dissertation title: *Voluntary Associations and Political Culture in post-Gadhafi Libya*
- Elected member of the Fletcher PhD Committee 2010-2011
- President of the Fletcher European Society Club 2011-2012

Master of Arts in Law and Diplomacy 2008 – 2010

- Fields of study: International Security Studies, Political Theory, Human Security
- Concentrations: Peace-Building and Peace-keeping operations, Security Sector Reform and DDR
- Academic proficiency: 4.0 GPA

Institut d'Etudes Politiques (Sciences Po) **Paris, FRANCE**
Visiting student, International Security and European Union studies Jan - May 2010

- Lead a research team of 13 students from the class on Conflict Resolution to interview key informants and decision makers in France and Mali on civilian-military relations in Mali and on the challenges posed by Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb

University of Trieste, Political Science **Trieste, ITALY**
Master of Arts in International Relations 2004 – 2007

- Completed graduate coursework in International security, Management, and Leadership at the Air Force Graduate School in Florence, Italy
- Conducted extensive research and was granted the character of “experimental thesis” on “*The system of International Sanctions, from the League of Nations to the UN*”: graduated with 110/110 *Magna cum laude*.

Italian Air Force Academy **Naples, ITALY**
Bachelor of Science 1992 - 1996

- Field of study Aeronautical Sciences: was awarded three consecutive annual academic distinctions

FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS, AWARDS, AND DISTINCTIONS

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- Junior Scholar Fellow, Crown Center for Middle East Studies, Brandeis Univ. 2016 - 2017
 - Doctoral Fellow, Geneva Center for Security Policy Summer 2016
 - Fellow, Fares Center for Eastern Mediterranean Studies, Tufts University 2015 - present
 - Junior Scholar Fellow, Crown Center for Middle East Studies, Brandeis Univ. 2014 - 2016
 - Tufts Special Mention for Outstanding Graduate Student Contribution to Undergraduate Education Spring 2014
 - Graduate Institute for Teaching fellowship, Tufts University 2011-12
 - I.N.S.P.I.R.E. Fellow & Hamlin grant recipient, Institute for Global Leadership, Tufts 2011-12
 - Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation International Security Studies scholarship recipient 2011
 - Henry J. Leir fellowship and Sarah Scaife Frank Rockwell grant 2009-11
 - William L. Blue & Joan R. Blue Scholar, awarded for academic achievement 2008-09
 - NATO Wing Com. Commendation for excellent support during a fatal accident safety investigation 2008
 - Wing Com. Commendation for saving a drowning man's life in adverse sea conditions 2002
 - Brig. Gen. Special Commendation for outstanding leadership and management 2000

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Tufts University **Medford (MA), USA**
The Democratic Transition in Libya - Lecturer Spring 2014

- Designed the course syllabus and teach the seminar-type class to 8 Tufts undergraduate students.
- Areas covered are security through the prism of State and Non-State actors, organized crime, the economy, the democratic steps, civil society and media, the Rule of Law and the role of international assistance
- Received a university-wide special mention for outstanding teaching to undergraduates following students' recommendations

Tufts University, Political Science Department **Medford (MA), USA**
Political Psychology - Teaching Assistant for Prof. Schildkraut Spring 2014

- Lecture on a portion of the class. The Professor recommended that I teach the entire class the following year
- Advise students and evaluate their assignments (research proposal; exams)

New Libya Foundation **Tripoli; Misrata, LIBYA**
Instructor February 2012 - April 2013

- Design and teach an intensive one-week course on democracy and civil society to Libyan Civil Society activists. Taught the leaders of 12 CSOs in Tripoli, and 18 CSOs in Misrata.

The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy Tufts University **Medford (MA), USA**
IR Theory and Practice - Teaching Fellow 2011-2012

- Selected to take part in the Tufts Graduate Institute For Teaching course (May-June 2011) with 23 other PhD candidates or post-Doctoral fellows from various Tufts University Academic departments.
- Co-taught the course "International Relations Theory and Practice" at the Fletcher School in the Fall of 2011 under the mentorship of Prof. Robert Pfaltzgraff

Transitional Justice - Teaching Assistant for Prof. Aucoin Fall 2011

- Research and organize course material
- Revise syllabus and coordinate class participation of students
- Provide feedback to professor on course development, help draft midterm and final exam, and administer final exam

Tufts University, Field Exercise for Peace and Stability Operations **Medford (MA), USA**
Team leader, Instructor March-April 2011

- Brief all the participants (70+) on the key concepts of civilian-military cooperation (CIMIC)
- Recruit other team leaders and coordinate selection of reading material and the production of handouts
- Lead the UN team, advise and supervise moves during exercise, debrief each move play

The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University **Medford (MA), USA**
Peace Operations - Teaching Assistant for Prof. Johnstone Fall 2010

- Revise syllabus and research appropriate articles and websites for inclusion in course
- Prepare and coordinate the end of course exercise as UNSC meeting, prepare bibliography
- Help evaluate students' participation and presentations during exercise
- Coordinate planning and execution of end of course panel conference on Sudan

Rule of Law in Post-Conflict Societies - Teaching Assistant for Prof. Aucoin Fall 2010

- Revise syllabus and coordinate class participation of students
- Organize the class intervention of guest lecturers both in class or remotely through webcasting
- Provide feedback to professor on course development, help draft midterm and final exam, and administer final exam

Tufts University, Political Science Department **Medford (MA), USA**
Introduction to International Relations - Teaching Assistant for Prof. Taliaferro Fall 2009

- Lead two 25-student recitation/discussion classes every week. Advise and mentor students during their research
- Evaluate students' research proposals and grade students' midterm and final exam

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, Tufts University **Medford (MA), USA**
The Italian Paradox - Lecturer Fall 2008

- Teach a class on Italian culture, history and society to 14 adults (maximum class size allowed)
- Design the syllabus, research material for course contents and lead group discussions

Euro-NATO Joint Jet Pilot Training School (ENJJPT) **Sheppard AFB (TX), USA**
Instructor 2005 – 2008

- Responsible for the training of 11 Student Pilots and for supervising 11 Instructors from four different countries: ensured full qualification of Instructors and 99% early completion rate of all student training, valued at over \$13M per semester.
- Selected to be an Instructor to the new Instructors joining the School from the US, Germany, Italy, Spain and the Netherlands.
- Handpicked among Instructors for judgment and instructional skills to teach the most challenging students: mentored them to graduation with 100% success rate.

Jet Training School, 61° Wing **Lecce, ITALY**
Instructor 2000 – 2003

- Lead the instruction of several classes of student pilots, evaluate their performance and make recommendations on their ensuing career assignments.
- Teach both theoretical classes on the ground and practical skills in flight.

Guest Lectures

Universita La Sapienza (Rome, Italy); U.C. Berkeley (CA, USA); North Eastern University (MA, USA); Boston University (MA, USA)

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

World Peace Foundation **Medford (MA), USA / Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA**
Consultant September 2015 - January 2016

- Draft a report on the lessons learned from the intervention in Libya for “The future of peace missions in Africa” project, aimed at providing recommendations to the African Union on how to restructure its peace and security architecture.
- Present the findings and recommendations to the African Union in Addis Ababa and discuss the findings with African peace and security scholars and decision-makers

Institute for Global Leadership - Tufts University **Medford (MA), USA**
Research team leader February-April 2014

- Recruit and mentor a team of 9 undergraduate and graduate students on governance research and survey design
- Coordinate the team effort to review existing literature and governance surveys (World Value Survey, Arab barometer, World Bank and UNDP governance surveys, etc.)
- Oversee the drafting of a comprehensive “local governance and local community assessment” survey questionnaire

UNICEF and UNDP **Tripoli; Benghazi; Misrata; Zawia; Zuwara, LIBYA**
Research Team Leader July 2013 – May 2015

- Design the research methodology and tools to assess and promote civil society organizations in six major Libyan cities

- Present the project to the Ministry of Culture and to the local authorities, coordinate the public campaign
- Recruit, train and supervise individual research teams in six different cities (70 people overall) and oversee the interview process (over 1000 organizations surveyed)
- Analyse the data and write the final assessment report. Present the report to national and international stakeholders

Global Integrity

Tripoli, LIBYA

Country Reviewer

Fall 2013

- Review and provide comments on each of the 110 Africa Integrity Indicators (Safety and Rule of Law; Participation and Human Rights; Sustainable Economic Opportunity; Human Dev.t) considering the score, narrative comments and references provided by the country researcher

Development Alternatives (DAI)

Tripoli; Benghazi; Zuwara, LIBYA

Expert – Libya Security Sector Assessment (SSR and DDR)

October-December 2013

- Design the research methodology and tools for a comprehensive assessment of the social, political and security context in Libya for the US State Department. Help assemble the research team.
- Interview key stakeholders (donors, civil society organizations, Government officials, international organizations)
- Contribute to drafting a report laying out the political, security and civil society landscape and articulating possible avenues for stabilization initiatives

Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED, France)

Sebha, LIBYA

Research Team Leader - Assessment and promotion of CSOs in Sabha

Dec 2012 - Jan 2013

- Design the research goals and methodology to assess and promote civil society org. in the Sebha region (Southern Libya)
- Draft the interview questionnaire, present it to the local authorities and recruit the local team of enumerators (7)
- Train enumerators and oversee the interview process (100 organizations interviewed over 9 days).
- Analyse the data and write the final assessment report. Present the report to national and international stakeholders.

Global Integrity

Tripoli, LIBYA

Country Lead Researcher

February - December 2012

- Interview key informants, such as journalists, members of the National Transitional Council, judges, HR activists, lawyers, journalists, members of international and local NGOs, university administration and university professors
- Research and score (provide the narrative and the references) approximately 125 *de jure* and *de facto* Africa Governance Indicators (Safety and Rule of Law; Participation and Human Rights; Sustainable Economic Opportunity; Human Dev.t)

New Libya Foundation, and Institute for Global Leadership - Tufts Univ.

Tripoli, LIBYA

Research designer, research team leader

Nov - Dec 2011

- Design a detailed questionnaire (100 questions) on governance, corruption, religion, women's rights, and media.
- Conduct a two-week civil society initial assessment mission: 52 interviews of a representative sample of Libyan society in Libya, 2 focus group discussions (one under 30 yo, one over 30 yo), and interview of key informants (Professors, NGOs...)

Institut d'Etudes Politiques (Sciences Po)*Research team leader***Bamako, MALI**

Summer 2010

- Research sponsored by the Strategic Affairs Directorate (DAS) of the French Defense Ministry, the Malian Employers' Federation, the Malian Defense Ministry, and the Institut d'Etudes Politiques (Paris)
- Manage the research of 12 graduate students on civilian military coordination, the exercise of sovereignty in the Sahel, and the problems of transnational terrorism and organized crime in Northern Mali.
- Coordinate the interview of over 30 stakeholders, including high-ranking diplomats of EU countries in Mali, journalists, high-ranking Malian military and state officials, and researchers in Bamako and Paris.
- Following the research, constitute and coordinate an expert network conducting "track 2" diplomacy focused on conflict prevention and resolution through civil society engagement. The network based in Bamako (Mali) discusses the interconnected issues of the minorities/nomadic tribes, organized crime in relations to the Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) terrorist group operating in the Sahel region. The network comprises leaders of the main Northern minorities (Songhai, Touaregs, and Arabs), as well as Malian and foreign civil society leaders, diplomats and military officials.

Restauration de la Justice au Congo (REJUSCO) Goma, DEMOCRATIC REP. of CONGO*Researcher*

Summer 2009

- Research and map the ongoing conflict and the phenomenon of sexual violence in Eastern DRC
- Research open sources, interview survivors of sexual violence, actors belonging to over 30 local and international organizations present in Eastern DRC, civil society leaders, and health and jail administrators in Bunia and Goma
- Interview intelligence, operations and planning officers from the UN Mission in the DRC (MONUC) and the EU Security mission in the DRC (EUSEC) on ongoing SSR and DDR programs
- Wrote an academic paper on the protection of civilians and Security Sector Reform in Eastern DRC, and to write my 2010 Master's thesis on *Violence after civil war*, which was awarded the highest grade

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL)***Consultant***Boston; Tunisia; Libya**

Dec 2016 – March 2017

- Recruit a team of four Libyan consultants. Design and oversee the research methodology (90 semi-structured interviews).
- Draft a civil society organizations outreach, engagement, and capacity building strategy for the UN integrated mission.

Comprehensive Support to Peace Processes Consortium (CSPPC)*Team Leader - Libya Participatory Mapping Project***Medford (MA), USA**

June - Aug 2016

- Design and develop all aspects of the project: research, analysis, mapping strategies, and training,
- Recruit a team of international and Libyan experts, and establish a network of Libyan partners among civil society and local administrations in multiple local municipalities.

United States Institute of Peace (USIP)*Libya Country Lead Researcher***Tripoli, LIBYA**

Feb 2013 – May 2013

- Design the small arms, justice and security research plan and methodology in partnership with the USIP Washington D.C. and Small Arms Survey (Survey questionnaire, semi-directive interviews plan and questionnaire, focus group discussions)

- Recruit and train a team of 6 Libyan researchers to conduct in-depth semi-directive interviews on justice and security
- Organize the conduct dozens of semi-directive interviews in multiple communities across Libya.
- Represent USIP's Rule of Law Centre in Libya

New Libya Foundation

Tripoli, LIBYA

Program Manager, Director of Research

July 2011 – July 2012

- Design the *Leadership in Civil Society* program to teach, coach and support 15 young Libyans to develop their own civil society organization. Supervise the recruitment of candidates
- Manage all aspects of the 6 months-long program in Tripoli, including human resources, budgeting, accounting, fundraising, PR, programming and operations
- Design and deliver training on democracy and civil society to Libyan state and non-state actors. Organize and supervise workshops and seminars for grass-root CSOs, in partnership with other International and local NGOs on various topics (e.g. Campaign Strategies, Engaging the Media, Conflict Sensitivity, Election Observation and Civic Education, Advocacy, Design Monitoring and Evaluation, Research design and Surveys, Women Challenges in Libya)
- Liaise with national and international civil society actors in Libya, oversee all the Foundation's research activities, and supervise 4 interns' work and Master's thesis research. Design and drive the program monitoring and overall evaluation

Ecole de Maintien de la Paix

Bamako, MALI

Associate

Summer 2010

- Research and draft future courses, selected candidates for courses, assist in teaching 30 students.
- Conduct a qualitative and quantitative comparative analysis of UNITAR's "Introduction to Peace Operations" and DPKO ITS' "Core Pre-Deployment Training Materials" courses.
- Draft the structure and content of a new course "Foundational course on Peace Operations" to be taught by the School

Restauration de la Justice au Congo (REJUSCO) Goma, DEMOCRATIC REP. of CONGO

Gender Based Violence Office - Researcher

Summer 2009

- REJUSCO, sponsored by the EU, was the largest rule of law program in the DRC
- Prepare training and sensitization for local military, police and civil society
- Research and mapped the ongoing conflict and the phenomenon of sexual violence in Eastern DRC
- Interview actors belonging to over 30 local and international organizations in Eastern DRC, including intelligence, operations and planning officers from the UN Mission (MONUC) and the EU Security mission (EUSEC)
- Participate in security and HR cluster meetings, met with Mr. Dimitri Titov, UN Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law in the DPKO, to present the activity of REJUSCO and the situation in the Kivus
- Formulate recommendations for the ensuing campaign of sensitization and prevention of sexual violence in eastern DRC

Mêmes Droits pour Tous (MDT)

Conakry, GUINEA

Associate

May - June 2009; June 2010

- Promote the establishment of rule of law, the defense of human rights for have-nots and jail detainees
- Design and manage the health and hygiene program in the N'Zerekore jail: all 130 detainees were disinfected, provided new clothes and visited by a doctor for the first time in a year, 17 detainees were treated with urgency. All cells were cleaned and disinfected

- Took charge of a teenager victim of street justice and risking the amputation of both arms, built his dossier and had him treated by a Swiss NGO (Terre des Hommes), deferred the case to the judicial authorities
- Establish a dialogue with the military police, the police, and the judicial authorities on the respect of human rights

Euro-NATO Joint Jet Pilot Training School (ENJJPT) **Sheppard AFB (TX), USA**
Flight Commander and Instructor 2005 – 2008

- Manage 22 officers from 5 countries and coordinated the high pace instruction. Evaluate and report political issues over management among member nations and advised on policy decisions to the national component commander.
- Evaluate the officers under my command, reported their proficiency, monitor their level of training, and make recommendations for their future employment within the Squadron.

Safety Officer

- Manage the ground and flying safety prevention program first at the Flight level, then at the Squadron level: lead part of the immediate investigative actions (interviews and assessments of all eye witnesses) following a fatal flying accident: awarded a letter of commendation for the work accomplished.
- Participate to the crisis management following incidents, from the initial response, to the coordination of efforts to the investigation.

Flying Safety Headquarters, Italian Air Force **Rome, ITALY**
Officer in the investigative division 2004

- Research accidents/incidents reports and analyzed statistics, devising crisis management recommendations. Performed accident causes and trends analysis and evaluated organizational effectiveness to formulate policy recommendations.
- Conduct several AF Base team inspections, analyzing organizational processes and structures affecting the mission and evaluating programs and policy. Wrote multiple articles on accident prevention for the AF Flying Safety magazine.

Jet Training School, 61° Wing **Lecce, ITALY**
Flight Commander and Instructor 2000 – 2003

- Manage thirteen students and three instructors, overviewed the instruction and the schedule of ground and flight training
- Direct the flying operations of the major air show in 5 years on the base

14° Wing **Pratica Di Mare, ITALY**
Pilot 1997 – 2000

- Plan and conduct transport and air-to-air refueling training, operational and war missions on five continents and in cooperation with various foreign Air Forces.
- Serve as a Squadron liaison officer in the Balkan CAOC (Combined Air Operation Center) to coordinate the use of Squadron assets in the conduct of operations in the Balkans.

CONFERENCES AND PRESENTATIONS

- “State of the research on non-state voluntary movements in the post-2011 MENA”, MESA, *Roundtable Organizer* Nov 2016
- “Perspectives on State Formation and Nation Building in Libya”, MESA, *Panel Organizer and Presenter* Nov 2016
- “Leading Sustained Cooperation in Fragile Environments” workshop, NATO, GCSP & CCL, Geneva, Switz. Sept 2016
- “The current security and governance challenges in Libya”, Swiss Federal Dept of Foreign Affairs, Bern, Switz. Sept. 2016
- “L’*échec de la transition politique Libyenne* », University of Laval, Quebec City, Canada, *Presenter* May 2016

- « Libya: Five Years After the 2011 Revolution », VCU University, Virginia, USA, *Organizer and Presenter* April 2016
- “The 2011 intervention in Libya: Lessons learned”, World Peace Foundation, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, *Presenter* Jan 2016
- “Dynamics of transformation, elite change & new social mobilization in the Arab world”, SWP, Berlin, *Discussant* Oct 2015
- “Untold stories of the Middle East”, 10th Anniversary of the Crown Center for M-E Studies, USA, *Panelist* Sept 2015
- “State, Society and State-Building in Libya”, British Middle East Studies Association, London, *Speaker* Jun 2015
- “The MENA: Change & Upheaval”, GCSP/ Crown Center/GRC annual conf, Gstaad, Switzerland, *Speaker* Jun 2015
- “La société civile Libyenne: acteur de changement dans la Libye post-insurrectionnelle”, Ecole Francaise de Rome Jun 2015
- “Libyan Civil Society Organizations Workshop”, UNDP, Tunis, Tunisia, *Workshop design and facilitation* May 2015
- “Syria, Iraq, Libya, Tunisia and Egypt Post Arab Spring”, ARTOC Group, Cairo, Egypt, *Speaker* May 2015
- “The Arab Springs and the West”, Italian Ass.ⁿ for Middle Eastern Studies (SeSaMo), Venice, *Discussant* 16-17 Jan 2015
- “The West in Muslim societies”, “Islam and the West” Harvard graduate workshop, *Panelist* 21 Oct 2014
- “The role of individual attitudes and behaviors in a nascent associational life”, ISPP annual conference, *Speaker* July 2014
- “Civil and uncivil society in Libya: actors in the current crisis and beyond” roundtable, SWP, Berlin, *Speaker* 23 Jun 2014
- “The MENA: Change & Upheaval”, GCSP/ Crown Center/GRC annual conf, Gstaad, Switzerland, *Speaker* 20-22 Jun 2014
- “Sharia, Constitution and Politics in the countries of the Arab Spring” Panel discussion, Fletcher, *Moderator* 11 Apr 2014
- “Post-Qaddafi Libya: A Status Report”, Crown Center for Middle East Studies, Brandeis Univ, *Speaker* 02 Apr 2014
- “The Future of the MENA” Conference, Civ-Mil relations in Libya, the Fletcher School, *Panelist* 28 Feb 2014
- “State of the State in the M.E.N.A.”, academic workshop, Tufts University, Boston, USA *Speaker* 26-27 Feb 2014
- “Fieldwork: Challenges & Opportunities”, PhD Colloquium, The Fletcher School, Medford, USA, *Speaker* 12 Feb 2014
- “Tunisia governance study” workshop, Yale University, Program on Governance and Local Devt, *Discussant* 10 Feb 2014
- “Why do we need democratic governance inside CSOs?” EIFES Democratic Resource Center, Tripoli, *Lecturer* 29 Oct 2013
- “Whatever happened to the Arab Spring?”, Tufts University, Middle East Studies Program, *Panelist* 20 Feb 2013
- “Libya in the African Context”, World Peace Foundation Boston, USA, *Panelist* 15-16 Nov 2012
- “Libya Conflict Assessment”, EU Civil Society Dialogue Network, Brussels, Belgium, *Panelist* 25-26 July 2012
- “The New Economic Libya”, Rome Bar Association, Rome, Italy, *Panelist* 28 May 2012
- “Libyan democratic transition”, Libyan Economic Dev.t Board, Tripoli, Libya, *Speaker* Mar 2012

LEADERSHIP AND VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

- Libya Writing Initiative** **USA - Libya**
Founder, coordinator 2016 - Present
- Raise funds, recruit and pair Libyan practitioners and academics with English IR graduate students and editors to write Op-eds and academic papers.
 - Facilitate the publication of articles by Libyan practitioners and academics in newspapers and academic journals.
- Libya Policy Forum** **USA**
Founder, Steering Committee Member 2016 - Present
- Raise funds and organize conferences on Libya, providing a public platform for Libyan practitioners and Libya scholars to highlight the current situation, challenges and opportunities affecting Libya.
 - Organize regular Policy Discussion Roundtables, in which Libyan practitioners, Libya scholars, policy makers and international organizations engage in discussions in order to analyze key aspects of post-conflict Libya, ranging from politics, security, human rights, and state-society relations to local governance. Past LPF details are available [here](#), and [here](#).
- Sidley Austin LLP** **Boston (MA), USA**
Expert Consultant June 2016
- Interview a Libyan political asylum seeker in the US and prepare a detailed affidavit in connection with his asylum request to be used as the legal expert statement by the immigration authorities.
- Libyan Civil Society Roundtable (LCSR) initiative** **Boston, USA**
Founder 2014 - 2015
- Hold regular roundtable discussions among the most engaged and dynamic young Libyan civil society activists in North America, Libya and Tunisia with the aim of fostering networking, dialogue and cooperation on grass-root research and civil society projects
- Réseau Francophone de Recherche sur les Opérations de Paix (ROP)** **Montreal, CANADA**
Member of the “bank of experts” 2010 - present
- Orphelinat “Saint Kisito”** **Gouécké, GUINEA**
Volunteer 2009 - 2011
- Raise funds and support the orphanage’s activity. Help develop and fund local projects to achieve self-sustainability and local ownership
- Avocats Sans Frontières - Guinée** **Conakry, GUINEA**
Member of the Board of Advisors 2009 - 2011
- Big Brother Big Sister** **Wichita Falls (TX), USA**
City Chapter Organizer 2006 - 2008
- Spearheaded the opening of a “Big Brother Big Sister” agency in town, organizing and coordinating meetings, media [coverage](#) and promotion, volunteers’ recruitment, leadership involvement and fund raising: \$1.6M was privately donated and a State grant was allocated for the initiative.
- Habitat For Humanity** **Wichita Falls (TX), USA**
Volunteer 2005 - 2007
- Organized and coordinated volunteer teams for “Habitat for Humanity”: contributed to the construction of several houses for elderly and distressed citizens
- Per La Strada** **Rome, ITALY**
Volunteer 1993 - 2004
- Collaborated for over 10 years with the non-profit organization “Per la Strada” (“on the road”): provided food, clothing and support for hundreds of homeless people.

SPECIALIZED EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- Decentralization and Devolution, Forum of Federations, Tripoli, LIBYA Dec 2012
- Civilian-Military Coordination course (CIMIC), Peacekeeping School, Bamako, MALI July 2010
- Trained Court mediator in the State of Massachusetts Nov 2009
- Humanitarian Studies in the field, Harvard – Tufts – MIT course, Boston (MA), USA Jan & Apr 2009
- Pilot Instructor Training & Supervisor (leadership) courses, Sheppard AFB (TX), USA 2005
- Accident Prevention course, Flying Safety HQ, Rome, ITALY 2004

LANGUAGES (1 - excellent; 5 - basic)

Language	Reading	Speaking	Writing
French	1	1	1
Italian	1	1	1
English	1	1	1
Spanish	2	2	3
Arabic	5	5	5

PUBLICATIONS

- “Guinea: has a nascent democracy lost its way?”, *The Harvard Law Record, Opinion* / October 16, 2009, accessed June 16, 2015, available from: <http://hlrecord.org/?p=11225>
- “Libya: the long way forward”, *World Peace Foundation – Reinventing Peace*, January 3, 2013, accessed June 16, 2015, available from: <http://sites.tufts.edu/reinventingpeace/2013/01/03/libya-the-long-way-forward/>
- “Sebha Civil Society Organizations: Assessment Report”, European Union and ACTED - Civil Initiatives Libya, January 2013, accessed August 27, 2015, available from: <http://cil.org.ly/en/cil-experts-conducts-an-assessment-of-csos-in-sabha/>
- “Regards sur les villes libyennes aujourd’hui », *Confluences Méditerranée*, No.85: Spring 2013, accessed June 16, 2015, available from [Cairn.info](http://www.cairn.info/) at: <http://www.cairn.info/revue-confluences-mediterranee-2013-2.htm>
- “Libya: One Step Forward, Two Steps Backwards”, *Heartland*, September 2014, accessed June 16, 2015, available from: <http://temi.repubblica.it/limes-heartland/libya-one-step-forward-two-steps-backwards/2040>.
- “Libya’s Untold Story: Civil Society Amid Chaos”, Crown Center for Middle East Studies, Middle East Brief No. 93: May 2015, accessed June 16, 2015, available from: <http://www.brandeis.edu/crown/publications/meb/meb93.html>
- “Can there be a viable roadmap for Libya?”, Geneva Center for Security Policy, Policy Paper 2015/5: May 2015, accessed June 16, 2015, available from: <http://gcsp.ch/About-Us/Publications-Research/GCSP-Publications/Policy-Papers/Can-there-be-a-viable-roadmap-for-Libya>

- “Quelle solution pour la Libye ?”, *ENA hors les murs*, April 2015, available from : <http://www.aeena.fr/publications/la-revue>
- “Libyan CSO Mapping : Comparative Highlights”, UNICEF and UNDP, May 2015, accessed August 27, 2015, available from: www.facebook.com/LibyaCSOreports and <http://docdro.id/iWvRTfu>; <http://docdro.id/JsAXU6G>
- “Benghazi Civil Society Organizations: Survey Report”, UNICEF and UNDP, May 2015, accessed August 27, 2015, available from: www.facebook.com/LibyaCSOreports; and <http://docdro.id/USQsL3M>; <http://docdro.id/bqJPMjK>
- “Misrata Civil Society Organizations: Survey Report”, UNICEF and UNDP, May 2015, accessed August 27, 2015, available from: www.facebook.com/LibyaCSOreports; and <http://docdro.id/7Bg3dzY>; <http://docdro.id/WFvRynG>
- “Tripoli Civil Society Organizations: Survey Report”, UNICEF and UNDP, May 2015, accessed August 27, 2015, available from: www.facebook.com/LibyaCSOreports; <http://docdro.id/EFRL97K>; <http://docdro.id/qMARYCn>
- “International interventions in Libya since 2011: Challenges and failures”, forthcoming
- “Doing research in Post-Gadhafi Libya”, in “Fieldwork in the Middle East: Challenges and Possibilities.” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. Forthcoming
- “The security implications of the failed political transition in Libya”, forthcoming

Abstract

In 2011, a popular revolution in Libya brought about the collapse of a brutal regime, the disintegration of state institutions that were already historically weak, and the dislocation of society and traditions. At the same time, thousands of Libyans formed voluntary associations of all kinds throughout Libya, and continue to do so notwithstanding these highly unfavorable circumstances. However, these associations do not necessarily constitute a *civil* society – one that promotes civic values such as pluralism, equality, and tolerance.

Libyans had not experienced free associational life since the mid-seventies; they lacked a culture of public participation; they were plagued by violence and lawlessness; and they were stripped of institutions capable of promoting and protecting civic engagement. Overall, the social, economic and political conditions that characterize Libyan history and the post-Gadhafi environment are not propitious for the development of a voluntary associational sector that possesses a civic political culture.

In light of these premises, to what extent do Libyan voluntary associations embody and express a *civic* political culture (e.g. trust, tolerance, religious openness, support for gender equality, political engagement) in comparison to the civic attitudes and political behaviors that prevail among Libyans? And what explains the emergence of this *civil* society in such a violent and lawless environment?

Through the analysis of the data drawn from three independent surveys conducted across the country between 2012 and 2014, I present a strong and convincing body of empirical evidence, which shows that voluntary associations embody and express a civic political culture.

Moreover, on the basis of an in-depth inquiry through dozens of individual stories of civil society activists and organizations I identify two avenues that help to explain the development of a civic culture and a strong civil society in unfavorable settings. The first is a process of exposure to foreign information, behaviors and meanings that represent one facet of the phenomenon known as *globalization*. It is driven by traveling, reading, connections to a diaspora, access to satellite television, the internet, and to other forms of foreign information. The second is the novel availability of a quasi-public space constituted by interactive communication platforms available through the internet, and “smart” mobile phones.

To the women and men who dedicate their lives to pursuing their civic ideals, and to those who love and support them.

And

To André: I was too young to know you, but your absence has shaped my life and character.

Acknowledgments

Each dissertation endeavor is a unique journey. However, all doctoral endeavors build on the support, knowledge and advice of a number of individuals. Forgive me if I dedicate more than a short paragraph to acknowledge those who made my journey possible and my work worthy of a doctorate.

When I told my family and friends about my intention of leaving the Italian Air Force after sixteen years of enriching and formative professional experience to become a student again, words do not exist to express the look in their eyes. Some seriously thought I had become insane. Indeed, I was abandoning a well-established and prestigious career, and the privilege of flying airplanes to the limits of their flight envelope. It had been my childhood dream, the culmination of many sacrifices, and an amazing adventure.

However, the biggest surprise and perplexity among those who knew me the most – chief among them my mother – did not come from the change itself. It resulted from the nature of my new endeavor: studying. As an early widow, my mother had struggled throughout my youth to get me to study. I deserved all their suspicion and scrutiny for my intention to now change from a man of action into a man of contemplation. Short of an explanation, I can only assert my conviction that there can be many seasons in a life. If anything, this may help give some pause to mothers whose sons have no inclination to excel at school. I thank my sister Valerie for believing in me even before she understood my choice.

I was lucky to carry out my metamorphosis in a School of international relations that I believe is second to none, precisely because of its ability to teach theory and practice, and equally value action and contemplation. The amazing peers, professors and staff who I met at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University and had an influence on my studies are too many to cite, so I will only mention a few.

The first Fletcher person I met, and one who made it possible for me to join this prestigious School was Jessica Daniels at the admissions office. I wish to thank her for believing in my vision of how Fletcher fit in my career change and how I could be an asset for the School. Together with the Admissions Director Laurie Hurley, she always made me feel like Fletcher was a family, and I was happy to transmit that to fellow students and prospective ones.

When I arrived at the Fletcher School, I thought I had left the military. However, I found a US Marine Corps General as the Director of the Fletcher PhD program! Although Jenifer Burckett-Picker never served in the military, her discipline and stamina would have made her a fine Marine Corps Commandant. I certainly benefitted from her clear enforcing of rules and timelines. Furthermore, over the years I also had the privilege of benefiting from her vast experience and wisdom. I hope that many more PhD students will be able to benefit from her often undervalued and invisible work, and that they may have the ability to appreciate it.

When I began my PhD, the Academic Dean was a Belgian Professor who “could not [ever] complain about a thing.” I did my best to give Professor Peter Uvin some good reasons to complain during his time as my advisor, and then as the Chair of my PhD Committee, but to no avail.

His unfaltering smile, unique wit and sarcastic humor always allowed him to pinpoint my faulty assumptions and lofty concepts with elegance and effectiveness. His ruthless criticism was not pain-free but it was highly formative, and the sarcastic humor in which it was always wrapped made it easier to digest. I owe him the important decision to move away from the concept of social capital. After he agreed to be the Chair of my Dissertation Committee, I met him to present the plan I had for my dissertation, which heavily revolved around the fungible and ambiguous concept of social capital. After listening patiently and smiling, Professor Uvin congratulated me for putting my hand on something that really felt important and meaningful. He then pointed out that neither I, nor anyone else he had read, had ever provided a univocal and concrete definition of the concept, let alone an operationalization into quantifiable and measurable indicators. He concluded by highlighting that he had only had two PhD students who had focused on social capital: one never finished his PhD, and he failed the other at his defense. He then made a big smile and said that, of course, I was free to give it a try. Unfortunately, I had to learn the hard way, and I hardly ever let go of an idea without a fight. For almost a year I did my best to address his remarks, then finally moved away from the concept of social capital. By that time, I was already in Libya and was confronting in real life the challenges of conducting empirical research about elusive and abstract concepts.

Unfortunately, by the time I thought I was ready to defend my research proposal, Professor Uvin had left Fletcher to take on an important academic challenge in another

school. Losing one's PhD Committee Chair is one of the three main causes for not completing a PhD. If this did not happen to me, I owe it to three amazing professors - Katrina Burgess, Zeynep Bulutgil, and Melani Cammett – who all quickly and graciously agreed to be members of my PhD Committee. Among them, Professor Burgess deserves a very large part of the credit by accepting the role of my new committee chair. Although she sent me back to the drawing board before we could move forward together, I am well aware of my good fortune in finding such an honest, positive, and constructive committee chair. Overall, I greatly benefitted from the advice and guidance of these three amazing and complementary scholars.

All of this happened while I was already in Libya, where I arrived one month after the end of the 2011 revolution. I wonder how my life would have been if I had chosen to study the democratic transition in the Maldives. However, I believe that challenges forge character. Thus, I have to thank Iya Khalil, who, in a cold winter reception in Boston approached me to ask for advice on how civil society could be fostered in an emerging democracy. Little did I know that a few months later I would be flying off to Libya to manage a civil society capacity-building program that I had largely designed. I learned a great deal about transitions and about Libya. Above all I learned that I understood very little about both. This is why I decided to continue my “monk's life” as a foreign scholar and consultant in Libya past the seven-months long program that I had managed. I thank Professors Burgess, Bulutgil and Cammett for supporting my decision and for their patience in advising me despite the long distance and the difficult communication. I hope that the Fletcher School, whose trademark is to bridge the gap between academia and practice, will develop its capacity to accommodate and maybe support those among its PhD candidates who decide to invest in extended periods in the field. My two years in Libya were far from easy, but I greatly benefitted from them as a scholar. Two years of time in the field is probably more desirable for an anthropologist than for a political scientist, but maybe some questions and challenging contexts require more intimate exposure than others.

My extended stay in Libya allowed me to conduct the largest survey on voluntary associations ever made in the country. To this end, I wish to thank ACTED (Agence d'Aide à la Coopération Technique Et au Développement) for appreciating the importance of conducting a systematic study of civil society organizations and for entrusting me to do

so in Sebha in December 2012. On the basis of the report of this first research, UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) contracted me to carry it out in another three major cities, and UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) quickly joined in to support this project. It is thanks to these organizations that I was able to conduct a much larger and systematic data collection than any academic researcher alone would have ever been able to conduct in the very challenging Libyan context. Above all, I must thank the fantastic country team UNICEF had between 2012-2104. In particular, I salute the passion and vision of its Country Director Carel De Rooy and of his Deputy Katrin Imhof. I also thank Luzma Montano who was the specialist in charge of the civil society mapping project. Their dedication, feedback and support made this project both feasible and more valuable.

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Upon my return to Boston, Sherman kindly invited me to present at a conference on the Middle East and North Africa. During the academic roundtable discussion that preceded the conference, I was lucky to meet Shai Feldman, one of the most intellectually honest, passionate, and noble men I have ever met. I cannot begin to thank him for believing in my doctoral research, and for supporting my work as both a member of my dissertation committee and the Director of the Crown Center for Middle East Studies. He not only provided me with the largest amount and the most detailed feedback on my successive chapter drafts; he also gave me invaluable tactical, operational and strategic advice on the dissertation, my academic career, and my life endeavors. It is a rare privilege to have a mentor like him. The Crown Center became my home base and provided me with a remarkable intellectual community with whom to exchange ideas. I thank all the staff and Fellows who enriched my understanding of processes taking place in the Middle East and North Africa, and who helped me better articulate my thoughts.

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Chapter 1

Introduction: The surprising presence of a *civil* society in post-Gadhafi Libya

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

Apocryphal quote, often attributed to Margaret Mead (1901-1978).

Mansour is a Libyan activist from the South of Libya. He lived in Northern Europe for most of his childhood. He was socially active and had volunteered for a civil society organization. Four years before the 2011 revolution, in his late teenage years, he returned to Libya with his family. He recalls the cultural shock:

The biggest shock was the mentality. There was a lot of pessimism. People were not very active, they would enjoy sitting down and chatting about trivial things, like football and cars. Although their life was not easy, most of the youth didn't feel like changing it. I met a lot of people. I wanted to talk about life and society. I wanted to start projects, but when I spoke about it, they would tell me that I was crazy, that things could not change, and that I would get in trouble. Most people just wanted to make a living for themselves but had no ambition to change

society. Life revolved around eating, drinking and sleeping. People didn't think that they deserved more. There was little access to the internet. So they didn't know how society could be different.¹

After about a year, Mansour saw nothing improving around him. He too surrendered to social apathy and pessimism, and withdrew into his private life. Slowly, he realized that his friends' attitudes were a result of their upbringing, and he understood how they had adapted to the environment. Most importantly, after gaining the confidence of his peers, he discovered that, invisible to the foreign eye, there were a few people who had a different attitude, and spoke about change. They were of various kinds, but most seemed to belong to one of two broad categories: Some spoke English and could connect with the outside world, either through the internet or through other channels; others were typically students who did not have these knowledge and connections, and who were suffering more than others from injustice.

Both types of individuals were driven by a desire to change society, which naturally led them to gravitate towards each other when interacting at school and among neighborhood friends. Mansour became the member of one such group. They would usually meet at someone's home, where they would debate about society and change, as Mansour recalls:

We talked about the lack of books. We spoke about the lack of sports and recreational activities for youth. We discussed about tribalism, and how members of tribes affiliated to the Gadhafi regime could do whatever they wanted. We longed for more justice, and more room for the youth.

¹ Author interview, skype, May 2016.

Then, in mid-February 2011, after four decades of a totalitarian regime, what had appeared as being immutable changed in the blink of an eye. A popular revolution brought about the collapse of a brutal regime, the disintegration of state institutions that were already historically weak, and the dislocation of society and traditions.

Following the collapse of the Gadhafi regime, Libyans were suddenly granted unfettered access to the public space. Tens of thousands of young Libyans eager to assume a role in the new Libya joined one of the numerous armed militias that proliferated in this power vacuum.² These groups were driven by various factors: Ideology, interest, identity, a thirst for power, or some combination thereof. Unsurprisingly, within less than three years, Libya witnessed a dramatic increase in violence and polarization; these trends continue to characterize the low-intensity civil war that currently prevails.

Nowadays, Libya is held captive by these armed groups, which fuel divisions and intolerance, and control much of the public space. Under these unfavorable conditions, few observers expected a rich associational life to develop; still less that it might be of a civil character. This skepticism was for good reasons: Libyans had not experienced free associational life since the mid-seventies; they lacked a culture of public participation; they were plagued by violence and lawlessness; and they were stripped of institutions capable of promoting and protecting civic engagement. Nonetheless, during and after the revolution, thousands of Libyans formed voluntary associations of all kinds throughout Libya, and continue to do so notwithstanding these highly unfavorable circumstances.

² In 2013, between 200.000 and 250.000 men were allegedly registered as militia members with the Warriors Affairs Commission, in charge of a national Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration program. See Gaub 2013 and McCormick-Cavanagh 2016. However, many of these young men registered in the hope of getting money or employment. Only part of them are active members in one of the thousand militias that exist today in Libya.

In 2012, Mansour's friends formed a College Student Union, of which Mansour became the first elected President in 2013. Around the same time, he created South Libya News,³ a voluntary association to report news from the South of Libya – a region that is largely ignored by Libyan and international agencies alike - and promote the work of other voluntary associations from southern Libya. At the time of writing, South Libya News is one of the foremost sources of information on Southern Libya, and a platform through which voluntary associations from the region can showcase their work. It has developed a network of reporters that spans across the entire south of Libya.

As of early 2014 — only three years since voluntary associations were allowed to exist in Libya - at least 2000 such associations were actively operating,⁴ and more than 4,000 were officially registered with the Ministry of Culture.⁵

In the midst of such unfavorable conditions, and in comparison to the civic attitudes and political behaviors that prevail among Libyans, to what extent do these voluntary associations embody and express a *civic* political culture? Moreover, what can explain the surprising emergence of civic voluntary associational life in spite of highly unfavorable historical, social, economic, and institutional premises, and in a violent and lawless environment?

Broadly speaking, a *civic* culture is a set of individual-level attitudes and behaviors toward politics and society that support the development and viability of a participatory, inclusive, and democratic political system. In my research, I do not refer to a civic culture in absolute terms, but rather in relative ones. When I argue that a sub-national group

³ The name of the association was changed for safety reasons.

⁴ Based on the author's estimates, after interviewing 1022 active voluntary associations in six Libyan cities, whose inhabitants amount to half of the Libyan population.

⁵ Data from the Ministry of Culture and Civil Society, Civil Society Organizations Support Center, March 2014.

possesses a civic culture, I intend to say that it displays more civic attitudes and behaviors than those that characterize the nation to which it belongs. In this sense, if Libyan voluntary associations possess a civic culture, they can potentially constitute an agent of social change that fosters civic engagement, greater popular participation in politics, and a more plural and inclusive society.

My two hypotheses are that voluntary associations in post-Gadhafi Libya do, in fact, embody and express a civic political culture. They can be said to *embody* a civic culture if, overall, their members display more civic attitudes and behaviors than non-members. In this sense, I will refer to these attitudes and behaviors as a political sub-culture, defined as the political culture shared by a group of individuals, which differs from that of the nation to which they belong. Voluntary associations embody a civic sub-culture when, as a whole, they are characterized by more civic attitudes and behaviors than the rest of society.

Voluntary associations can be said *express* a civic culture if Libyans who possess the traits that characterize a civic culture are more likely to belong to voluntary associations than those who do not, while controlling for alternative explanatory variables (e.g. age; gender; economic conditions). In other words, voluntary associations are, at least in part, a manifestation of civic attitudes and behaviors.

These two propositions are closely related, however, they are distinct. The first focuses on the group level (members and non-members of voluntary associations) and it rests on the comparison between descriptive statistics of these two groups as they are, without keeping any variable constant. In other words, members of voluntary associations could possess a more civic culture by chance, or as the result of one or more other factors that lead people to both be members of voluntary associations and to have a more civic

culture. Therefore, if the first proposition is true, it does not necessarily imply that the second is true as well.

The second focuses on the individual level and it rests on a conditional probability, meaning that it is based on the change in probability that individuals who possess a higher degree of a specific trait may be members of a voluntary association, *while keeping a series of alternative explanatory variables for membership in a voluntary association constant* (e.g. age, education, contextual factors).

In fact, the series of variables that I am holding constant in the regression analysis could have a negative correlation with membership in voluntary associations to the extent of cancelling and even reversing the uncontrolled correlation between a civic trait and membership in voluntary associations. In other words, notwithstanding the first hypothesis, without controlling for other variables, members of voluntary associations would not necessarily display a civic culture compared to non-members.

In sum, while the first proposition relates to how members of voluntary associations taken as a whole are in terms of civic culture traits, the second looks more specifically at the correlation between each civic culture trait and membership in voluntary associations, while controlling for other variables.

Voluntary associations do not necessarily constitute a *civil* society

Voluntary associations represent the organized part of society that is not part of the state nor the market. It is at the core of civic engagement and civil society, which are considered to be a central pillar of democracy (Thomas and Znaniecki 1918; Putnam et al. 1993; Gellner 1994; Linz and Stepan 1996; Diamond 1999). Among competing

conceptualizations of civil society, this research focuses on its socio-political function, rather than merely on its form, which, alone is more relevant for studies on political economy (Heinrich 2010, 26). Thus, in this research, the strength of a civil society is understood as its capacity and purpose to contribute to inclusive and participatory governance and development. The strength of a civil society is measured through two dimensions: Structural, which captures its objective capacity to connect individuals and produce ideas, goods or services; and cultural, which gauges the extent to which the purpose of its work contributes to democracy and development (Heinrich 2005; Bailer et al. 2007, 237).

The structural dimension focuses on the human and financial infrastructure of civil society, such as the number and diversity of individuals who engage in it, the depth of their engagement, the ties they establish, and the amount of resources they can wield (Heinrich 2004, 18-19).

However, a structurally capable sector of voluntary associations does not necessarily constitute a pillar of democracy (Byrsk 2000; Roßteutscher 2002; Encarnación 2003; Blaydes 2012). The mere existence and activity of voluntary associations offers no guarantee that they will promote pluralism and tolerance (Uvin 1998, 168). In fact, the same networks, bonds, and mobilization capacity that voluntary associations possess “can be turned to anti-democratic ends as well as to democratic ones” (Berman 1997, 426-7). Lastly, civil society can be appropriated by the state, such as in Iran (Mohebi 2014, 127-46), Ukraine (Allina-Pisano 2010, 229-53), and authoritarian states in general (Yom 2005, 24) precisely to control society and prevent liberal and democratic claims from turning into widespread social movements. As I will highlight again when discussing the importance of conducting single-country studies, associational life plays different roles in

different contexts. In particular, the nature and role of civil society largely depends on the type of regime and the strength of state institutions in the country where they operate (Jamal 2009, 135), and on the stage of democratic development (Mercer 2002, 7-8).

Therefore, the cultural dimension has a primary importance when gauging the strength of civil society in terms of its capacity and role in fostering inclusive and participatory governance and development. This dimension looks at the values, attitudes and behaviors of civil society members. A civil society is strong in the cultural dimension when values such as tolerance, gender equality and non-violence are adhered to, practiced and promoted by its members (Heinrich 2004, 20-21). It is important to note that the cultural dimension of civil society does not constitute a criterion for defining what is or is not civil society. This dimension simply serves to capture one of its most relevant aspects, which is central to determining the influence that it may have on society and politics.

The core focus of my research is the cultural dimension of Libya's civil society, that is the political culture that characterizes members of Libyan voluntary associations. It belongs to the rich field of inquiry that spans from political science to sociology, opened by Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba through their pioneering empirical research on the correlation between the quality of democratic governance and the political culture of nations, defined as "attitudes toward the political system and its various parts, and attitudes toward the self in the system" (1963, 12). Their empirical findings led them to assert that the development and good functioning of democracy rest on a specific set of attitudes that they termed *civic culture*. Almond, Verba, Pye, and many other scholars further bolstered the importance of empirical studies to test and refine this "civic culture

argument”.⁶ I adopt Almond, Verba and Pye’s conceptual framework to study associational life in relation to individual attitudes and behaviors, and the quantitative methodological approach based on large surveys, which they pioneered.

The original model of civic culture developed by Almond, Verba and Pye provided the foundation for further inquiry and theoretical advancement on the links between civic engagement, political culture and democracy. In particular, a vast empirical research endeavor grounded on the World Values Survey, led Inglehart, Dalton and Welzel to develop the *assertive civic culture* model of democratic citizenship. On the basis of multiple large-scale surveys spanning thirty years across almost one hundred countries, Inglehart, Dalton and Welzel argue that a civic culture rests on the desire to participate in the political decision-making process; the propensity to engage in elite-challenging actions; a higher level of interpersonal trust, openness and tolerance; and a greater participation in the public space (Inglehart 1990, 74-5; Welzel 2013, 63; Dalton and Welzel 2014, 20).

I ground my research on Inglehart, Dalton and Welzel’s *assertive* model of civic culture, accepting as a premise that the set of attitudes and behaviors that compose it are conducive to inclusive politics, participatory governance and better government performance. I draw from this literature to identify the key traits that capture the most salient aspects of a civic culture. I identify eight, namely:

- Strength and radius of the individual-level social identity: I focus on both the level of strength of the sense of social belonging, and on its radius, that is how

⁶ See *inter alia* Pye and Verba 1965; Inglehart 1988, 1990, 1997; Putnam et al. 1993; Muller and Seligson 1994; Diamond 1999; Paxton 2002; Newton 2001.

large the community is with which one identifies, particularly in reference to the national community;

- Trust: I focus on both the level of trust, which determines the facility of acting together, and on the radius of trust, which dictates how far this benefit extends;
- Tolerance: I focus on the level of tolerance to a variety of non-mainstream behaviors and towards members of out-groups;
- Religiosity: I focus on religious piety; secularism; and religious openness. I refer to religious piety in terms of the degree to which individuals pray, follow religious practices, and define themselves as being religious. Secularism is intended here as the extent to which members of voluntary associations believe that politics should be separated from the activities of religious associations and mosques. Religious openness captures those religious attitudes that may hinder or accommodate other views and practices within and outside one's own religion.
- Support for gender equality: This is the degree to which individuals support equality between men and women in different settings (e.g. education, employment);
- Political engagement: This includes a series of peaceful behaviors, such as voting; showing interest in politics; signing petitions and conducting demonstrations, through which individual agency can be expressed and channeled to produce collective political outcomes;
- Information consumption: I focus on the number of information sources used to acquire information and the frequency of use;

- Active use of media: This trait captures the scope of internet usage and the level of active engagement on various media platforms;

I divide these eight traits into attitudes, which include identity, trust, tolerance, religiosity, and gender equality; and behaviors, which include political engagement; information consumption, and the active use of media. The distinction between attitudes and behaviors is not air-tight, however it aims at differentiating psychological attitudes from actions, which are two interconnected yet distinct aspects of political culture.

I do not demonstrate empirically that these eight individual attitudes and behaviors necessarily lead to inclusive politics, participatory governance, and better government performance. I limit myself to defining each of these eight traits and I draw briefly from the pertinent literature that supports this theoretical proposition, which I expect to hold for Libya but remains to be tested empirically in the Libyan case. Although such a test is beyond the scope of my quantitative analysis, I offer support for it in my qualitative case material.

Furthermore, the scope of my research is not to identify the causes that explain the emergence of voluntary associations in post-Gadhafi Libya, and why they may possess a civic culture. However, in order to understand the significance of this phenomenon, I lay out the conditions in which Libyan voluntary associations have emerged in light of the series of factors that are considered to be the causes of the development of a strong civil society.

A large body of work in comparative politics has investigated the factors and processes leading to the development of a strong civil society, along diverse theoretical perspectives, such as modernization theory, institutionalism and global cultural diffusion. These can be grouped in four dimensions: Socioeconomic factors; socio-cultural factors;

political institutions; and international influence. I show that Libya offers very unfavorable conditions for the development of a strong civil society and a civic culture along all these dimensions.

My argument

I show that, in spite of highly unfavorable conditions, in comparison to the prevalent Libyan political culture, voluntary associations in post-Gadhafi Libya display those attitudes and behaviors towards society and politics that contribute to making a civil society strong and a political culture civic. I do not argue that Libya possesses a structurally strong civil society, especially given that many voluntary associations that were created during and immediately after the 2011 revolution have disappeared, and the very difficult circumstances that characterize the country since 2014 continue to impose dramatic limitations for the structural development of civil society (i.e. funding, membership, and activities).

The first part of my argument is that, collectively, voluntary associations *embody* a civic culture that contrasts with the prevalent political culture in Libya. As highlighted earlier, this is not necessarily the case even if the first proposition is true. In fact, this part of my argument analyzes the overall character of voluntary associations as they are, not keeping any factor constant, such as age, income or contextual characteristics of the socio-economic environment.

I defend this proposition by showing that, on average, members of voluntary associations possess the characteristic traits of an assertive civic culture to a greater extent than do non-members. In other words, not only are civic-minded individuals more likely to belong

to voluntary associations, they also make up a critical mass within members of voluntary associations. Thus, taken as a whole, civil society in Libya is characterized by a more civic political culture than that which predominates the nation.

The second part of my argument is that voluntary associations *express* a civic culture. I support this assertion by showing that, for each of the traits identified earlier as constituting a civic culture, individuals who possess them are more likely to create, join or simply belong to voluntary associations than those who do not, while keeping other explanatory factors constant (i.e. individual and context characteristics). In other words, I argue that a group of individuals exists in Libya, which differs from other Libyans along a series of civic attitudes and behaviors. These like-minded individuals, who constitute a civic sub-culture in Libya, establish networks and cooperative ties. They ignore unfavorable social and economic incentives to form or join voluntary associations to a much greater extent than those who possess a less civic culture. In a context where the political and the economic arenas are dramatically underdeveloped and fraught with obstacles, they see voluntary associations as a conduit to express individual beliefs, and a peaceful means to try and shape society and politics.

Methodology and data

This research develops through a mixed methods approach that combines quantitative data and qualitative material. The quantitative evidence draws from three different surveys conducted in Libya through face-to-face interviews in Arabic by local researchers between 2012 and 2014. These data are complemented with a rich body of ethnographic evidence gathered through dozens of interviews of key informants, and direct participation in the development and operations of Libyan voluntary associations.

To conduct the quantitative analysis, I draw from the 2013 World Values Survey (WVS) and the 2014 Arab Barometer (AB) data, both of which were administered to a large representative sample of the Libyan population. I analyze the differences in mean scores for measures of multiple indicators of the eight traits listed above, between members of voluntary associations and non-members. I further test whether existing correlations remain significant after controlling for a series of individual and environmental alternative explanatory variables.

I complement this analysis with data on a specific sub-group of members of voluntary associations who are of particular relevance: the leaders. This data derives from the Libyan Civil Society (LCS) survey I conducted between December 2011 and April 2014 in six major Libyan cities. I integrate this quantitative evidence with the contextual explanation of processes and meanings, which was provided by dozens of semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with members of voluntary associations; journalists, academics, and state officials and with the texture of knowledge and hands-on experience I gained through the collaborative work on civil society I conducted in Libya for two years, between November 2011 and December 2013.

Context

I conduct a brief overview of the main theoretical perspectives that seek to explain the emergence and the strength of civil society and a civic culture. Utilizing this framework, I analyze the Libyan context. I show how, by and large, the social, economic and political conditions that characterize Libyan history and the post-Gadhafi environment are not favorable to the development of a strong civil society. I show that international influence and support also fail to explain the emergence of voluntary associations in Libya.

To be sure, I do not seek to explain why Libyan voluntary associations appeared, or to explain why members of voluntary associations may have developed a civic culture. I simply aim at describing the Libyan context along the criteria that are thought to influence the strength of civil society, in order to better appreciate the puzzling emergence of civic voluntary associations in post-Gadhafi Libya.

Thus, I illustrate the Libyan context between 2011 and 2013, and the recent history that shaped it. I complement this description with quantitative data about key social, economic and political characteristics. The one or two key indicators I present for each concept only serve as a quantitative reference. Moreover, notwithstanding the limitations of cross-national comparisons, I compare data on Libya to the other countries of North Africa in order to help evaluate the conditions in Libya against the backdrop of countries that share broad cultural and institutional characteristics.

As it readily becomes clear, Post-Gadhafi Libya offers a unique and valuable opportunity to study how individual attitudes and behaviors correlate with the emergence of voluntary associations, and to assess their impact on social change, in a context that is characterized by a highly unfavorable history and unconducive context for the development of a civil society.

Firstly, Libya witnessed a rapid and widespread appearance of voluntary associations, including the dramatic emergence of youth, women, and minorities into the public space. This phenomenon followed four decades of complete authoritarian control, and the prohibition of any form of free associational life. Therefore, Libya offers a rare opportunity to observe a civil society at its inception.

Secondly, this expression of individual agency through voluntary associational life takes place in a context characterized by a virtual absence of state institutions and no history

of democracy, which are often associated with the development of a civic culture. Thus, Libya's institutional void is another rare and valuable condition for studying the relationship between political culture and civic engagement through voluntary associations.

Summary of findings and explanatory avenues

Through the analysis of the World Values Survey and the Arab Barometer data, I present a strong and convincing body of empirical evidence, cross-examined through the use of both surveys, which shows that voluntary associations embody and express a civic political culture. I also find some counter-intuitive quantitative results in light of my initial hypotheses. However, I am able to provide some potential explanation through qualitative evidence, and I point out areas that warrant further research.

Firstly, I present conclusive evidence showing that members of voluntary associations display a more civic culture than non-members along all eight traits of a civic culture. In particular, both members and leaders of voluntary associations display a greater level of unspecified general trust (i.e. likely to believe that most people can be trusted) than is typical among non-members. They also consistently display a higher level of trust towards people they met for the first time, people of another religion and people of another nationality compared to non-members. Members and leaders of voluntary associations display roughly the same level of trust in their family as non-members do. However, they have a *lower* level of trust in their neighbors compared to non-members, and contradictory results for trust in people they know personally.

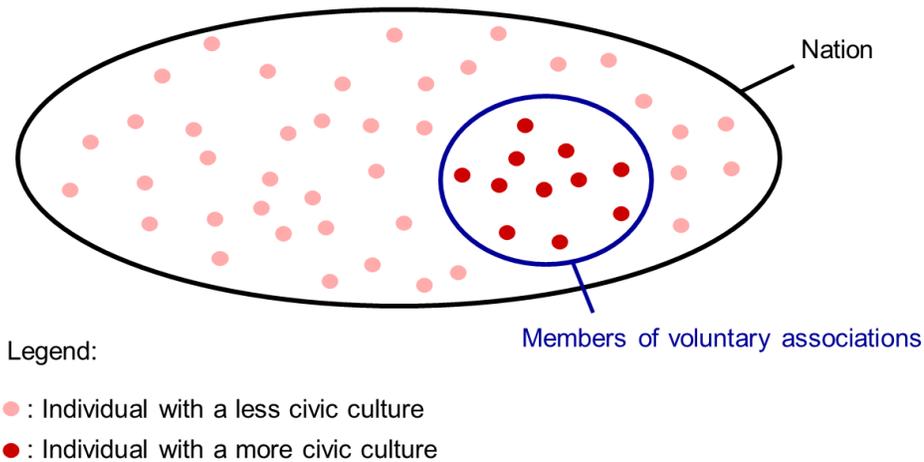
I show that members of voluntary associations are more tolerant than non-members across sixteen out of seventeen different indicators, with one exception for immigrants / foreign workers, although the difference between members and non-members for this one indicator is very small. In terms of religiosity, I present evidence showing that members of voluntary associations are less likely to describe themselves as religious persons than non-members, they display a greater religious openness, but they are *less* secular than non-members.

In terms of attitudes towards women, six indicators out of eleven show that members of voluntary associations have a higher level of support for gender equality than non-members. However, these mixed results are due to the fact that there is a substantially larger proportion of men among members of voluntary associations than among non-members. If the gender distribution is kept equal, members of voluntary associations are more supportive of gender equality than non-members across all indicators.

The body of evidence is even stronger for the three behavioral traits. All members of voluntary associations (active or non-active) display a higher level of political engagement along any and all of eighteen indicators across both surveys. Both regular members and active members of voluntary associations make a larger use of all media to get news. And members of voluntary associations show, on average, a more extensive use of all types of communication platforms listed in nine distinct indicators.

In virtue of these findings, I argue that voluntary associations in post-Gadhafi Libya are a means to express a civic political culture because they are, at least in part, a manifestation of civic attitudes and behaviors. In this sense, voluntary associations constitute a civic political sub-culture in Libya (Fig. 1.1).

Fig. 1.1: Libyan voluntary associations embody a civic political culture



Secondly, I show that Libyans who possess a higher degree of any of the eight attitudes and behaviors identified above, are more likely to belong voluntary associations than those who do not, even after controlling for individual and environmental alternative explanatory variables.

More specifically, I present empirical evidence that individuals who display a greater sense of belonging to both their local community and to the national community are more likely to be members of voluntary associations. At the same time, I show that (surprisingly) the level of pride in being Libyan is negatively correlated with membership in voluntary associations. This counter-intuitive finding may indicate that members of voluntary associations possess a civic-based form of nationalism (i.e. linked to the performance of national institutions) rather than an ethnic-based one.

Furthermore, I show that general trust correlates positively with membership in voluntary associations and that individuals who have a smaller gap between the trust they grant to family and the trust they grant to strangers are more likely to be members of voluntary associations. Specifically, I present evidence showing that individuals who display a higher

level of trust towards people they have met for the first time, people of another religion, and people of another nationality are consistently more likely to be members and leaders of voluntary associations compared to those who display lower levels of trust towards these groups. The level of trust in family does not appear to correlate with membership in voluntary associations. However, members of voluntary associations have a lower level of trust in their neighbors, and inconclusive results for trust in people they know personally.

I also lay out strong empirical evidence showing that a higher level of tolerance towards various out-groups (e.g. people of a different race; people infected with HIV; people who speak a different language; religious minorities) and towards people showing non-mainstream, contentious behaviors, or preferences (e.g. alcohol consumption; pre-marital relations; homosexuality) is positively correlated with membership in voluntary associations.

I show that individuals who are less religiously pious, and who are more open in their interpretation of faith, are more likely to be active members of voluntary associations than those who are more pious and conservative. However, those who attend religious rituals more often are much more likely to be active members of voluntary associations. This may be related to the social function of religious gatherings, rather than to their religious meaning.

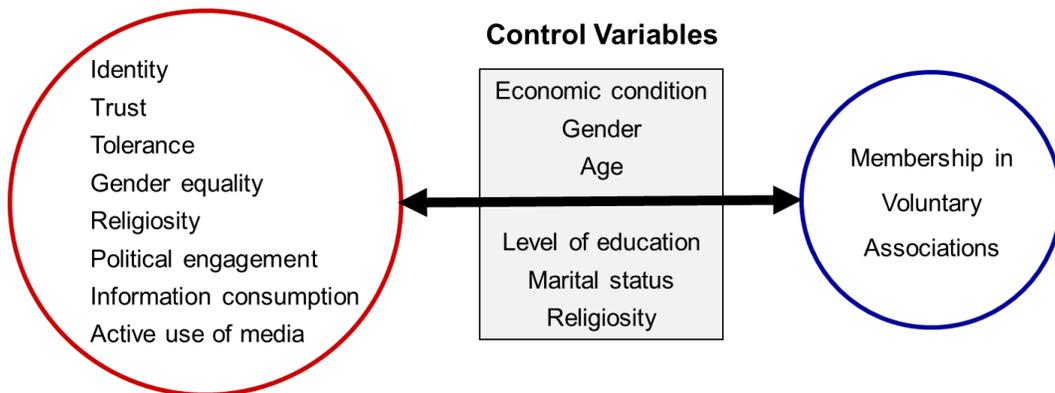
Regarding attitudes towards women, I show that support for equality between men and women (in terms of access to education, access to employment, and income level) is positively correlated with membership in voluntary associations.

The World Values Survey and the Arab Barometer data also allow me to show that both the greater use of any source of information and active participation on social media are

positively correlated with membership in voluntary associations. Finally, I show that individuals who vote more; show a greater interest in politics; are more likely to sign a petition and contact an official; and participate more in political meetings, protests, strikes, and boycotts are more likely to be members of voluntary associations.

Based on these findings I posit that individuals who possess a more civic political sub-culture than that of the broader polity are more likely to be members of voluntary associations, even after keeping other important variables constant (e.g. age; economic condition; marital status; level of education). Graphically, this correlation can be depicted as a two-way arrow (since we have not shown any evidence about the direction of causality) between civic culture traits and membership in voluntary associations, which remains valid even after going through the “filter” of individual- and context-level control variables (see Fig. 1.2).

Fig. 1.2: Libyan voluntary associations express a civic political culture



Overall, these findings allow me to assert that voluntary associations in post-Gadhafi Libya embody and express a more civic political culture than the predominant one in the country.

I complement and substantiate the quantitative evidence through anecdotal evidence based on interviews, focus group discussions, and direct experience. In particular, I tell the detailed story of voluntary associations and their founders.

These case studies on “voluntary associations in action” serve two purposes. Firstly, they illustrate the relationship between the subjects’ civic attitudes and behaviors, and their civic engagement through voluntary associations, thereby substantiating the findings that emerged from the quantitative analysis. Secondly, they provide tangible evidence of the significant positive effect that voluntary associations have on Libya’s society and politics. Lastly, these detailed accounts allow me to identify mechanisms that potentially underlie the emergence of a civic-minded civil society in post-Gadhafi Libya.

As a whole, Libyan voluntary associations are operating within and across ethnic, tribal, and geographical divides in the pursuit of freedom, political participation, and access to economic opportunities. By doing so collectively, many are forging a new Libyan identity by developing bonds of common interest that cut across kinship ties. They are reconquering the public space and fostering participation through volunteerism. And they are developing attitudes of tolerance and inclusion by giving voice to the pluralism that characterizes their society.

Voluntary associations and civil society writ large may not be able to create a democratic state in Libya, but they can help diffuse the values that underpin inclusive politics, participatory governance, and better government performance. Given their civic culture, Libyan voluntary associations have the potential to contribute to the cultural change that will be needed to foster tolerant and democratic Libyan citizens.

But how is that possible? On the basis of an in-depth inquiry in the individual stories of civil society activists and organizations I suggest two avenues that help to explain the development of a civic culture and a strong civil society in unfavorable settings.

The first is a process of exposure to foreign information, behaviors and meanings⁷ that represent one facet of the phenomenon known as *globalization*. Its drivers are traveling, reading, the presence of a connected diaspora, the access to satellite television, the internet, and to other forms of foreign information (radio; newspapers; magazines).

The second is the quasi-public space constituted by interactive communication platforms available through the internet (e.g. Facebook; Twitter; Skype; blogs; webinars), and “smart” mobile phones (e.g. Snapchat Whatsapp, Telegram, and Viber). In this quasi-public space, physically dispersed individuals can exchange ideas, forge common identities and visions, and coordinate action.

Significance of this research

In spite of the unfavorable context, and contrary to the predictions deriving from contending theories that seek to explain the emergence of civil society, post-Gadhafi Libya possesses a strong civil society, at least along the political culture dimension. The mere existence of this phenomenon has significant theoretical and policy implications.

At the theoretical level, my findings are at odds with the current mainstream civic culture theory championed by Inglehart, Dalton and Welzel. Their “assertive culture” model rests on a “human empowerment” process, according to which a national civic culture appears

⁷ Note that foreign is intended here as that which is different from what is available through ascriptive groups (e.g. family, tribe, clan, city, own religion...). Thus, it is not restricted to that which originates from a different country.

as a consequence of changing economic, and political conditions (Welzel et al. 2003, 341; Welzel 2013, 7).

The presence of a civic sub-culture in Libya clashes with two key aspects of this theory, known as the congruence and the collective sequence propositions. According to the first proposition, there is a strong congruence between a country's prevailing economic conditions, its political institutions, and the individual cultural attitudes of its people. Thus, a political culture becomes more civic in response to improved security-related, and economic existential conditions. This does not characterize the evolution of conditions in Libya until the 2011 revolution, and it is certainly not the type of change that Libyans experienced after it.

In addition, the collective sequence proposition entails that the political culture of a people is fairly coherent within a nation (Welzel et al. 2003, 351). Political attitudes and behaviors change collectively, and what matters for the development of democratic institutions, such as civil society is the predominant political culture, which Welzel refers to as "society's center of gravity" (2013, 8).

Instead, my research shows that individuals can form voluntary associations that cultivate and promote a civic culture that is incongruent with national economic and political conditions. The emergence of a culturally strong civil society in the very challenging Libyan context contradicts the congruence proposition.

Furthermore, the Libya case shows that, in spite of strong economic and existential pressures, a sub-national groups developed a civic political culture that is at odds with the predominant national political culture. The presence of a group of individuals (i.e. members of voluntary associations) who display a political culture that is more civic than the national one implies that a cultural change must have happened among a part of the

population, separately from the national cultural change sequence, which questions the collective sequence proposition. In other words, I argue that individuals and small groups – not entire nations - are the appropriate levels of analysis to study political culture and civil society.

This research also provides the basis to articulate a constructive criticism against the cross-national methodology that is typically adopted to study the relationship between individual attitudes, civic engagement and political participation. Macro-social phenomena, such as political culture and civil society are usually studied through the cross-national comparison of aggregated individual-level data. I explain how the national aggregation of individual attitudes and behaviors in order to constitute a national political culture suffers from two important problems: Ecological fallacy, whereby some measures of individual political culture lose their meaning when aggregated at the national level; and non-exchangeability of indicators across countries.

Civil society plays “different roles in different stages of the democratic process” (Mercer 2002, 7-8) and it “may be used for different purposes under different political circumstances” (Seibel 1990, 47). Therefore, it may be more fruitful to study associational life in a specific country, rather than conduct cross-national studies by comparing aggregated national data. After decades of cultural and political absolutism in development, we did learn to pay attention to the context, thus, we ought to analyze how the development of democratic institutions works in a specific society.

The fact that civic-minded voluntary associations can emerge and survive in spite of unfavorable economic and security conditions also has important policy implications. As stated earlier, voluntary associations play a central role in the development and good functioning of democracies, and their ability to play this role largely depends on the

political culture that characterizes them as a whole. Therefore, notwithstanding the large focus given to the development of effective democratic state institutions, international assistance can and should also focus on helping the development of a civic culture among citizens, and on supporting voluntary associations when they embody and express a civic sub-culture. Given their active engagement in the public sphere, members of voluntary associations are uniquely placed to mobilize their fellow citizens and coordinate their social and political actions. In the case of Libya, voluntary associations can represent powerful agents of democratic change in an environment dominated by factionalism, intolerance and opportunism.

Lastly, abundant empirical research on associationalism has been done in developed countries, and most often in stable democracies.⁸ However, if we agree that voluntary associations play a central role for the development and good functioning of democracies, it may be valuable to study them in transitional settings. As Liverani (2010) laments, only scant data is available on the associative phenomenon in North Africa. Furthermore, in the region, Libya enjoys the least amount of literature and research. For over forty years, Moammar Gadhafi was particularly attentive to preventing the conduct of independent polls and social research. His objective was to prevent any possible emergence of a national sentiment. The first national, independent socio-political surveys that have been conducted in Libya are those used in this research, and my survey of leaders of voluntary associations is the largest ever conducted in Libya. The deterioration of the situation in Libya since the spring of 2014 makes it unlikely that further research will be achievable

⁸ See for instance the works by Putnam 2001; Curtis et al. 1989; Grabb and Curtis 1992; Curtis, Baer, and Grabb 2001; McPherson, Smith-Lovin, and Brashears 2006 cited in Bonikowski 2006

on a national scale for several years. Therefore, this research provides a rare contribution to the study of this complex nation.

Finally, the two avenues I identify to help explain the singular emergence of Libya's civic voluntary associations offer valuable insights for understanding the development of a strong civil society in unfavorable settings. These processes can also help understand the emergence of novel phenomena such as violent transnational jihadism and "glocal" social movements.

Chapter 2

Concepts and methods

In this chapter I specify the field of inquiry in which my research resides. I briefly discuss the concepts of voluntary associations and political culture, laying out the operational definition I adopt in my research.

I explain why I chose to conduct my research in a single country and I will present some important pitfalls of cross-national empirical research and of methods commonly used to investigate individual attitudes, voluntary associations and political engagement. I then specify the qualitative and quantitative data I draw from to conduct my analysis. I briefly define each of the key variables I utilize, I clarify the distinct aspects of each one of them, and I list the key indicators I adopt to measure them. Lastly, I explain the specific methods I applied to ascertain whether or not empirical evidence provided by these different sources confirm or disconfirm my two hypotheses.

a. **Conceptual field of inquiry: Voluntary associations and political culture**

Voluntary associations

In the early 19th Century, a young French lawyer by the name of Alexis de Tocqueville set off on a journey to study the blossoming American republic. One of the key factors he identified as being behind the success of the American democracy, was the amazing

associational life he found amongst its citizens – an aspect that James Madison had also emphasized in *The Federalist Papers* (1788). Influenced by his work, scholars of sociology and politics such as Mill, Durkheim and Cole further highlighted the central role played by associations in democracies: They balance and complement the power of state and market.

In fact, many scholars argue that voluntary associations play a number of roles in the development and well-functioning of participatory governance systems (Knoke 1990; Verba et al. 1995; Brehm and Rahn 1997; Dekker and van den Broek 1998; Putnam 1995; Seligson 1999). This is particularly evident in democracies, as Fung nicely summarized, “associations enhance democracy in at least six ways: through the intrinsic value of associative life, fostering civic virtues and teaching political skills, offering resistance to power and checking government, improving the quality and equality of representation, facilitating public deliberation, and creating opportunities for citizens and groups to participate directly in governance” (2003, 515). As a consequence of its central importance in democracy, associationalism became a political concept and a model of democratic governance stressing the role of self-governing voluntary associations.⁹ It is even described as “the original “third way” between free market individualism and centralized state control” (Bade 2001, 1).

My research on associational life encompasses all those aspects characteristics of the phenomenon of individuals voluntarily joining together in the pursuit of a shared objective. This broad definition separates voluntary associations from kinship groups, geographical communities, castes, armies, clans and ethnic groups, which, to greater or lesser extents, are formed without the free choice all their members.¹⁰ Furthermore, I

⁹ The concept of associative democracy was notably developed by Paul Hirst (1994).

¹⁰ Distinction made by other scholars, such as Scott (1957, 316).

confine the scope of associations to those operating outside of the state, the family and the market. This definition coincides with most definitions of civil society organizations, which is often fused with the broader concept of civil society.¹¹ Hence, I may use the terms “voluntary associations” and “civil society organizations” interchangeably, which is already the case in the pertinent literature.

I chose to use the terms “voluntary associations”, rather than “civil society” for numerous reasons. The concept of voluntary associations is narrower; it has a comparatively smaller normative and ideological baggage;¹² and it is easier to translate in empirical terms. Civil society is a vague concept (Choudry 2002; Viterna et al. 2015), and its popularity has only further compromised its clarity (Foley and Edwards 1996; Carothers and Brandt 1999).¹³ Through this choice, my hope is to minimize confusion and ease the operationalization of the concept, which are both crucially important prerequisites for an empirical analysis. Furthermore, by taking a distance from the normatively-charged concept of civil society I seek to avoid a teleological approach that sees associational life as being inherently conducive to liberal values and democracy (Tocqueville 1835, 1840; Putnam et al. 1993; Diamond 1994).

Associations do not need to be civil in their scope or impact on society in order to qualify as a voluntary association. In fact, many such associations are widely considered uncivil,

¹¹ For instance, Van Rooy defines civil society as “groups formed for collective action outside the State and the marketplace” (1998, 30), and CIVICUS – Civil Society Index defines civil society as “the arena, outside of the family, the state, and the market where people associate to advance common interests” (Heinrich 2004, 13).

¹² Civil society is often defined or conceptualized as being inherently *civil*. For instance, Heinrich and Fioramonti define civil society as: “the arena outside family, government, and market where people voluntarily associate to advance common interests *based on civility*.” (emphasis in the original document) (2007, 30)

¹³ Barry Knight goes as far as stating that: “Rarely in the history of development can a term have progressed so quickly from obscurity to meaninglessness without even a nanosecond of coherence” (Knight 2000)

such as the Ku Klux Klan, black block groups and hooligans. Voluntary associations are at the core of civic engagement and of the concept of civil society understood as a part of society (rather than a kind of society or an arena, as interpreted by Edwards and Gaventa (2014, 2)). They are also referred to as “third sector” and “volunteer sector”; so I may also use these terms, and that of civil society to refer to them on occasions. In particular, when I will discuss the strength of this sector in the next chapter, I will refer to it as civil society, given that most of the literature that seeks to explain what makes a civil society strong refers to it in these terms.¹⁴

Lastly, I refer to associational life as encompassing all the characteristics of the nature and operation of associations.

My operational definition of voluntary associations is: ***groups joined freely outside of the state, the family, and the market, for the pursuit of shared objectives.***

For the sake of brevity, I may at times omit the adjective “voluntary”. The purpose of my operational definition is to give an easily identifiable delimitation to the object of my research. However, the diverse and fluid nature of voluntary associations does not warrant a strict delimitation. In fact, this domain, which is also referred to as the “third sector” (in addition to the market and the state), overlaps with the economic and the political societies. Some voluntary associations advocate for a political agenda and promote a political vision, others conduct for-profit activities in parallel to their non-profit work.

Voluntary associations vary in their degree of organization, ranging from grassroots groups of loosely affiliated individuals (Smith 2000), to membership associations

¹⁴ For an extensive discussion on this subject, see Heinrich (2010).

(Tschirhart 2006) and highly structured associations. Furthermore, when voluntary associations aggregate in the pursuit of social change, they are known as social movements (Payes 2005, 16). Both unregistered and informal groups fall within my definition of voluntary associations, as well as formal and registered ones. This definition largely overlaps with what Salamon et al. call the “civil society sector”, which they define as organized; private; not-profit distributing; self-governing; and voluntary organizations (2003, 7-8; 2004, 9-10), which they consider the most useful concept to conduct cross-national comparative inquiry. The concept of voluntary associations also implies a degree of structure, that is a certain delimitation of membership and regularity in the conduct of activities. This leaves out some non-associative forms of civic engagement, which belong to the broader civil society domain.

Depending on the scope of the research, using the concept of voluntary associations versus that of civil society can be an important drawback, given that it confines the study to the organizational level, neglecting other important forms of civil society, such as individual actions, street demonstrations, and fluid and informal groups.¹⁵ However, my aim is not to investigate the origin or the impact of the entire civil society sector on society and politics. My attention centers on the relationship between political culture and the engagement in voluntary associations. By focusing on individual-level traits of members and leaders of voluntary associations versus those of non-members, my aim is to try and observe the links between individual attitudes and behaviors and participation in voluntary associations.

In the case of Libya, which is characterized by widespread lawlessness and the absence of state institutions, non-state armed groups (which I also refer to as militias) are a very

¹⁵ As lamented by Heinrich (2004, 16-17) and Van Rooy (1998) cited in Heinrich 2004.

common phenomenon. These groups can fall within the definition of voluntary associations I adopted. Besides the prospects of accessing power and money, militias appeal to many individuals who seek to participate in the public life, who look for a feeling of belonging and group identity, and who share a certain vision of society. Militias may also genuinely respond to a community's demand to provide security. However, the element of violence that characterizes militias sets them apart from the rest of voluntary associations. In fact, the use of violence makes it difficult to ascertain whether and to what extent a given militia pursues a shared objective besides power and wealth. Therefore, for the scope of this research, I exclude militias from the operational definition of voluntary associations that I utilize.

A precise terminology would refer to these two categories as armed militias and non-violent voluntary associations, respectively. However, for the sake of brevity, I call voluntary associations that use violence "militias", and those who do not, voluntary associations.

The importance attributed to voluntary associations in social sciences has a long history that spans across multiple disciplines such as sociology, anthropology and political science. In political science, the focus on voluntary associations has been driven by the role they are believed to play for economic growth and democracy. It rests on a long historical tradition, spanning from Alexis de Tocqueville (1835) and James Madison et al. (1961) to Putnam (1994; 1995) and Skocpol and Fiorina (2004).

Voluntary associations can play a central role in promoting inclusive politics, participatory governance, and better government performance by providing the infrastructure for civic engagement and participation. They play an important organizing and coordinating role, coalescing groups of citizens that share a common goal, thereby allowing them to

aggregate and articulate their message and action. Voluntary associations counterbalance the atomization of society that result from individualism and apathy. In relation to the state, a vibrant voluntary associational life guards against the risk of autocratic and authoritarian drift that usually results from an unchecked exercise of power. For these reasons Linz and Stepan (1996) identify civil society, of which voluntary associations are a core part, as one of the five key constitutive elements of a democratic system.

Voluntary associations empower citizens by providing them with a greater capacity to influence decision-makers and public opinion. Associations also often complement or extend the capacity of the state to provide services. In short, associations play a central role for the good functioning of polities by fostering communication among groups of citizens, and bridging the gap in communication and service delivery between decision-makers and their constituencies. Finally, associational activity has the ability to generate very important by-products that are particularly relevant in post-conflict settings: socialization to values and the integration of diverse groups into one society (Paffenholz and Spurk 2006, 13).

Thus, notwithstanding different understandings of it, I adopt Heinrich's definition of the strength of civil society in terms of its internal capacities to contribute to social development and democracy through accountability; democratic reforms; inclusion of minorities; promotion and practice of democratic norms; and broad inclusion in the public sphere (2010, 37).

Political culture

In line with a long philosophical tradition, spanning from Aristotle's Greece to the Enlightenment's work of Charles de Montesquieu, a number of scholars argue that attitudes and values of individuals in society have an important effect on the development and good functioning of participatory government systems.¹⁶ Some scholars hold that the political culture of a polity is the aggregate individual psychological traits of its members, "which give order and meaning to a political process and which provide the underlying assumptions and rules that govern behavior in the political system" (Pye 1968, 218).

In 1963, Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba conducted pioneering empirical research across five nations to study the correlation between the quality of democratic governance and the political culture of nations, defined as "attitudes toward the political system and its various parts, and attitudes toward the self in the system" (1963, 12). Their empirical findings led them to assert that the development and good functioning of democracy rests on a specific set of attitudes that they termed *civic culture*. Almond and Verba ascribed an important role to voluntary associations as the place and means through which a political culture fosters democratic governance.

Verba and Pye's *Political Culture and Political Development* (1965) further opened the avenue for the study of macro-social phenomena, such as economic development and political performance, in relation to the individual cultural traits of nations. However, Muller and Seligson (1994, 635) argue that the question of "whether attitudes of the general public have a major causal effect on the establishment and stability of democratic regimes" is still unresolved and they present evidence against this "civic culture

¹⁶ See Lerner 1958, Almond and Verba 1963; Inglehart 1988 and 1990; Huntington 1993; Putnam et al. 1993; Rose, Mishler, and Haerpfer 1998.

argument". As pointed out earlier, the issue may be related to the limitations of cross-national comparisons and to the faulty assumption that the correlation between individual values and democracy holds constant along the different stages of democratization, from the inception to the established functioning of a democracy.¹⁷

Despite the methodological and theoretical criticism that they elicited, Almond, Verba and Pye opened a rich field of inquiry, and bolstered the importance of empirical studies to test and refine their "civic culture argument".¹⁸ Since the publishing of Almond and Verba's *Civic Culture*, many scholars have explained the influence of political attitudes on civic engagement and political participation, both theoretically and through empirical evidence (see *inter alia*, Olsen 1972; Rogers, Barb and Bultena 1975; Verba and Nie 1972; Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995; Stolle and Rochon 1998; Seligson 1999; and Rossteutscher 2005).

My research falls within Almond, Verba and Pye's conceptual approach, which studies associational life in relation to individual attitudes and behaviors. It also includes the quantitative methodological approach based on large surveys that they pioneered.

b. Discussion of methods

Before I describe the methodological approach I have adopted, a brief discussion is warranted to explain why I chose a single-case study and to understand some of the

¹⁷ As stressed by Rustow (1970, 346): "The factors that keep a democracy stable may not be the ones that brought it into existence: explanations of democracy must distinguish between function and genesis."

¹⁸ See for instance Inglehart 1988, 1990, 1997; Putnam et al. 1993; Muller and Seligson 1994; Diamond 1999; Paxton 2002; Newton 2001.

pitfalls of methods commonly used by cross-national empirical research on individual attitudes, voluntary associations and political engagement, such as non-exchangeability and ecological fallacy. This will help with understanding my choice of methods and why I believe that they are the best compromise between data availability, scientific rigor and the objective to reach useful conclusions.

Within-country study

My analysis is a cross-sectional study within a single country. Besides the unique setting provided by Libya, whose significance for my research I explain in the previous chapter, why did I chose to focus only on one country to study the relationship between individual attitudes, associational life and pro-democratic political behavior? This question deserves a broad conceptual answer and a more technical one.

Institutional frameworks play an important role in influencing political attitudes and behaviors and the nature of associational life in a given country and in determining the mechanisms by which they interplay. Thus, the relationship between these elements should be studied within the domain where these institutions exert their influence. Cross-national studies can help understand the role of macro-social institutions, such as culture, religion and regime type. However, without discounting the worth of cross-national analyses, I argue that studies on the relationship between individual attitudes, associational life and political behaviors ought to be country-specific to uncover correlations and understand processes at play besides and beyond the influence of macro-social institutions. Conducting a comparative analysis of communities within a single country allows controlling for the variation of broad social, economic and political conditions that, existing theories argue, can have a strong influence on individual

cognitive attitudes and political behaviors. In particular, despite the increase in cross-national networks and movements, associationalism is largely a local phenomenon that brings together individuals to respond to local needs and aspirations¹⁹ and the way they associate and conduct activities is very much specific to the national and local context.

As Brady and Collier (2010, Kindle 528-530) point out, “Knowledge of context provides insight into potentially significant factors that are not among the variables being formally considered. In this sense, it helps us to know what is hidden behind the assumption “other things being equal,” which is in turn crucial for the causal homogeneity assumption that is a requisite for valid causal inference.” Diverse country settings in terms of stage of economic development, cultural and religious framework, regional and international influences, security situation, history of democratic governance, ethno-linguistic setting or political regime, and most importantly formal governance institutions may render comparative analysis between individual cognitive attitudes, associational life and political engagement across countries equivalent to that of apples and oranges. Instead, a comparative study of individuals within one country will provide that all evolve in the same broad ecological environment, along the political, social and economic dimensions listed above.

Hence, I argue that these macro-social factors act as strong “noise” covering other determinants that vary at the subnational level. Case in point, cross-country analyses usually find weak and inconsistent correlations between possible causal factors and associationalism. In a landmark empirical research across 13 European societies, Badescu & Neller (2007) found that almost all correlations of the numerous predictors they used

¹⁹ Dacombe (2010) points out that “Although civic participation can (and increasingly does) occur at national and supranational levels, it is commonly a local concern”

varied, often in opposite direction, across the countries studies. This is true even for those factors showing the strongest correlations.

This is the case not necessarily because these correlations are not valid, but because the level of analysis is not the most appropriate to study them. There are two technical reasons for this problem: ecological fallacy, that is some measures of individual political culture cannot be aggregated nationally; and non-exchangeability of indicators across countries.

Ecological fallacy

Cross-country analyses suffer from the ecological fallacy, whereby some traits that matter at the individual level lose their explanatory power once aggregated at the national level. In other words, attitudes and relations between two individuals or attitudes prevalent among a sub-group don't necessarily keep their meaning once aggregate at the level of an entire nation. Cross-national analyses on the correlation between individual political attitudes (referred to as civic culture) and macro-social phenomena, such as the emergence of a civil society and democratization, use data aggregated at the national level. Thus, a positive correlation between the two rests on the implicit assumption that democratic change is related to the aggregated change in political attitudes of an entire nation. However, the opposite is more likely to be true in contexts with little or no institutions. As Dahl argued, change in a polyarchy (what is commonly called "democracy") may be due less to mass participation than to the role played by organized minorities "operating within the context of an apathetic majority" (1958, 87).²⁰

²⁰ Cited in Krouse (1982, 444).

This “minority influence” argument was further developed by Moscovici (1976, 1980), whereby a minority convinces the majority that its views are correct. Moscovici showed how this process, which he called conversion, was prevalent in settings where normative pressures to conformity are low, such as in transitional settings. After all, important social movements and changes were brought about by individuals and small groups (e.g. Christianity; the African-American Civil Rights Movement; the anti-apartheid movement). From this reasoning we can induce that the measure of political culture has substantial meaning only if measured at the level of political subcultures, which is “a group of the population that possesses a distinct and consistent set of attitudes, beliefs and orientations to political objects” (Rosamond 1995, 65). Thus, a key problem of using aggregated data for indicators of a political culture is that it creates a single measure of multiple subcultures that may be at odds with each other and the change in attitudes of individuals and small groups that could produce major social and political changes may be completely invisible among the apathetic or reactionary majority.

Another good example is general trust: Foley and Edwards (1999) made this point, noting that “when 'generalized social trust' is taken as survey respondents' assessments of the trustworthiness of their social environment, aggregate scores at the national level can tell us little to nothing about what social groups enjoy trustworthy environments, under what circumstances.” (Foley and Edwards 1999, 150). In concrete terms, the specific trust and organizations developed along ascriptive lines (e.g. belonging to the same ethnic group or tribe) that may help a narrow community provide for itself, is likely to be a great obstacle for the integration and success of the nation that harbors it. Empirical studies on trust have made great progress through the distinction between specified and unspecified general trust and between general trust and particular trust. However, this important individual attitude may differ among specific segments of society, each characterized by

its own more or less trusting sub-culture. Once aggregated at the national level, these distinctions disappear and all measures of trust are aggregated into an average that may mask important trends. In fact, some segments of society, such as leaders of voluntary associations, political leaders or specific sub-national communities (e.g. the settler community in Israel), may have a large influence over the rest of society and on politics, whereas other segments of society that constitute the majority, may have a comparatively smaller ability to influence society and politics. Yet, once aggregated, the level of trust of the apathetic majority may dilute or entirely obscure important trends among comparatively smaller but much more active and influential parts of society.

Non-exchangeability

Measuring a concept through the same indicators and questions in contexts where the concept has a different meaning or form renders the data collected non-exchangeable and therefore not comparable. A good example is that of the type of associations. Even across countries with fairly similar economic and governance systems, such as Germany, Sweden and the USA, Stolle and Rochon found that there are serious variations on the kind of associations most productive of social capital (1998, 62). Logically, they conclude that other factors may be at play.

Efforts have been made to address and possibly overcome problems of comparability between country-specific factors, notably by CIVICUS Civil Society Index (CSI).²¹ This is a very valuable tool, but it is not suited to unveil fine-grained, country-specific mechanisms causing associational life, particularly in regards to cognitive factors.

²¹ See Heinrich (2004, 12).

In order to avoid these pitfalls my research focuses on a single country, for which I identify multiple and distinct indicators. I collected a large set of information that includes multiple measures for each indicator, as well as for indicators of a variety of competing explanatory variables that allows controlling for individual heterogeneity. I also complement quantitative evidence with interviews and accounts drawn from my direct participation in the life of Libyan voluntary associations.

Moreover, I argue that the most important insight we may gather from this kind of research is the one that could give us avenues for actionable policies, rather than mere cultural and institutional considerations. In other words, single-country research on civil society helps us understand what may boost or hamper associationalism in that specific country. After decades of cultural and political absolutism in development, we did learn to pay attention to the context, so we ought to analyze how these processes work in a specific society.

c. Data collection

This research develops through a mixed methods approach that combines quantitative data and qualitative material. The quantitative evidence draws from three different surveys conducted in Libya through face-to-face interviews in Arabic by local researchers between 2012 and 2014. These data are complemented with a rich body of ethnographic evidence gathered through dozens of interviews of key informants and direct participation in the development and operations of Libyan voluntary associations.

The largest body of quantitative data I use derives from the World Values Survey, which is a global research project that explores people's values and beliefs and their social and political impact. It has been carried out by a worldwide network of social scientists in almost 100 countries since 1981. The last round of surveys (Wave 6) was conducted between 2010 and 2014. During this last round, the survey was conducted for the first and only time in Libya between January 19th and February 15th, 2013 over a national sample of 2131 Libyans aged 18 or older. The sampling frame used was the 2006 census, which is still the most recent comprehensive population census available. The sampling was stratified at the level of the 22 Shabiyah (i.e. provinces) using multi-stage random sampling and was weighted.²²

The Arab Barometer (AB) is a survey-based research project focusing on the politically-relevant attitudes of citizens in the Middle East and North Africa. Similarly to the World Values Survey, it has been repeated over time since 2006. In the third and last wave (2012-2014) it surveyed Libya for the first time, interviewing a representative national sample of 1247 Libyans between March 29 and April 18, 2014.²³

Lastly, the Libyan CSO Survey (LCS) is a research I designed and conducted in Libya together with six local research teams of ten to sixteen civil society activists each, over the course of sixteen months, between December 2012 and April 2014. The research was funded by the Agence d'Aide à la Coopération Technique Et au Développement (ACTED), The United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). It gathered first-hand data on attitudes and behaviors of the leaders of nearly all voluntary associations in six major cities across all three regions

²² The database used is "WV6_Data_stata_v_2015_04_18 (Stata DTA)" available from <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSDocumentationWV6.jsp>. Last accessed 19 March 2016.

²³ The data are available from <http://arabbarometer.org/instruments-and-data-files>

of Libya (i.e. Fezzan, Cyrenaica and Tripolitania) totaling 1022 individual organization's leaders.²⁴

I designed this survey by drawing largely from social surveys conducted around the world in the last three decades. Notably, the main references were the World Value Survey, CIVICUS, the Eurobarometer and the Arab Barometer. I adapted many questions and crafted new ones together with Libyan researchers and members of voluntary associations after running a pilot survey in November 2011 and discussing the interviews and its findings with the team of researchers. The pilot survey sample was a random selection of 50 adult Libyans living in Tripoli, with diverse ages, genders, and levels of education. I do not use these data, but the information they provided and the precious feedback offered by both the respondents and my research colleagues proved invaluable for the design of the LCS survey and for the understanding of my research question in the context of Libya.

I interpret and explain the patterns that emerge from the quantitative analysis through the stories of work with or engagement in associations and of opinion on society and politics gathered from dozens of members of Libyan voluntary associations, academics, journalists, members of international non-governmental organizations and state officials. I gathered their perspectives through in-depth, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions that I conducted in various cities in Libya, Tunisia, the United Kingdom and the United States between 2012 and 2016. Their stories and perspectives provide invaluable insight on meanings and processes that guide actions of Libyans in society and through voluntary associations.

²⁴ The complete list of the civil society organizations surveyed and a series of reports on the key aspects of their nature and activities can be found at: <https://www.facebook.com/LibyaCSOreports/>

One important drawback of this cross-sectional study versus a longitudinal analysis (interviews and surveys of the same population over time) is that it does not capture variation among alleged causal factors and outcomes over time. Such a longitudinal study of attitudes and behaviors among members of associations could have allowed me to present stronger evidence about the causal effect of one over the other. This is certainly an important avenue for future research, which I hope to explore in the future. However, the dramatic further degradation of security in Libya since the spring of 2014 and for the near future do not allow the safe conduct of field work.

By the time the last survey interview was conducted on May 10th, 2014 in Benghazi, the level of security had degraded to a level that no longer allowed any open academic research. Some enumerators had received threats for their work as activists and a former research team leader and prominent human rights advocate was briefly kidnapped and had to leave the country to seek asylum abroad.

However, cross-sectional data, such as that used in this study can still present convincing evidence of quantitative correlation between the identified predictors and outcomes. Furthermore, the solid and varied body of qualitative evidence and participatory research I conducted in Libya for two years allows me to provide both context and texture to these findings and open some avenues to understand the direction and mechanism of causality. This research provides novel evidence and constitutes a rare analysis of the phenomenon of associationalism at its inception in a unique setting characterized by the almost complete absence of state institutions.

d. Methods and variables

My first hypothesis (H1) purports that voluntary associations *embody* a civic culture because, on average, their members display more civic attitudes and behaviors than non-members. I seek to compare the overall political culture of members of voluntary associations to that of non-members, without keeping constant any variable. I do so by comparing the sample means of the eight civic culture traits for these two population categories. This allows me to draw conclusions on the overall civic character of Libya's voluntary associations.

These data are further complemented with the descriptive statistics of key civic culture indicators for leaders of associations, drawn from the Leadership in Civil Society survey in which I included some of the same questions asked by the World Values Survey. Given that the Leadership in Civil Society survey database is composed entirely of observations of leaders of associations and that the sample frame is not national (it is limited to six of the major cities in Libya, hosting about half of the total Libyan population), it cannot serve as the basis of a regression analysis of the correlation of variables with membership in voluntary associations, but it does provide additional fine-grained information about leaders of voluntary associations and about voluntary associations themselves, which are at the center of my analysis.

In order to verify the validity of my second hypothesis (H2), according to which voluntary associations in post-Gadhafi Libya *express* a civic culture, I seek to ascertain whether and how the eight traits that characterize a civic culture are correlated to membership in voluntary associations (AB) or on active membership in voluntary associations (WVS). To do so, I analyze the World Values Survey and the Arab Barometer survey data through

simple and multivariable linear ordinary least squares regression models. The latter are utilized to estimate the relationship between two variables while keeping others constant.

I isolate the correlation between a membership in voluntary associations and the eight civic culture variables, among many factors that interact with both, by including a series of control variables in the regression models. I identify each of the control variables and explain their significance below.

Model 1 is the simple linear regression of the outcome variable on membership (AB) / active membership (WVS) in associations. Model 2 is a multiple linear regression that includes all the individual-level control variables. Model 3 also includes the district-level control variables. Finally, model 4 includes all the individual-level variables and all districts (21 dummies and one district of reference) in order to capture all environmental factors that may have an impact on the outcome variable. Overall, these four models impose an increasing level of control over the independent significance of the effect of membership in voluntary associations on the outcome variables of interest.

Outcome variable: Membership in voluntary associations

The outcome variable in my research, also referred to as dependent variable (Y), is membership in voluntary associations.²⁵

Both the World Values Survey and the Arab Barometer surveys include a set of questions asking the respondents if they are members of voluntary associations, which allows me

²⁵ Note that the use of predictor or independent variable and outcome or dependent variable serves to identify the position of variables in a regression analysis, which only shows correlations. They do not indicate a direction of causality.

to construct a variable that distinguishes between members and non-members and compare the difference between them along a series of traits. In order to compare the attitudes and behaviors of members of voluntary associations to those who are not, I created a binary variable corresponding to membership in one or more associations presented in the survey questionnaire.

I list below the categories that were presented to respondents.

World Values Survey (Questions 25 – 35): “Now, I am going to read out a list of voluntary organizations. For each organization, can you tell me whether you were an active member, non-active member, or not a member of that organization. *(Read out and mark one answer number for each organization):*

- Church or religious organization
- Sport or recreational organization
- Art, music or educational organization
- Labor Union
- Political Party
- Environmental Association
- Professional Guild
- Humanitarian or Charity Organization
- Consumer Advocacy Organization
- Self-Help group, Cooperative group
- Another organization.”

In the Arab Barometer the question asked was (q501): “Are you a member of ...:

- A charitable society.
- A professional association/trade union.

- A youth / cultural / sports organization.
- A family/tribal association.
- A local development association
- A cooperative association
- A civil society organization that was not mentioned above.”

The distribution of membership in associations according to their category are reported in Table A2.1 and A2.2 in Appendix 2, along with the data relative to other countries in the region that serve as a frame of reference for the data on Libya.

Alas, the two surveys provide different categories of associations among the options. Furthermore, the two surveys ask different questions regarding the type of membership. The World Values Survey differentiates between non-members, non-active members and active members of voluntary associations whereas the Arab Barometer only distinguishes between non-members and members of voluntary associations. I include all categories in the descriptive statistics,²⁶ however, the reference population for my quantitative analysis is not the same for both surveys. In the analysis of the World Values Survey data I observe the difference in means between *active* members and non-members, whereas in the analysis of the Arab Barometer data I observe the difference in mean values between members and non-members of voluntary associations. This means that the reference population for membership in voluntary associations is not the same for both surveys and that the type of associations included in the two studies is different.

²⁶ For the World Values Survey, I created two binary variables corresponding to active and non-active membership in associations. The respondents who were active in one or more associations were not included in the non-active membership variable, even if they were non-active members of other associations.

While this hampers the ability to compare findings across surveys and may cause some findings to differ, it does not detract from the validity of the findings for each database on the impact of the set of attitudes and behaviors analyzed and participation in voluntary associations, whether active or not.

Independent variables

The independent variables in this research, which I refer to as predictor variables of interest (X), are grouped into five attitudes and three behaviors. The attitudes are the individual social Identity; trust; tolerance; religious openness; and support for gender equality. The behaviors are: Political engagement; information consumption; and active use of media. Drawing from the most recent literature on civic culture, these eight traits capture the most salient aspects of a political culture that support the development and sustainability of a stable and effective democracy.

I briefly define each of these concepts, and I clarify the distinct aspects of each one of them.

Identity

Identity is a cognitive attitude towards one's self or group, which refers to a sense of sameness and continuity (Erikson 1968, 65). Individual identity attitude responds to the question: "Who am I?", whereas group identity responds to the question: "who is like me?" The concept of identity further divides among a large array of sub-categories or

types, such as racial, ethnic, class, religious, occupational, gender, age, sexual orientation, physical ability or inability, etc.²⁷

For the purpose of this research, identity refers to individual-level social identity. Following the concept developed by Turner and Oakes (1986), I define social identity as capturing an individual's conception of self in relation to others derived from the perceived membership in a relevant social group: tribe; neighborhood, city; region; country; etc. This particular component of an individual's identity is an important socio-psychological attitude of individuals for two main reasons. Firstly, the strength of one's identification with a group of people affects the likelihood and ability to engage with other members for mutual support or the pursuit of common interests. Individuals who have a stronger sense of belonging to one or more groups are likely to be more inclined and better able to join voluntary associations within the groups they identify with, which in turn makes civic and political action more effective.

Secondly, one's sense of social identity defines the boundary that separates the similar and the different, it gives an indication about the size and nature of the in-group and out-group. To be sure, each individual has a multiple set of overlapping group identities that together make up her social identity. None of these group identities, taken alone and in isolation from the others, can encapsulate the individual social identity. However, identities are ordered in a situational and dynamic hierarchy of importance that allows the individual to act coherently with her overall social identity when two or more of her group identities are in conflict at a given time and in a given context. An individual's primary social identity is the group identity that she places at the top of her hierarchy of group identities when asked a general self-identification question. This hierarchy is fluid

²⁷ For a broader discussion on the concept of identity, see: Identity (2008).

and context-specific, but it is “sticky”: It requires time and/or strong emotional experiences to change.

Hence, when defined in concentric geographical circles (e.g. local community; city; region; nation) the level of social identity that one chooses as being primary is a good indication of the size of the community with whom one may be able to identify and act, which Wendt (1994) termed the "collective self." And since “people’s identification with one another influences their sense of what they want” (Gutmann 2003, 15), the primary level of social identity with which individuals identify influences the breadth of collective goals they may pursue. In other words, social identities contribute to determining the interests that drive individual and collective action.²⁸

Trust

Trust is “the mutual confidence that no party to an exchange will exploit another's vulnerabilities” Sabel (1993: 1133).²⁹ Borrowing from economics, trust lowers transaction costs, thereby making any group or organization run more efficiently (Fukuyama 1999, 16). In other words, if individuals believe that their fellow community members will behave honestly and reliably, which also reveals how much they behave in such a way themselves,³⁰ this will reduce the parties' need for information and enforcement mechanisms, thereby making cooperation much easier.

²⁸ Wendt argues that "The ability to overcome collective action problems depends in part on whether actors' social identities generate self-interests or collective interests" and notes "I shall define self-interest and collective interest as effects of the extent to which and manner in which social identities involve an identification with the fate of the other (whether singular or plural)." Wendt (1994, 386)

²⁹ Cited in Barney and Hansen (1994, 176).

³⁰ Among others, Glaeser et al. (2000) found a correlation between the statement “*I am trustworthy*” and trusting actions. Robert Putnam argues that the relevant indicator to measure in

However, trust is not a uni-dimensional concept. In particular, one important distinction is whether trust is confined to the in-group or if it extends to the out-group. Fukuyama nicely framed this aspect in terms of radius of trust. This distinction was first articulated by Yamagishi and Yamagishi (1994) who defined them as follows:

- General trust: cognitive bias based on the “belief in the benevolence of human nature in general”; the “default expectations of people’s trustworthiness” (Yamagishi and Yamagishi 1994, 139; and Yamagishi (2001, 143).³¹ Trust “which can extend to persons not directly known by the actor in the form of “default expectations of people’s trustworthiness” (Yamagishi 2001, 143)”. “It appears to reflect an individual's belief that most others share the same fundamental values, and belong to the same "moral community" (Fukuyama 1995; Uslaner 2002)".³²
- Particular trust: “knowledge-based trust” that “entails deeper ties to a closer circle such as family members, friends, and others with similar backgrounds” (Bahry et al. 2005, 522). Particular trust is the kind of trust granted to a circle of well-known individuals and within which social controls are strong (Delhey et al. 2011, 787).

This typology has since been adopted by scores of scholars studying trust and its social, political and economic impact.³³ Specifically, general trust appears to be an important psychological trait for the development of the other attitudes and behaviors that make

social capital research is trustworthiness, rather than trust (author’s interview, Cambridge, November 2012) and Capra et al. (2008) found that attitudinal questions about trust are good predictors of trustworthiness.

³¹ Cited in Glanville et al. (2013, 1-2).

³² Glanville et al. (2013, 2).

³³ See *inter alia* Smith (1997); Uslaner (2002); Uslaner and Conley (2003); Bahry et al. (2005).

up a civic culture. As Delhey et al (2011, 787) point out: “General trust is the basis of reciprocity, social connectedness, peaceful collective action, inclusiveness, tolerance, gender equality, confidence in institutions, and democracy itself.”

As I will point out in the next section, general trust has been measured for several decades with various questions that tap onto different aspects of it. Some questions ask about the level of trust individuals may grant to unspecified others (i.e. referring to “most people”), often providing a scenario or a circumstance. I refer to this as *unspecified general trust*. Given that this is the most distant group towards which trust is measured, it is also a good indication of a person’s radius of trust.

Other questions ask about the level of trust respondents grant to specific groups of people they do not know (e.g. people of another religion; people of another nationality). This is still general trust, but it is *specified general trust*. A third type of trust is the one granted to groups of people that one knows (e.g. family, neighbors, people that one knows personally), which I refer to as *personal trust*.

Lastly, individuals may display a higher level of trust across all types of groups, simply because they have a higher inclination towards trusting people, notwithstanding that their level of trust granted to each group is still likely to vary. I refer to this trust “baseline” as the *level of trust*.

Tolerance

In broad terms, Gibson (2006, 22) highlights that “to tolerate is to allow”, it is “a willingness to permit the expression of ideas or interests one opposes” (Sullivan et al. 1982, 2). As Gibson further elaborates, it is an important attitude for the development

and sustenance of democratic governance, which is based on free and fair competition between movements that do not share the same vision of society. The barrier to entry in the public realm of political debate and competition for power cannot be based on agreement with the majority.

Religiosity

Religiosity is intended here as a set of attitudes towards religion and religious practices. In the context of Muslim countries, Cornwall et al. (1986) and Spierings (2014) distinguish among three dimensions of Islamic-religious identity: Religious affiliation; religious piety; and political-Islamist attitudes.

Since almost all Libyans are Sunni Maliki (a specific Sunni school of thought), religious affiliation is not a meaningful dimension of analysis. Instead, I add another dimension of religiosity, which is religious openness.

Therefore, for the purpose of this research, I focus on three aspects of religiosity: The degree of religious piety, which Spierings defines as “the strength and degree of conservativeness of one’s religious views” (432); secularism, which Spierings refers to as political-Islamist attitude; and religious openness.

I define religious piety as the degree to which individuals see themselves as being religious, the importance they give to religious faith and to god in their life. The frequency of praying and attending religious rituals are often used as proxy measures of this elusive attitude; however, they are quite imperfect, since they measure practices that are affected by habits, social customs and by environmental pressures and norms.

Secularism is the attitude towards the space and role that religion should have in the public space and in politics.

Religious openness captures those religious attitudes that may hinder or accommodate other views and practices within and outside one's own religion. Religious openness is likely to be connected to both tolerance and to the support for gender equality, most likely as an antecedent. It is one aspect of religiosity, which is a complex individual attitude that is not prone to be treated as a simple dichotomous concept.³⁴

Support for gender equality

According to the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (aka UN Women), gender equality is defined as “the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys”.³⁵

According to the third Millennium Development Goal (MDG), which focuses on gender equality and women's empowerment, these concepts are expressed through three key dimensions: Education; employment; and political participation (Kabeer 2005, 13). Thus, support for gender equality means first and foremost support of equal access to education at all levels; support for women's access to employment and for equality in wages; and support for women's access to politics.

³⁴ Stressed by Spierings (2014, 426) in reference to the far-reaching conclusions drawn by Barro, 1999; Fish, 2002; Inglehart and Norris, 2003a; 2003b; Lincove, 2008; Ross, 2001.

³⁵ UN Women website, accessed on Aug 18, 2016. Available from <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsanddefinitions.htm>

Political engagement

According to Verba, Schlozman and Brady, political engagement indicates “the variety of psychological predispositions toward politics” (1995, 270). In this sense, political engagement encompasses values and attitudes individuals hold in relation to politics. However, in my research I define political engagement not just in terms of interest in politics, but also in terms of voluntary behaviors that aim at affecting the nature and actions of government. These behaviors are participating in protests, joining strikes, writing petitions, calling decision-makers, voting, attending political meetings and discussing politics.

This definition is similar to the one Verba, Schlozman and Brady give to political *participation*: “Activity that is intended to or has the consequence of affecting, either directly or indirectly, government action” (1995, 9), which is often adopted in the pertinent literature. Yet, I use the word “engage” which refers to actively taking part in an activity, rather than “participate”, which does not require playing an active role. Political engagement includes all political activities, which Milbrath (1965) differentiates in a hierarchical continuum ranging from relatively passive activities, such as voting and talking about politics, to very active ones, such as protesting and joining strikes, which I refer to as elite-challenging actions.

These are all expressions of the important instrumental role of political engagement. They are peaceful ways through which individual agency can be expressed and channeled to influence political outcomes. In this sense, political engagement is an important alternative to violent confrontation and to apathy.

Moreover, political engagement has an important social and political function that goes well beyond its immediate, instrumental one (Milbrath 1965; Elkins and Simeon 1979).

Political engagement develops and promotes symbols and meanings through public, collective rituals. The acts of voting, protesting, going on strike and discussing politics develop ideas of citizenship, national identity, ownership and self-empowerment. These coherent set of values and attitudes constitute what Talcott Parsons calls culture (1951).

The symbolic meaning of political engagement actions is the reason why these behaviors belong to the concept of civic culture. They complement individual attitudes with interpersonal activities in order to form a more complete and tangible concept of political culture (Elkins and Simeon 1979, 128-9).

Information consumption

The level of information consumption is the degree to which individuals expose themselves to information. It has a qualitative component, which is the variety and diversity of channels and media sources used to access information, such as internet; television; radio; mobile phones; printed newspapers and magazines; and speaking with people. The level of information consumption also has a quantitative component, which is the frequency at which each of these media is consulted.

Active use of media

While the level of information consumption gauges the reception of information that is produced by others, the active use of media identifies the production and dissemination of content through media of communication. In other words, it is the extent to which an individual uses the media to communicate. The active use of media can take the form of sharing news; and information directly collected or passed along; expressing opinions;

and conducting analyses. The prime medium for this type of active engagement is the internet, notably through blogs, social media and dialogue fora. The distinction between information consumption and the active use of media is a distinction between the input and the output sides of the relationship with media.

In the span of a few years, social media such as Facebook and Twitter have become prime tools for individuals who want to be engaged in the life of their polity and shape society and politics. The wider availability and decreasing cost of smart-phones has also contributed to the use of social media, which formerly required a laptop or PC. This medium offers the great advantage of a low entry cost and the new possibility of two-way interaction between the provider of information and recipient, which again offers a range of possibilities for encouraging political engagement, sharing of information and fine-tuning of initiatives as they progress.

The key indicators I adopted to measure each of these civic culture variables are listed in Tables A3.1; A3.2 and A3.3 in Appendix 3.

Controls

In the regression analysis I include a series of individual-level controls that are commonly identified as the primary determinants of civic engagement (Almond and Verba, 1963; Verba et al., 1971, 1978; Wilson 2000). These are standard demographic and socio-economic characteristics that may influence social and political attitudes and behaviors, namely socio-economic status; gender; age; level of education; marital status and religiosity. To these, I also add control variables that capture contextual effects, using districts as the ecological unit. By including district-level controls I intend to account for

the potential influence that ecological factors (i.e. the social, economic and security environment) may have on individuals. These can come in the form of peer pressure and group-think dynamics resulting from predominant attitudes in the local community and other characteristics of the local context. I include seven district-level control variable (six for the Arab Barometer that lacks a measure of individual empowerment), for which I use the sample mean within each district. These are: religiosity; level of education; level of crime / security; socio-economic status; sense of empowerment (World Values Survey only); general trust and trust in the police. The variables' description and scale are reported in Table A3.4 in Appendix 3.

In my research framework, voluntary associations are a tool in the hand of individuals who elect to join their forces in the pursuit of common objectives. Of course these objectives vary a great deal across voluntary associations, but overall, in a given society and at a given time, these associations taken together can be the expression of a specific sub-culture within society. In line with the attitudes and behaviors that define this sub-culture, voluntary associations assume a role of an agents, or more correctly of meta-agents of social and political change. In the case of Libya, I seek to show that, overall, voluntary associations represent conduits that help certain individuals who possess a more civic culture and a higher level of political engagement to join forces and promote these attitudes and behaviors across society.

Schematically, Figure 2.1 presents the relationship between my key variables. The arrows point in both directions given that I only aim at showing correlation, not at identifying the direction of causality.

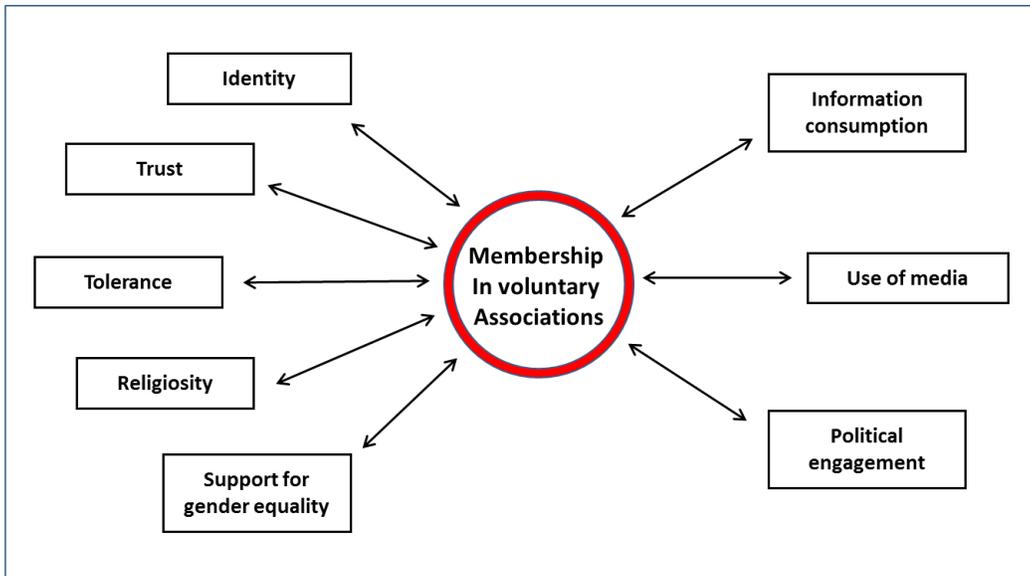


Fig. 2.1: Voluntary associations, attitudes and behaviors

Chapter 3

What is a strong civil society and what are the conditions that foster it?

In this chapter I discuss the key indicators that determine the structural and cultural strength of a civil society. Focusing on the latter, I explain why the eight traits defined in the previous chapter define a civic culture. This will help gauge the extent to which Libyan voluntary associations represent a civic political culture, and will help appreciate the nature of Libyan civil society that I will describe in chapters 5, 6 and 7. Furthermore, clearly laying out the criteria that determine when a civil society is strong, and a political culture civic, is necessary to identify and understand what the conditions are that favor the development and sustainability of a strong civil society that contributes to a civic political culture.

I then proceed to clarify the series of factors that major pertinent theories identify as the causes for the development of a strong civil society. To be sure, I do not seek to explain why Libyan voluntary associations appeared, or to explain why members of voluntary associations may have developed a civic culture. Nor do I intend to discuss which theoretical approach is more promising to explain the development of a strong civil society. My aim is limited to pinpointing those aspects of a nation's history and context that indicate the extent to which conditions are favorable for the development of a strong

civil society. In other words, I conduct this brief overview in order to establish the backdrop against which I analyze the Libyan context in the next chapter.

a. What is a strong civil society?

Despite the broad disagreement on the definition of civil society, most of the literature appears to recognize that, operationally, it has a structural (i.e. its capacity) and a cultural (i.e. norms and values) component (Heinrich 2005, 218; Bailer et al. 2007, 5).

A strong civil society is one that possesses key structural and cultural attributes. In particular, it possesses a large and sustainable structural capacity (i.e. number of associations and members; funding) and a set of values that support peaceful and democratic governance (i.e. equality, tolerance, transparency and environmental sustainability).

As discussed earlier, the focus of my research is on voluntary associations. Many scholars entirely equate civil society with associations (Foley and Edwards 1996; Hadenius and Ugglå 1996; Salamon et al. 2003).³⁶ However, I believe that the two concepts are distinct from each other. Notably, civil society encompasses forms of civic engagement that are not expressed through associations, such as individual actions, and spontaneous social movements. Therefore, a more appropriate set of questions would be: What is a strong voluntary associational life and what fosters it? Nonetheless, given that voluntary

³⁶ Foley and Edwards (1996, 38) have gone as far as defining the concept of civil society as a "dense network of civil associations" and Salamon et al. define the civil society sector entirely in terms of organizations (2003, 7).

associations form the core of civil society,³⁷ and in light of the fact that my definition of voluntary associations is quite broad and that my approach encompasses both the structural and the cultural aspects of associational life, I argue that when voluntary associational life – as I defined it - is strong, civil society is strong. Thus, I posit that the factors that foster a strong civil society are the same that foster a strong voluntary associational life. For the sake of clarity, given that most efforts at studying the development and the strength of this sector of society use the term “civil society”, I will use this term as well, with the understanding that I refer to voluntary associations as defined in Chapter 2.

Surprisingly, despite the immense popularity of civil society in both scholarly research and in development policy, very few rigorous and comprehensive tools have been developed to assess the strength of a country’s civil society and to gauge the degree to which conditions are favorable for its development. The two most conceptually and operationally developed tools are the Johns Hopkins Global Civil Society Index³⁸ (henceforth referred to as the Global Civil Society Index), and the CIVICUS Civil Society Index³⁹ (henceforth referred to as the Civil Society Index).

The Global Civil Society Index measures the “health and vitality of the civil society sector” (Salamon and Sokolowski 2004, 61) by looking at three dimensions: Capacity; sustainability; and impact (67-75). It is worth summarizing the indicators it uses for each dimension:

³⁷ As argued by Salamon and Sokolowski 2004, 65

³⁸ Accessed on August 18, 2016. Available from <http://www.jhu.edu/~cnp/>

³⁹ Accessed on August 18, 2016. Available from: <http://52.178.209.118/csi/>

- Capacity:
 - Number of full time-equivalent paid workers as a share of the country's economically active population
 - Number of full time-equivalent volunteer workers as a share of the country's economically active population
 - Amount of charitable contributions to civil society as a share of the country's GDP
 - Degree of diversification of civil society based on the distribution of paid and volunteer staff among 12 different fields of activity

- Sustainability:
 - Share of the total civil society revenue generated by itself (e.g. through fees; sale of goods and services, etc.)
 - Share of the total civil society revenue that comes from the government
 - Popular support measured through the number of civil society volunteers as a share of the adult population
 - Degree to which the legal environment facilitates civil society work (i.e. how restrictive the civil society laws are) and promotes trust in civil society organizations (i.e. through legal provisions that impose transparency and internal governance requirements)

- Impact:
 - Economic contribution of civil society (paid and volunteer equivalent wages) as a share of the GDP
 - Share of the total employment

- Contribution to advocacy and expression as a share of the adult population working on expressive activities (e.g. advocacy; culture; recreation)
- Share of the adult population that is member of a civil society organization
- Degree to which civil society performs key roles (i.e. service provision; innovation, advocacy; community-building; value guardianship)

This index provides valuable insights on important dimensions of civil society. In particular, the capacity and sustainability dimensions capture the structural capacity of civil society. However, none of the dimensions capture the cultural aspect (although it is marginally present in some capacity and impact indicators).

The CIVICUS Civil Society Index of the 'state of civil society' (CSI) offers a more comprehensive conceptual framework to evaluate the strength of a country's civil society. It is articulated around four dimensions: Structure; values; environment and impact (Heinrich 2004, 17-22). The structure and values dimensions capture the strength of a civil society, whereas the environment gauges the extent to which the environmental conditions are favorable to the development of a strong civil society.

The indicators through which the Civil Society Index gauges the strength of a civil society are:

- Structure:
 - Breadth of citizen participation: percentage of citizens that: undertake political actions, donate to charity, belong to a Civil Society Organization (CSO), do volunteer work and participate in community activities.

- Depth of citizen participation: how people give to charity, how much volunteer work they do and to how many different CSOs they belong.
 - Diversity within civil society: participation of women, minorities and other social groups in CSO.
 - Leadership and membership, which also looks at the geographical representation.
 - Level of organization: existence and effectiveness of CSO umbrella bodies, efforts to self-regulate, the level of support infrastructure and international linkages.
 - Inter-relations: extent to which diverse actors communicate and co-operate with one another.
 - Resources: financial, human and technological resources.
- Values:
 - Democracy: Extent to which civil society organizations practice internal democracy (e.g. in selecting leaders and making decisions) and how actively they are involved in promoting democracy at a societal level.
 - Transparency: Corruption and financial transparency in civil society, as well as civil society actions to promote transparency at a societal level.
 - Tolerance: Balance between tolerant and intolerant forces within civil society as well as the extent to which civil society is engaged in promoting tolerance within society at large.
 - Non-violence: Presence of violent forces within civil society as well as civil society's efforts to promote non-violence at the individual, household and societal level.

- Gender equality: Gender-equitable practices within CSOs as well as civil society actions to promote gender equity at the societal level.
- Poverty eradication: Degree of engagement in addressing poverty issues and promoting pro-poor policies.
- Environmental sustainability: Degree of engagement in promoting environmental sustainability.

b. What is a civic political culture?

As mentioned earlier, the concept of a civic culture was coined by Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba to refer to the type of individual attitudes towards the political system that underlie viable and effective democratic government. More specifically, in this research I understand a civic culture as a political culture that underpins and supports inclusive politics, participatory governance and better government performance.

While these are beyond the scope of my research, it is useful to clarify succinctly what these three aspects of democracy mean. Inclusive politics is intended here as the opportunity given to all segments of society to access politics and to be included in the state's distribution of goods and services. Participatory governance is the active participation of citizens in the governmental process (Fisher 2012, 457) (e.g. public discussion, deliberation and voting). Government performance is understood as the degree of responsiveness, effectiveness, and efficiency through which state authorities respond to public needs and demands.

Since Almond and Verba's seminal work on the political culture basis of democratic citizenship, several models of civic culture have emerged. The two most prominent models are Almond and Verba's original allegiant model of a civic culture, and Inglehart, Dalton and Welzel's more recent assertive civic culture model.

According to Almond, Verba and Pye's *civic culture* model, democratic governance was sustained by an allegiant political culture, based on the acceptance of the state's authority, the support of government and its institutions, and a limited level of political participation. In their words, a civic culture entailed "a balanced political culture in which political activity, involvement, and rationality exist but are balanced by passivity, traditionality, and commitment to parochial values" (Almond and Verba 1963, 31-32).

The work of Inglehart (1977; 1990), Dalton (1977; 1999), and Welzel (2006; 2013) and many others, however, showed that empirical data collected across dozens of nations around the world supported a quite different model of democratic citizenship, which they termed *assertive civic culture*. In *The Civic Culture Transformed*, Dalton and Welzel (2014) explain how, in contemporary democracies, allegiant attitudes have given way to assertive, self-expressive ones. According to this model, the emergence of civil society and democracy are linked to what Inglehart (1990) broadly refers to as post-materialist values and Welzel (2013) as emancipatory values. These rest on the desire to participate in the political decision-making process; the propensity to engage in elite-challenging actions; a higher level of interpersonal trust, openness and tolerance; and a greater participation in the public space (Inglehart 1990, 74-5; Welzel 2013, 63; Dalton and Welzel 2014, 20). The same *assertive civic culture* model is found in Klingemann's dissatisfied

democrats (1999; 2014), Norris' critical citizens (1999) and Dalton's engaged citizens (2009).⁴⁰

I ground my research on Inglehart, Dalton, and Welzel's *assertive* model of civic culture, accepting as a premise that the set of attitudes and behaviors that compose it are conducive to inclusive politics, participatory governance and better government performance. In line with this statement, the relative presence of these attitudes and behaviors among members of voluntary associations (compared to non-members), determines the *civil* nature of the organized society that voluntary associations represent (aka civil society). It is based on this premise that in the next chapters I show how voluntary associations that emerged in post-Gadhafi Libya constitute a *civil* society.

Drawing from the extensive literature on the assertive model of civic culture, I identified eight key traits that capture its most salient aspects, which I defined in the previous chapter. I now explain how they relate to civic engagement and why they are conducive to inclusive politics, better government performance, and participatory governance.

It should be noted that these attitudes and behaviors, albeit commonly attributed to Western liberal democracies, are not bound to a specific culture. As Welzel (2013) showed by drawing from empirical data from ninety-five societies, trust, tolerance, openness, and political engagement, which he refers to as emancipative values, are not a Western-bound concept.⁴¹

⁴⁰ As highlighted by Dalton and Welzel (2014, 10).

⁴¹ See also Welzel's discussion on the culture-invariant correlation between freedom and life satisfaction (2013, 42-3).

Identity

Both the strength of one's own sense of social identity (how strong the sentiment is) and the level of one's own primary social identity (the level of identity with which one identifies primarily), which I introduced in the previous chapter, have an important impact on civic engagement, participation in politics and government performance. Of these, the impact of the latter deserves further attention. In particular, since the national identity defines who the accepted participants in the political process are, a strong communal sense of identity does not have the same impact on political participation in a country's democratic politics, as a strong sense of national identity does.

In particular, the definition of a national identity has a strong influence on determining who is considered an accepted participant in the political process. Individuals may feel compelled to engage in national politics if they feel that they belong to the nation. Thus, a strong sense of national identity (as primary identity) will tend to have a greater impact on political participation in a country's democratic politics than a strong sense of communal identity (Rustow 1970, 360-3).

A shared national identity binds people together through a sense of solidarity based on shared elements, such as language, culture, ethnicity, descent, history, and the belief in a common destiny. Communitarian attitudes follow the same process of identification, but along feelings associated with kinship. This is typically a much narrower level of identification, which strengthens the identity boundary around one's own community (e.g. city, tribe, family). This is not to say that a strong communal identity is harmful to civic engagement or political participation, quite the contrary. A strong identification with fellow community members helps promote civic engagement and solidarity, and can help foster reciprocity and facilitate collective action with fellow community members. These

attitudes and behaviors can also be beneficial to the members of the broader group that contains the community, such as the nation. For instance, Gutmann notes that “Women who mobilize for equal pay for equal work also are likely to be among the same people who avidly support a living wage for all workers” (2003, 19). The same can be said of the Amazigh (aka Berber) minority population in Libya, which advocates for the recognition and protection of their language and culture. Other minority groups would benefit from enshrining the principle of minority rights in the proposed Libyan Constitution and this would advance the overall respect of citizen’s rights and the advancement of the principles of tolerance and pluralism.

However, these beneficial effects are not always present. The potential harm of group identification on democratic politics depends on whether identification entails putting considerations of group identity above considerations of justice (Gutmann 2003, 16). At the level of a nation and the concentric circles of communal identification it contains, communal identity can pose a problem to the development of democratic politics when this level of social identity trumps broader levels of social identity, such as the identification with fellow nationals. In other words, democratic governance cannot function if citizens support laws in theory but protect the author of a crime if he is a member of their tribe or city. The result may be parochialism and the pursuit of particular interests to the detriment of collective ones.

Thus, a national sense of identity (coexisting with, but not constrained or conditional upon other communal identities) is conducive to inclusive politics, participatory governance and better government performance. The emergence of a national identity overriding communal identities allows the structures of allegiance to slowly expand from family,

tribe, and city to the state. This process helps citizens to transcend factionalism and seek to implement national policies, as discussed by Smith (1997, 480) and other scholars.⁴²

In light of this premise, and for the purpose of our analysis, it is useful to introduce the concept of primary “radius of identity”, which parallels that of the “radius of trust” developed by Harrison (1985, 7-8) and used by Fukuyama. (1999) and Welch et al. (2007). The primary radius of identity is the circle of people with whom an individual identifies *primarily*, that is the group with whom an individual will ultimately identify if forced to choose among the multiple group identities that he possesses. In reality, social identities are neither fixed in time and space nor clearly ordered in the mind of individuals, however, this concept is useful as a theoretical paradigm that captures overall attitudes.

Based on this concept, my working assumption is that the larger the primary radius of identity of individuals, the greater is the freedom they can enjoy to affiliate with other individuals with whom they share other interests, without a risk of colliding with their identity group. This freedom to associate granted by a larger primary identity radius helps foster a pluralistic and inclusive conception of national identity that can ultimately accommodate ethnic, cultural, and religious differences. This is the transition from a *Gemeinschaft* (i.e. a “community” or “communal society”) to a *Gesellschaft* (i.e. a “society” or “associational society”) to adopt the terms coined by Tönnies (1887), then used by Max Weber (1922) as ideal types to explain the historical social change taking place in modern societies where social reality transitions from tribal groups to nation-states.

⁴² Cited in Schildkraut (2011, 95), who further details the reasons that “liberal nationalists” invoke for asserting the importance of a share sense of national identity for the development of democratic politics (96).

The usefulness accorded to a stronger sense of national belonging versus communal belonging, and the importance granted to the concept of primary social identity radius, does not imply that they deserve any absolute normative value. Their importance is to be understood only in relations to a large state-building endeavor, such as the one facing Libyans. Furthermore, I am not advocating here for the higher value of a state-centric governance system in general, or for Libya, which is a highly valuable question to debate – but one that resides beyond the scope of this research. The argument here is that a sense of national identity, that is the sentiment of a people to belong to a community called “Libya” in this case, is an important element in the process of forging a democratic polity. Dankwart Rustow (1970, 360) goes as far as identifying this as a necessary condition for democratization and one that greatly affects its entire process.⁴³

However, history also offers scores of examples of the harmful effects of a strong nationalism. A strong sense of national belonging goes along equally well with civic engagement and with xenophobia. Therefore, besides a quantitative assessment of the radius and intensity of identity, it is important to make a final, qualitative distinction about the underlying mechanisms of identification. As Smith (1991) defined and Hjerem (1998) supported empirically, there are two distinct yet overlapping criteria that foster one’s sense of national identity: civic and ethnic. Civic national sentiments are based on the recognition of common rules and principles, on the legitimacy accorded to national institutions and thus are largely elective, freely espoused and based on the performance

⁴³ In his words, “The difficulty that democracy finds in resolving issues of community emphasizes the importance of national unity as the 'background condition of the democratization process. The hardest struggles in a democracy are those against the birth defects of the political community.” Rustow (1970, 360).

of these institutions. Ethnic national sentiments are grounded on common culture, ancestry, place of birth and other ascriptive criteria.

Civic nationalism is certainly preferable to ethnic nationalism, and Hjern shows that “having a civic national identity [...] actually decreases the risk of having xenophobic attitudes” (1998, 341). But how can the two be distinguished? It would be fair to expect that a civic sense of national pride would be lower in a country whose government and institutions are not functioning well, whereas an ethnic sense of national pride would not be as affected. If this is true, in countries where state institutions are failing to fulfil people’s expectations, individuals with a predominantly civic sense of identity would be less proud of their nationality. In other words, in countries with poor performances, civic-minded individuals, such as active members of voluntary associations, should display a lower level of national pride than the average.

This apparent contradiction among individuals who possess a civic sense of national identity is also consistent with the assertive model of democratic citizenship that characterizes modern, emancipated democratic citizens, according to Inglehart, Dalton, Welzel and others, in opposition to the allegiant democratic citizen purported by Almond, Verba and Pye. In other words, modern, assertive, emancipated democratic citizens are less likely to be blindly proud of their country and less willing to fight for it, while still identifying with it. Empirically, Bi Puranen shows that willingness to fight for one’s country diminishes with “the rising emancipatory spirit of an assertive political culture.” (Puranen 2014, 261)

Trust

Trust helps overcome the individualistic rational choice of opportunism that lays at the center of the collective action problem: if I do good onto you and you do not, I lose and you gain. This is why trust is considered central to the development of a civic community (Almond and Verba, 1963, 356-7; Putnam et al. 1993, 167; Fennema and Tillie 2001, 33).

When de Tocqueville famously elaborates on the development of democracy in America, trust emerges as an important socio-political attitude, trust appears to be “probably the moral orientation that most needs to be diffused among the people if the republican society is to be maintained” (Tocqueville et al. 1972, 59, cited in Putnam et al. 1993).

The level (or “strength”) and the radius of trust are distinctive but interactive components of trust. They each have an important impact on social and political behaviors. The level of trust contributes to determining how easy it is for an individual to cooperate with other individuals, whereas the radius of trust dictates how far this benefit extends. Overall, trust determines the facility of acting together, which in turn has direct implications for civic and political engagement, as argued in a vast literature on civic culture and social capital (Almond and Verba 1963; Inglehart 1988; Putnam 1995, 2000; Verba et al. 1995; Brehm and Rahn 1997; Hall 1999).

Tolerance

Tolerance is an important pre-requisite for pluralism, inclusive politics and broad participation in governance. However, Gibson stresses that the relationship between tolerance and democracy may not be entirely linear: “At very high levels of tolerance, for instance, an increment in tolerance may not produce an increment in democracy, and

indeed some even believe that at extreme levels (allowing all activities, by every conceivable idea), tolerance can undermine democracy” (Gibson and Bingham, 1985 cited in Gibson 2006, 23). Nonetheless, in a country like Libya that is at an early stage of a democratic transition, where tolerance levels are low, it is fair to assume that more tolerance is conducive to more inclusive politics.

The relationship between tolerance and membership in voluntary associations is a little more complicated, as epitomized by the conflicting results of empirical studies. In trying to explain involvement in voluntary associations across 13 European countries, Badescu and Neller (in Van Deth et al. (2007, 158)) find that “social tolerance shows non-significant effects [on involvement in associations] in the majority of cases”, and Stolle and Rochon (1998, 61) do not find any correlation between tolerance and membership in associations. Conversely, Cigler and Joslyn (2002, 20) find that there is a strong positive relationship between membership in associations and political tolerance, although these findings vary depending on the type of association. Uvin (1998, 168) helps cast some light on these conflicting findings by arguing that “NGOs do not promote pluralism and tolerance in society if they do not seek to do so.”

In light of the correlation between tolerance and democratic governance, and the conflicting findings on the correlation between tolerance and membership in associations, it is all the more relevant to include this attitude among the characteristics to be observed in this study.

Religiosity

Empirical studies on the relationship between religiosity, membership in voluntary associations and democracy are not conclusive (Ebaugh and Haney 1978; Jelen 1984; Spicer 1994; Scheepers and Van Der Slik 1998, cited in Scheepers et al. 2002, 158). For instance, Tessler (2002) find no statistically significant correlation between personal religiosity and attitudes towards democracy. Several other scholars instead bring forth empirical evidence showing that various measures of religiosity correlate negatively with democratic attitudes (Meyer, Rizzo and Ali 2007; Moaddel 2006; and Norris and Inglehart 2012, cited in Spierings 2014, 431). Using the data from the World Values Survey (1995-2007) for in 83 countries, including twenty Muslim-plurality societies, Norris (2011, 11 and 17) finds “the more faithful [are] less approving of democracy and secularism, as well as secular democracy” and argues that this effect operates primarily at the micro-level, which is the level of analysis of this research.

I argue that these discrepancies are related to the use of bad indicators for the variables of interest and to the problem of non-exchangeability of measures across different national contexts rather than to the absence of a strong and significant correlation between religiosity and democratic attitudes and behaviors. More specifically, many empirical studies utilize church or mosque attendance as an indicator of religious piety, whereas it is often nothing more than an indication of social conformity. For the outcome variable, trust or confidence in democratic institutions is a very poor measure of pro-democratic attitudes, and as Fails and Pierce (2010) show, there is no empirical support linking levels of democratic legitimacy to the level, stability, and deepening of democracy. Intuitively, it is logical that the support that citizens grant to democratic institutions varies according to the stage of democratic development and depends on the specific

performance of key institutions at the time of survey (Bratton and Mattes 2001; Jamal and Tessler 2008). This argument is supported by Inglehart and Welzel (2005) who bring forth a large body of empirical evidence to show that support for democracy is not correlated with democracy and democratic development.

Overall, I retain the argument empirically supported by Welzel et al. which purports that strong religiousness is negatively linked with effective democratic development and individual emancipation (2003, 355).

Support for gender equality

The attitude towards women is another important individual-level attitude for the development and well-being of participatory governance. Gender equality and women's rights are not marginal principles or simply parts of a feminist cause. It is a principle of equality towards half of the population that lies at the heart of human rights, and affects the entire body of the nation.

Attitudes towards gender equality also affect the actual development of civic and political participation, which Dahl (1971; 1989) lists as one of the three key principles undergirding liberal democracies (which he refers to as "polyarchies"), along with contestation and human rights.⁴⁴ Granting the same level of opportunities, room for participation in the public life and protection from discrimination to women is a question of broadening the effective participation in the democratic life to half of a nation's constituency. Thus, discrimination against women is a self-inflicted wound on development and growth,

⁴⁴ Cited in Norris (2011, 3).

which is particularly harmful in a country that is short on human resources while it is striving to carry forward a momentous social, political and economic transition.

In his cross-national examination of the relationship between Islam and regime type, Fish (2002, 5) shows a correlation between a lower condition of women in society (e.g. literacy gap; sex ratio; women in government; gender empowerment) and authoritarianism. Since the condition of women in society can be largely attributed to the prevalent individual attitudes towards gender equality, a tentative connection can be argued to exist between the latter and the development of inclusive politics and the performance of democratic governance (Sharabi 1988; Hammoudi 1993, 1997; Landes 1999; cited in Fish 2002, 30).

In sum, I accept as a premise that a greater support for gender equality in emerging Muslim-majority countries is another element of a civic culture, which is conducive to more inclusive politics.

Political engagement

Broad political engagement is important for the good functioning of democratic governance (Bellah et al. 1992, 5-6). It is the means through which citizens grant their consent, which is the basis for the democratic legitimacy of decision-makers. It is also the mechanism through which citizens can demand accountability from their rulers. Furthermore, popular involvement in the exercise of power, which begins necessarily with popular engagement, can help maintain stability and order (McClosky 1968, 257).

In post-Gadhafi Libya, political engagement has exercised a modest and steadily decreasing influence on the action of government. Why do some Libyans engage in voting, public protests, or strikes in spite of the real dangers they run, when they are aware of

the modest impact they will have on politics? Besides the immediate impact on politics, these public political actions are a way to express their beliefs and their identity, and to signal them to other Libyans.

The fact that political institutions do not emerge in the short to medium term is not a sign that these actions have no impact. As Hamid Dabashi argues: “The longer these revolutions take to unfold, the more enduring, grass-roots based, and definitive will be their emotive, symbolic, and institutional consequences” (2012, 6, cited in Jamshidi 2013, 27).

Political engagement and civic participation are closely linked (Almond and Verba 1963; Verba and Nie 1972; Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995), as illustrated by a number of empirical studies, which provide evidence to support these claims (Erickson and Nosanchuk 1990; Putnam et al. 1993; Stolle and Rochon 1998; Seligson 1999; Cassel 1999; McClurg 2003).

Information consumption

Intuitively, it appears obvious that more informed individuals make better decisions than their less informed peers (Ashworth and De Mesquita 2014, 565; and Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996, 221–24) and that an “enlightened understanding” of the social reality and of the policy options available to address it is a basic requirement for the good performance of a democratic systems of governance (Dahl and Shapiro 2015, 37 and 97). More specifically, political knowledge is often pointed out as having a powerful influence on voter turnout; the level of tolerance (Barabas et al. 2014, 840); the level of acceptance

of democratic principles (Galston 2001); and the level of accountability to which public officials are held by citizens (Prior and Lupia 2008, 169).

Empirical studies appear to confirm these general “social learning” assertions (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996, 226–27; Brehm and Rahn 1997, 1010). However, empirical findings diverge according to the type of media consumed. Brehm and Rahn (1997) and Hall (1999) do not find evidence of a positive correlation between time spent in front of the television and the level of participation in voluntary associations, whereas time spent reading newspapers is found to foster trust and participation and is considered to be a more reliable sign of interest in community affairs (Putnam et al. 1993, 92).

Overall, it is hard to evaluate the impact of information consumption for each type of medium without more detailed information. In fact, to varying degrees, each source of information can be accessed to gather news about politics or society, but it can also be used for entertainment, or in the case of internet and cell phones, as a means of communication. And even at a given level of media consumption, the type of channel accessed (e.g. local, national or international; politically partisan or not, religiously open or narrow) has a great influence on the type of attitudes and behaviors that are fostered. The radio station listened to, the television channels and programs watched, the type of newspapers read and the type of internet websites visited may help build or erode general trust, tolerance, civic awareness and engagement, political knowledge and participation.

Furthermore, the media consumers could seek out information exclusively from those partisan or communal domestic outlets that may reinforce the narrow and biased views already prevalent in closed circles. Conversely, other users could access a broad palette of media outlets, both domestic and international, which may help broaden the

understanding of realities and peoples outside of the familiar circles. In turn, the greater knowledge and understanding of out-group members, within and outside Libya can help foster general trust, tolerance, and religious openness.

Since most surveys do not go into this level of details when asking respondents about their access to information, what is available is an overall indication of the level of information consumption in terms of the variety of media consulted and the frequency of use. Notwithstanding the distinctions and caveats just highlighted about the type of channels consulted, I espouse the argument that a higher level of information consumption and the exposure to a larger number of information outlets foster higher levels of civic engagement and political participation.

Active use of media

The development of social media and the widespread access to internet-capable mobile phones have enabled new forms of mobilization and organization of collective actions, as the popular uprisings of 2011 in the Middle-East and North Africa and other movements (such as “Occupy Wall Street” in the US and “Indignados” in Spain) have shown. More specifically, a number of scholars have documented how these platform of communication played an important role in the 2011 uprisings across the MENA region (Howard et al. 2011; Eltantawy 2011; Khondker 2011; and Gerbaudo 2012).

This newly available access to information, and to platform of communications such as social media has another type of impact - one that is more important than the mere instrumental role they played in facilitating mobilization and coordination of actions. They have produced a cognitive shift, particularly among the youth who has embraced these

new media more extensively. It is a shift from a passive dissatisfied individual who does not identify with her surroundings, to an active citizen who joins like-minded individuals in defining a new national identity. As I will elaborate more extensively in the concluding chapter, this process constitutes a promising explanatory avenue for the emergence of voluntary associations in post-Gadhafi Libya.

Activists who engage in discussions and share information and analyses about the reality that surrounds them build an infrastructure of shared meanings and perceptions which form a common narrative (Johnston and Klandermans, 1995). As discussed previously, the belief in a common narrative is a constitutive element of a collective identity. The combined effect of the availability of platforms of communication and the development of a sense of collective identification help foster public engagement and a sense of ownership towards politics and society.

Furthermore, some of these platforms cut across boundaries that divide groups along ascriptive ties (e.g. tribal, ethnic) or ideological leanings (e.g. Islamists versus non-Islamists). In a highly divided and violent society such as Libya's, opportunities for the exchange of information and for dialogue between members of different groups are extremely valuable for the maintenance of peace and stability and to facilitate the difficult task of the public administration. Through an empirical study of ethnic violence in India, Varshney (2001, 375) highlighted the important role played by inter-communal platform of communication in providing information to local administrations, and facilitating communication between members of opposing factions.

Overall, both information and communication also help local authorities in their efforts to provide peace, stability, and effective administration.

c. What fosters a strong civil society?

It is readily apparent that the indicators that measure the strength of a civil society in the values dimension are very similar to the eight traits of a civic culture that I defined in the previous chapter. Therefore, the conditions that foster a strong civil society in its structural and cultural dimensions, include the conditions that help develop a civic culture.

This should not be a surprise, given that a civic culture is defined as the political culture that underlies a viable and effective democratic government. And a key criterion that determines the strength of a civil society is the extent to which it possesses attitudes and values that support the development and effective functioning of an equitable democracy. Thus, in cultural terms, a strong civil society is one that possesses a civic political culture.

Scholars of comparative politics have developed an extensive body of theoretical literature and empirical research to identify the factors that lead to the development of civil society and other democratic institutions. In this section I draw from the reviews conducted by Heinrich (2004, 39-43; 2010, 137-189) and Bailer et al. (2008, 238-41) to provide a brief overview and operationalization of the main contending theories that seek to explain the development of a strong civil society. Thus, for each theoretical perspective, I list the key corresponding quantitative indicators, largely drawn from the Quality of Government Dataset, which is a comprehensive compilation of the most common and authoritative international datasets about social, political and economic indicators (Teorell 2016).

The factors that, according to the major contending theories on the subject, potentially foster a strong civil society can be grouped into four categories: Socioeconomic factors;

socio-cultural factors; political institutions; and international influence. Empirical research conducted in dozens of countries around the world have provided contradicting evidence for the merit of each one of these factors (See *inter alia* Brehm and Rahn 1997; Tsutsui and Wotipka 2004; Anderson and Paskeviciute 2006; Bailer et al. 2007; Heinrich 2010; Inglehart and Welzel 2010; Schofer and Longhofer 2011). It is more likely that the development of a strong civil society depends on a combination of them.

1. Socioeconomic factors.

In his seminal 1959 article *Some Social Requisites of Democracy*, Seymour Martin Lipset argues that socio-economic development factors, such as “industrialization, urbanization, wealth, and education” promote democratic development (1959, 80). Although Lipset points out the important influence of several other factors (1959, 105), and highlights that economic development is not a sufficient condition to the development of democratic institutions,⁴⁵ he is often considered the key proponent of this theoretical perspective. The rationale of this argument is that better educated and economically secure individuals are more likely to engage in voluntary associations (Lipset 1994, 12-14). Other scholars also insist on the importance of economic equality for the development of a strong voluntary associational life (Alesina and La Ferrara 1999; La Ferrara 2002; Costa and Kahn, 2003). Based on this literature, I selected the following series of indicators to assess the extent to which socio-economic conditions are favorable for the development of a strong civil society:

⁴⁵ Lipset points out that “Unfortunately, as has been indicated above, this conclusion does not justify the optimistic liberal's hope that an increase in wealth, in the size of the middle class, in education, and other related factors will necessarily mean the spread of democracy or the stabilizing of democracy.” (1959, 103).

- GDP per capita
- Adult literacy rate
- Poverty and economic vitality
- Level of youth unemployment and total unemployment
- Time required to start a business
- Infant mortality rate
- Number of physicians per 1,000 people
- Life expectancy at birth
- Level of urbanization
- Population density

2. Socio-cultural factors

Another theoretical strand focuses on the influence of a nation's social make-up, cultural traditions and political attitudes. The focus on socio-cultural factors can be further divided in structural and cultural approaches. The former highlights the largely negative influence of social heterogeneity, that is the degree of fractionalization of society (e.g. religious, ethnic, linguistic) on civic engagement (Rotolo 2000; Anderson and Paskeviciute 2006).

Other scholars insist on the importance of the cultural dimension. One approach, championed by Huntington, argues that the civilizational area to which people belong determine how easy it is for a civil society to emerge and thrive (1993). I do not expand on the geo-cultural perspective according to which, on the basis of their religious culture, some civilizations, such as Islam and Hinduism, are less predisposed to the emergence of a civil society (Huntington 1996).

Other scholars argue that voluntary associations are a result, and an expression of the surrounding cultural *milieu*. This argument rests on the interplay between the national and the individual (or small group) levels of analysis. In other words, it rests on the collective sequence proposition discussed previously, according to which political attitudes and behaviors change collectively, and what matters for the development of a civil society is the predominant political culture.

Seibel argues that the nonprofit sector is "embedded" in its social, political, and economic environment (1990, 46-7), which has a strong influence in determining the nature of nonprofit associations and the predominant role they play towards society and the state. Welzel et al. argue that a more civic culture leads people to more collective action (2005: 141). Overall, according to this theoretical perspective, what matters for the emergence of a strong civil society among a people is the predominant political culture – the more civic a nation's political culture is, the more likely it is that a strong civil society will emerge (Inglehart 1988, 1995, 1997; Welzel 2013; Dalton and Welzel 2014). In order to quantify the degree to which a nation possesses a civic political culture, I utilize the eight traits I defined in the previous chapter.

Thus, the indicators for this theoretical approach are:

- Level of fractionalization (ethnic, religious, and linguistic)
- Predominant political culture (i.e. strength of the national Identity relatively to the communal one; general, unspecified trust; tolerance; religious piety and religious openness; support for gender equality; political engagement; information consumption; and active use of media)

Unlike Heinrich (2010, 156), I do not identify Welzel's Human Empowerment theory as a distinct and separate explanatory avenue. This theory is an elaborate and cogent

combination of modernization and political culture theories. According to the human empowerment model, democratic institutions such as civil society emerge as the result of a sequential and interconnected process of modernization, which provides individuals with “action resources”, and the development of “emancipatory values”, that is a more civic political culture (Welzel et al. 2005, 141). Therefore, although this theory deserves a large conceptual attention, it does not operationally translate into distinct predictive indicators beyond those of the two previous theories.

3. Political institutions

A series of theoretical approaches to explaining the development of civil society focus on the influence of public institutions. These are further distinguished between those who focus on the protracted and path-dependent influence of institutions over time (Steinmo and Thelen 1992), and those who focus on the influence of the current political environment (Linz and Stepan 1996). The former, known as Historical Institutionalism, insists on the profound and pervasive influence of state institutions over time, particularly in the extent to which they allow behaviors that are at the base of voluntary associational life, such as freedom of expression and freedom of association. Badescu et al. highlight that the level of historical experience with autonomous voluntary associations has a direct impact on the strength of civil society:(2004) “We expect that the shorter the tradition of autonomous voluntary associations in a society, the more likely it is that activity will be motivated primarily by private and individual rather than public and collective ends” (Badescu and Neller 2007, 165-6).

Therefore, operationally, this factor is measured by the previous regime type (ranging from totalitarianism to democracy), and by the extent to which a country has had a prior experience with democracy and voluntary associations:

- Previous regime type and effectiveness
- Prior experience with voluntary associations

Another strand of historical institutionalism is the Social Origins theory that derives from Barrington Moore's *Social Origins of Democracy and Dictatorship* (Moore 1966). Salamon and Anheier (1998) developed this approach by highlighting the importance of the relationship between social classes during the processes of modernization and state-formation. The interplay of these social forces at critical historical junctures gives way to the development of one of several types of regime (ranging from Social democratic to statist), which, in turn, determines the degrees of welfare spending and size of the nonprofit sector (Salamon and Anheier 1998, 228). I do not further elaborate this theoretical perspective given that it does not seem to be readily applicable to the North African countries that underwent popular uprisings. One reason is that it would require the complicated categorization of North African regimes in the Western-developed ordinal typology laid out by Salamon and Anheier. Moreover, some of these countries are still undergoing dramatic changes that make it very difficult to gauge the type of regime that may be unfolding.

Those who focus on the role of current political institutions highlight the influence that they exercise on the ability to create and operate voluntary associations (Kitschelt 1986; Tarrow 1994; Hadenius and Uggla 1996). Therefore, what matters is the quality of democratic institutions, the effectiveness of the state, and the extent of development of the rule of law - particularly in terms of the protection of the freedom of speech and of

the freedom of association. This argument rests on a direction of causality that is opposite to the one on which the very definition of the strength of civil society is based. Although this results in a circular argument, the reality is that democratic institutions and civil society are mutually reinforcing phenomena.

The State Fragility Index (Marshall and Cole 2014),⁴⁶ Freedom House,⁴⁷ and Transparency International⁴⁸ provide several measures of key indicators for these factors:

- State's level of fragility
- Electoral Process
- Political Pluralism and Participation
- Functioning of Government
- Freedom of Expression and Belief
- Associational and Organizational Rights
- Rule of Law
- Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights
- Level of corruption

4. International influence

An increasingly broad theoretical approach focuses on the cultural, economic and political influence that the international sphere, referred to as the *world society* (Powell and

⁴⁶ Available from <http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscrdata.html>

⁴⁷ Available from <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world-aggregate-and-subcategory-scores>

⁴⁸ Available from <http://www.transparency.org/cpi2012/results>

DiMaggio 1991; Meyer et al. 1997, 145) and the *international social system* (Tvedt 2002, 366) exercises over the domestic sphere. This approach, known as World Society theory, is championed, among others, by Schofer and Longhofer who argue that “world society plays a powerful role in supporting and empowering domestic associational activity worldwide” (2011, 540). The proponents of this theory focus on processes of diffusion and adaptation of cultural frames and institutional models. According to this theoretical approach, institutions undergo a process of global homogenization by imitation, known as *isomorphism* (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Tsutsui and Wotipka 2004; Monaci and Caselli 2005). Similarly, at the cultural level, social practices and beliefs are subjected to a foreign-driven change through a process of cultural diffusion, notably of *systems of practice*, such as patterns of civil and political participation, and of *normative structures* that inform them, such as ideas, values and beliefs (Levitt 1998, 933-5).

The major driver of the international influence on the domestic civil society sphere is international aid, which Tvedt refers to as the Donor-States-NGO (DOSTANGO) system (2002, 364). If we espouse Adam Smith’s conception of human beings as selfish advantage-seeking individuals,⁴⁹ the large presence of international donors create powerful social and economic incentives that push individuals to create or join voluntary associations.

However, other powerful international drivers are linked to the mobility of individuals (e.g. diaspora, migrants) and to modern information technology (i.e. internet, mobile

⁴⁹ “Every individual is continually exerting himself to find out the most advantageous employment for whatever capital he can command. It is his own advantage, indeed, and not that of the society, which he has in view.” Smith (2005, 362).

phones) that allow them to establish trans-national connections between receiving- and sending-country communities (Levitt 1998, 926).

Operationally, the degree of influence that these factors may be able to exert can be measured through the following indicators:

- Internet penetration
- Amount of foreign aid received
- Share of the population that has spent time abroad
- Number of tourist visits
- Level of integration in the globalized world (economic, social, and political)

Chapter 4

Libya's context and liabilities

In this chapter, I describe the Libyan context and history along the criteria identified in the previous chapter, in order to place Libyan voluntary associations in the *milieu* in which they emerged. I explain why the social, economic and political conditions that characterize Libyan history and the post-Gadhafi environment are not favorable to the development of a strong civil society, and why international influence and support cannot explain the emergence of voluntary associations in Libya.

As I explained in chapter 2, associationalism is not a single, universal phenomenon. As Capoccia and Ziblatt argue: "Different causal logics may be at work not only in different countries but also in different phases of the process of democratization within the same country (Hall, 2003)" (2010, 936). This argument about the development of democracy applies to the emergence of a strong civil society, which is one of its key pillars. At the same time, cross-national comparisons help get a better sense of the nature and importance of national characteristics to the extent that they resemble or differ from other countries'. In order to appreciate and compare the conditions under which Libyan voluntary associations have emerged, I have chosen to compare Libya to the other countries in North Africa. Historically, these offer similar social, religious and political institutions, and at the same time they have had different successes with the

development of civil society and democracy. Furthermore, this region was bound together by the wave of uprisings in 2011.

Given that I observed and measured voluntary associations in 2013-2014, in this chapter I focus my analysis on the context present between 2011 and 2013, and on the recent history that shaped it. In fact, these are the circumstances under which voluntary associations appeared in Libya.

Overall, these geographical and temporal delimitations help us draw a useful backdrop of structural and conjunctural circumstances against which we can better evaluate voluntary associational life in post-Gadhafi Libya. Thus, I complement the description of the Libyan context with quantitative data about key social, economic and political characteristics of North African countries. For each concept, there are dozens of indicators. My intention is simply to provide some key quantitative reference and regional perspective for the arguments that I develop. Therefore, I only select one or two key indicators for each concept, which should not be taken as a sole and sufficient measure of it.

a. Socio-economic context

According to the perspective of those who argue that economic development is the key driver of democratization, better educated and economically secure individuals are more likely to engage in voluntary associations. The logic of the argument connects industrialization, urbanization, wealth, and education to the increase in the standard of living and the emergence of a middle class. In turn, these factors lead to a higher level of civic engagement, and to a stronger civil society.

When assessed on paper, in 2011 - the year of the revolution, Libya offered more favorable socio-economic conditions for the development of a civil society, compared to other North African countries.

While it is undeniable that Libya has been able to produce a higher GDP per capita compared to its North African neighbors, and that, as a consequence, Libyans have enjoyed a broader access to healthcare and education, the reality at the level of individual citizens has not reflected these national statistics. A more careful, micro-level analysis shows that these figures are misleading. Most Libyans were not really able to reap the benefits of the country's wealth, and enjoy a level of healthcare provision and education commensurate with the aggregated, key national statistics. As I will elaborate further, this was largely due to a high level of economic inequality and corruption.

Libya possesses the largest proven oil reserves, and the 4th largest proven gas reserves in Africa, on which its economy relies almost entirely. Referring to 2006, the World Bank estimated that this sector "represented 97 percent of exports of goods and non-factor services (76 percent of GDP), and 93 percent of government revenues" (World Bank, 2009, 4). Considering that the population was only 6.5 million in 2011, the large revenue generated by the energy sector explains why Libya had the largest GDP per capita (purchasing power parity) among the five North African countries – almost double the average in the region, excluding Libya (Table 4.1). Furthermore, owing to its large revenue from hydrocarbon resources and to the welfare policy adopted by the Gadhafi regime, when measured nationally, Libyans enjoyed better economic conditions than most of their North African neighbors. As Table 4.1 shows, in 2011 Libya had the most favorable composite indicator of poverty and economic decline; and a staggering 90 percent adult

literacy rate, compared to an average of 73.3 percent among other North African countries.

However, these favorable national statistics belied a much worse standard of living among the vast majority of Libyans. Although no data exist on the level of poverty and inequality in contemporary Libya, the CIA World Factbook estimates that about one-third of Libyans live at or below the national poverty line.⁵⁰ As the member of Mercy Corps team (an international Non-Governmental Organization) reported in March 2011, following an assessment in Eastern Libya: "A large part of the population is living without clean running water, working sewage systems and is struggling to meet basic daily needs" (The National 2011).

Despite its large Gross Domestic Product compared to its neighbors, Libya's wealth was concentrated in the hands of very few individuals. The hydrocarbon sector, on which it relied almost entirely, could not generate much employment. This explains why, in 2012, almost half of the Libyan population between the ages of 15 and 24 was unemployed, compared to an average of 29.6% among the rest of the countries in North Africa, and the total level of unemployment in 2011 was the second highest among North African countries, almost on par with Tunisia (Table 4.1). Another important cause of the high level of unemployment is the almost complete absence of a private economic sector. In 2012, the International Monetary Fund estimated that 80 percent of the Libyan labor force was employed in the public sector (IMF 2012). This large Libyan state bureaucracy is highly inefficient and the legal system has not been reformed to keep the pace of modernization. It is telling that, on average, it takes 35 days for a new business to

⁵⁰ Accessed Sept 1st, 2016. Available from <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ly.html>

complete the procedures required to begin operating legally in Libya, which is more than twice the time required on average among the rest of the countries in North Africa (Table 4.1).

In the health sector, key national indicators also place Libya among the best ranked in North Africa. The under-five mortality rate, which is the probability per 1,000 that a newborn baby will die before reaching age five, is 17.6 – a close second lowest rate in the North African region after Tunisia. Libya also has the second highest concentration of physicians per 1000 people, in North Africa, after Egypt (Table 4.1). However, the experience of ordinary Libyans tells a different story. Based on a 2001 survey of 887 individuals that a Libyan scholar conducted in Benghazi, only 0.7 percent of respondents expressed a positive opinion about the quality of health services, which was the lowest level of satisfaction among eleven types of service provisions they were asked about (Al-Werfalli 2011, 60). Al-Werfalli points out that the Libyan health sector was marred by entrenched corruption and mismanagement. Libya relied on foreign doctors and nurses, and some of the Libyan physicians bought their certification without having the qualifications.

Thus, despite the relatively high level of access to healthcare Libyans enjoyed compared to their neighbors, the quality was poor. Most of those who had the means, would travel to Tunisia, Jordan or Egypt to seek medical treatment (2011, 79). More than ten years later, this situation had not changed, based on the accounts of several Libyans that I interviewed across the country. The bad quality of the Libyan healthcare system may help explain why, despite the favorable national indicators presented above, Libyans had the second lowest life expectancy at birth in the North African region, after Egypt (Table 4.1).

Lastly, the impressive rate of adult literacy among Libyans seem to indicate a high caliber educational sector. However, as Al-Werfalli shows, only 0.8 percent of respondents to her 2001 survey in Benghazi expressed a positive opinion about the quality of education (Al-Werfalli 2011, 60). As she explains, corruption and mismanagement affected the educational sector as well. Moreover, the Gadhafi regime recognized its political importance as a prime tool for socialization to its ideology. Accordingly, it interfered regularly in the design of teaching curricula and in the administration of national education. For example, political science did not exist as an independent department in Libyan universities, and when the subject matter was taught, it focused entirely on the study of Gadhafi's Green Book, an inorganic collection of the leader's political thinking.

As a result, in 2011, one of the most authoritative reports on the competitiveness of states in the world ranked the quality of the Libyan educational system at the 138th place among 139 countries ranked, based on two surveys conducted by the World Economic Forum in 2009 and 2010 (The Africa Competitiveness Report 2011, 157). The same report ranked Libya 129th for Internet access in schools, and 134th for the availability of research and training services.

Table 4.1: 2011* socio-economic indicators for North African countries

	Morocco	Algeria	Tunisia	Libya	Egypt	Average (excl. Libya)
GDP per capita (purchasing-power-parity) (1)	5193	7305	9650	12686	6474	7156
Adult literacy rate (%) (2)	67.1	72.6	79.7	90.3	73.9	73.3
Poverty and Economic Decline (3)	6.0	5.2	5.0	4.6	6.5	5.7
Total unemployment (% total labor force) (4)	8.9	10.0	18.3	17.7	12.0	12.3
Youth unemployment (% total labor force) (5)	18.6	27.5	37.6	48.7	34.7	29.6
Time required to start a business (days) (6)	12	24	12	35	8	14.0
Infant mortality rate (under-5) (7)	31.9	26.6	16.5	17.6	27.9	25.7
Physicians (per 1,000 people) (8)	0.6	1.2	1.2	1.9	2.8	1.5
Life expectancy at birth (9)	73.0	74.1	74.3	71.7	70.5	73.0
Urban population (% of total) (10)	58.7	68.9	66.3	78.0	43.0	59.2
Population density (11)	72.9	15.4	68.7	3.6	84.2	60.3

* Except where indicated otherwise.

Note (1): Current international dollar. International Monetary Fund (2014)

Note (2): Population ages 15 years and older, both sexes. Source: World Bank (2015). Given the limited availability of data for these countries, entries refer to the following years: Morocco (2011); Algeria (2006); Tunisia (2011); Libya (2013); Egypt (2012). World Bank (2015)

Note (3): Composite index including economic deficit, government debt, unemployment, youth employment, purchasing power, GDP per capita, GDP growth, inflation. Scale from 1) Most stable; to 10) Most at-risk of collapse and violence. Messner et al. (2011).

Note (4): Share of labor force without work but available for, and seeking employment (modeled ILO estimate). World Bank (2015)

Note (5): Unemployment rate among individuals ages 15-24 (national estimate). Year 2012. World Bank (2015)

Note (6): # of calendar days needed to complete the procedures to legally operate a business. Year: 2012. World Bank (2015)

Note (7): Probability per 1,000 that a newborn baby will die before reaching age five. World Bank (2015)

Note (8): Year: 2010. World Bank (2015)

Note (9): Number of years a newborn infant would live if prevailing patterns of mortality at the time of its birth were to stay the same throughout its life. Year: 2012. World Bank (2015)

Note (10): People per sq. km of land area. World Bank (2015)

Note (11): Midyear population divided by land area in square kilometers. Counts all residents regardless of legal status or citizenship--except for non-permanently settled refugees. World Bank (2015)

The causes of the large discrepancies between nationally-aggregated data on socio-economic indicators, and the actual condition of Libyans are rooted at the political level.

The Gadhafi regime fell in the category that Weber called “sultanistic” (1978, 231),

whereby all powers are in the hands of the leader, who exercises it at his own discretion (232). As Weber explains, this complete arbitrariness destroys the very bases on which economic activities can be rationalized (238).⁵¹ Few dictatorial regimes in the world could compare with the level of mercurial arbitrariness that characterized Gadhafi's rule.

Gadhafi exercised power through an informal governance system centered on him, and composed of his relatives, and a small handful of highly trusted individuals. Meanwhile the official state bureaucracy was highly ineffective and based on "wasta" (i.e. a system of favoritism through personal connections) rather than on rules. There are two main consequences of the sultanistic nature of the Gadhafi regime that are particularly deleterious for the development of socio-economic conditions: the atrophy of the private economic sector; and corruption.

The Libyan private sector, which was already small at the time of the 1969 military coup that led Muammar Gadhafi to power, was practically suppressed in 1978, when the regime first encouraged workers to take over the companies for which they worked, and then outlawed rental payments for properties, declaring from one day to the next that tenants were the owners of the property they had been renting (al-Werfalli, 41). In 1993, the regime went as far as destroying the property registries.

Confronted with its poor socio-economic performances, the Gadhafi regime attempted to liberalize the Libyan economy several times. These efforts, known in Arabic under the name *infitah*, were initiated in 1987, 1990, and 2003 (Vandewalle 2012, 160-5 and 183-94). However, they all failed, due to the impossibility of reforming a regime characterized

⁵¹ Specifically, according to Weber, these are "the calculability of obligations and of the extent of freedom which will be allowed to private enterprise" (1978, 238).

by such a complete and unregulated exercise of power.⁵² As a result, Libyans had no escape from the endemic mismanagement and pervasive corruption that were a direct byproduct of the regime's political architecture. Perhaps the aspect of the economy that is most revealing of corruption is public tenders. By law, public procurement in Libya was supposed to be open to the public, and required competitive bidding.⁵³ However, a prominent corporate lawyer and a large businessman lamented that, in practice, only those informed and connected to state officials learned about tenders, which were typically published only in part, and too late to provide enough time for companies to participate in the tender.⁵⁴

Lastly, another socio-economic factor that can aid the emergence of a strong civil society is a high level of urbanization. From this point of view, the Libyan population is more urbanized than any other country in North Africa, with 78 percent of the population living in urban areas, compared to an average of 59.2 percent among the rest of North African countries. The close proximity of citizens is conducive to the creation of networks, the formation of bonds, and facilitates the activities and the management of voluntary associations.

The same principle logically applies at the national level, where a greater population density should support the development of countrywide networks and channels of communication, and foster cooperation among geographically dispersed, but thematically close voluntary associations. As we may recall, the strength of a civil society also depends on the extent to which actors that belong to different communities across

⁵² A more extensive discussion on the prospects for a democratic transition from sultanistic regimes, see Linz and Stepan (1996).

⁵³ Article 30, Resolution 563/2007 of the Prime Minister Concerning the Issuance of the executive administrative regulations.

⁵⁴ Author interviews of commercial lawyers and businessmen. Tripoli, Fall 2012.

the country, communicate and co-operate with one another, in addition to the existence and effectiveness of CSO umbrella bodies (Heinrich 2004, 18-9). Despite its high level of urbanization, Libya is characterized by an incredibly challenging demo-geography and very poor communication infrastructure. Its population of six and a half million is dispersed over an area that is almost the size of Western Europe.⁵⁵ In other words, Libya's small population is clustered in cities that are scattered across a vast territory. On average, there are only 3.6 inhabitants per square kilometer in Libya, compared to an average of 60 among the other North African countries. The level of connectedness between Libyans living in different urban centers is further hampered by the fact that 90 percent of the Libyan territory is desert, and that the country's communications systems are underdeveloped (e.g. there is no passenger railway system and roads are unsafe).

In sum, it is undeniable that, in 2011, some socio-economic indicators were more favorable in Libya than in other North African countries, such as the GDP per capita, the, and the adult literacy rate. Some of these indicators do reflect some favorable conditions for the improvement of living conditions, such as the level of literacy, and for the lessening of existential pressures, such as the likelihood that a newborn may survive its first few years of life (i.e. under-five infant mortality rate).

However, as I explained, the remarkably high values of some key national-level socio-economic indicators belied the actual living conditions of Libyans. Notwithstanding the above favorable conditions, I argue that the socio-economic aspects that matter the most for the emergence of voluntary associations - such as the presence of a middle class - were highly unfavorable in Libya. No data exist on the level of economic inequality (i.e. Gini coefficient) in Libya in the last four decades. However, it is evident that a large gap

⁵⁵ Libya is the size of size of all 8 westernmost EU countries combined.

divides the poor Libyan majority and the incredibly wealthy small ruling elite, and that the middle class separating the two is very small. Therefore, the low infant mortality rate and the high level of literacy that Libyans enjoyed did not lift them from pressing existential constraints.

Despite their high national GDP per capita compared to their neighbors, Libyans struggled to find employment, and had almost no chance to start private businesses. They had good access to healthcare and education, but the quality of the available services was low, and the level of citizen satisfaction with them was among the worst in the world. It is fair to conclude that Libyan society did not fully experience the benefits of modernization, in terms of economic security, access to services, and freedom to develop economic enterprises. The highly centralized and totalitarian nature of the Libyan regime was accompanied by profound and rampant corruption and mismanagement. As a result, Libya's large national wealth was concentrated in the hands of a small minority, thus preventing the emergence of a middle class – probably the key link between economic development and the strength of civil society in modernization theory (Lipset 1959). Conversely, the high level of urbanization in Libya was a positive factor for the emergence of voluntary associations at the local level. However, the very low population density, coupled with the lack of proper communications infrastructure posed significant obstacles to the development of a strong national civil society.

b. Society and culture

At the structural level, a high level of social heterogeneity is largely considered to hamper the development of a strong civil society. Another theoretical strand argues that the

strength of a country's civil society depends on how civic the overall national political culture is.

Social heterogeneity

The measure of social heterogeneity aims at gauging the extent to which a people is divided along various lines. The most universal and salient criteria are probably religion, language and ethnicity. However, there can be several other dimensions along which the citizens of a nation can distinguish themselves from one another (e.g. tribal; urban/rural; geographical; occupational).

In comparison to countries such as Iraq, Lebanon and Syria, Libya is characterized by a relatively low level of social heterogeneity along religion, language and ethnicity. Almost all Libyans are Sunni Muslims, belonging to the Maliki school of religious jurisprudence. Less than four percent of the population belongs to other religions, such as Christianity and Ibadhism (The World Factbook 2016). The entirety of Libyan society speaks Arabic, and only a minority cultivates the Tamazight culture. As shown in Table 4.2, Libya is less fractionalized than its North African neighbors at the religious level, and it is on the regional average at the linguistic level. The ethnic dimension is the only one along which Libyans are far more divided than their North African peers. In fact, besides the large majority of ethnic Arabs, the Libyan nation also includes other ethnic communities, such as the Touareg, the Tubu and the Amazigh from Western Libya (occasionally all three groups are referred to as Amazigh, or Berber, given their autochthone regional origin).

Table 4.2: Post-2011 social and cultural indicators for North African countries

	Morocco	Algeria	Tunisia	Libya	Egypt	Average (excl. Libya)
Ethnic fractionalization (1)	0.48	0.34	0.04	0.79	0.18	0.26
Religious fractionalization (1)	0.47	0.44	0.01	0.08	0.02	0.24
Linguistic fractionalization (1)	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.06	0.20	0.06
Identity (national id. minus communal id.) (2)	0.25	0.42	0.21	0.13	0.13	0.25
General, unspecified trust (3)	0.13	0.18	0.16	0.11	0.22	0.17
Tolerance towards other races (4)	0.86	0.80	0.83	0.45	N/A	0.83
Perception of own piety (5)	1.11	1.17	1.30	1.27	N/A	1.19
Religious openness (6)	1.53	1.29	1.46	1.20	N/A	1.42
Support for gender equality in politics (7)	2.04	1.84	1.83	1.72	1.61	1.83
Interest in politics (8)	1.64	2.16	2.21	2.60	2.99	2.25
Signing a petition (9)	1.18	1.47	1.33	1.31	1.06	1.26
News consumption via daily newspapers (10)	N/A	3.30	2.23	1.73	2.02	2.52
News consumption via the television (11)	N/A	4.53	4.59	4.56	4.83	4.65
Participation in interactive or dialogue-based groups on social networking websites (12)	0.31	0.38	0.23	0.16	0.39	0.33
Internet use to express political opinions (13)	0.28	0.14	0.44	0.42	0.59	0.36

Note (1): Probability that two randomly selected people from a given country will not belong to the same ethnic / religious / linguistic group. The higher the number, the more fractionalized society. Year: 1995. Alesina et al. (2003).

Note (2): Level of identification with the nation, minus level of identification with the local community, each on a scale from 1) Strongly disagree; to 4) Strongly agree. Year: 2013. World Values Survey (WVS) (2013)

Note (3): "Generally, would you say that 0) you should be very careful when dealing with people, or 1) it is possible to trust most people?" Year: 2013. WVS (2013)

Note (4): "Select groups you would not wish to have as neighbors: People of a different race". 0) Selected; 1) Not selected. Year: 2013. WVS (2013)

Note (5): "Regardless of whether or not you attend religious rituals, do you think that you are 1) a religious person, 2) not a religious person or 3) atheist" Year: 2013. WVS (2013)

Note (6): "Please tell us whether you 1) strongly agree, 2) agree, 3) disagree or 4) strongly disagree with the following statement: The only acceptable religion is my religion." Year: 2013. WVS (2013)

Note (7): "Could you tell me to what extent you 1) strongly agree, or 2) agree, or 3) disagree, or 4) strongly disagree with the following statement: Generally speaking, men make better political leaders than women do." Year: 2013. WVS (2013)

Note (8): "To what extent you think you are interested in politics?" Scale from 1) Not at all interested; to 4) Very interested. Year: 2013. WVS (2013)

Note (9): "I would like you to tell me whether you have done the following political action, might do it or you would never under any circumstances do it: Sign a petition. Scale: 1) I will never do it; 2) I might do it; 3) I have done it. Year: 2013. WVS (2013)

Note (10): "Specify whether you are using daily newspapers to get information 5) on a daily basis, 4) weekly, 3) monthly, 2) less than monthly, or 1) you never use it." Year: 2013. WVS (2013)

Note (11): "Specify whether you are using the television to get information 5) on a daily basis [...] or 1) you never use it." Year: 2013. WVS (2013)

Note (12): "Are you a member of or participant in this activity?" 0) No; 1) Yes. Year: 2014. Arab Barometer (2014)

Note (13): "Do you use the internet in order to express political opinions?" 0) No; 1) Yes. Year: 2014. Arab Barometer (2014)

Notwithstanding the objective measures of social fractionalization, social cleavages are not necessarily activated. In other words, existing differences between people only

become obstacles if and when they are given importance, thereby “activating” them. Furthermore, the socio-political salience that a division between groups may acquire is largely uncorrelated with the objective magnitude of the difference itself. Therefore, more than the objective degree of social heterogeneity, what matters is the importance that communities give to the distinctions between them.

For instance, a potential source of social heterogeneity that is not captured by the level of religious, ethnic and linguistic differences is the level of tribal fractionalization. Although it can be argued that the substantive magnitude of the difference between individuals across tribal lines is smaller than that along the other dimensions, tribal distinctions can still constitute an important source of social division. This is partly the case in Libya, where the population is divided among hundreds of tribes, whose estimated number ranges between 140 (St John 2011) and 300 (Cherstich. 2011). Except for those living in the capital city of Tripoli and some living in Benghazi and Misrata - the second two most populous cities in Libya, Libyans often grant a substantial role to tribes. Often in contrast to the others, those who live in these three urban centers, strongly identify with their city and their region. Thus, the social salience of tribal divisions in Libya is undeniable, however it is far from being universal among Libyans, and it is only one among many criteria of social division in the country.

In fact, aside from its much-heralded tribal divisions (Basu 2011; Dehghanpisheh 2011; Friedman 2011), the Libyan nation is also split along class, cultural, ethnic, geographic, and ideological lines. Libyan communities across the country maintain age-old enmity and suspicion of each other, typically fueled by economic and political interests. In large part, this is the result of a deliberate social alchemy that Gadhafi practiced over four decades,

to sow discord within and among Libyan communities to prevent the emergence of any popular unity.

In terms of social classes, Gadhafi humiliated and weakened the old urban elites and businessmen by seizing their properties, empowering Bedouin tribes, and publicly celebrating the Bedouin culture (Ahmida 2012, 74). His symbolic insistence on Bedouin culture was most visible through the highly publicized meetings and rituals he held in tents (Sattar). As mentioned earlier, the dictator also seized the properties of wealthy families, often assigning them to rural populations that were being resettled in urban centers (ICG 2012, 3).

The Amazigh (aka Berber) population makes up only a small minority of the Libyan nation. However, its historical roots in the region, notably in the Nafusa Mountains along the border with Tunisia and Algeria, extend well past the Islamization of North Africa and the settlement of Arab populations. Furthermore, Amazigh heritage embodies a rich culture and its own written and spoken language. Maybe the strong historical roots in the territory and the cultural richness of the Amazigh people explains why, during its forty-two-year rule, the Gadhafi regime oppressed them, and forced the “Arabisation” of Libyan Berbers, prohibiting the teaching of Tamazight language.

Gadhafi typically fueled the tensions between ethnic groups by balancing economic and administrative power. A telling example is provided by the Southern town of Kufra, which has a population of almost fifty thousand, and sits at the crossroad of routes from neighboring Egypt, Sudan and Chad. The strategic smuggling trade across these borders has been historically disputed by the two main ethnic groups that make up the town’s population. The Tubu are black Libyans with familial ties in Sudan, Niger and Chad. The Arabic Zway consider themselves as being the aboriginal tribe in the area. They hold the

political power over the city administration with the support of strong political and security networks at the national level.

The Tubu control the borders and the desert that extends between them and the city, thereby controlling the transnational commerce in the area. They benefit from the armed support of fighters from Niger, Chad and Sudan, with whom they have family ties and a history of cooperation. The Tubu were often used by the Libyan regime to wage wars in, and with neighboring Chad. When, in 1996, Libya lost the conflict with Chad over the Ouzou strip that divides the two countries, it identified the transnational Tubu community as a key culprit of its defeat. Thus, Libyan Tubu were deprived of their citizenship and were denied access to the most basic state services, such as education and healthcare (Murray 2011).

While each ethnic group comprising the population of Kufra holds the key to the survival and success of the other, they both employ this power against each other in an endless self-defeating conflict. The Zway continue to marginalize the Tubu, deny their citizenship rights and prevent them from accessing national resources, while the Tubu have command of the lucrative illegal cross-border trade and deny passage to Egypt and Sudan to Zway commercial trucks.

The same type of cleavages originates from the struggle for local control of power and economic resources, but are justified by narratives drawing from historical grievances and anti-Gadhafi sentiments. These conflicts pit dozens of ethnic and tribal communities throughout Libya against each other. The 2011 revolution, and the removal of the Gadhafi regime further aggravated these divisions by providing incentives and creating the conditions for conflict. Firstly, the dictatorship's collapse marked the end of decades-long local arrangements for the management of licit and illicit trade. The sudden absence of

central authorities with the ability to impose their power opened the way for local ethnic and tribal groups to vie for control over available resources. Secondly, communities, ethnic groups and neighboring towns that had been divided by history, competing interests, and positions of privilege in the Gadhafi governance system, naturally joined opposing sides of the revolution. The decisive victory of one side inevitably led to the settling of scores and acts of revenge against the other. Thirdly, the collapse of the Libyan economy and the rapid evolution of illicit yet highly profitable trafficking of humans, weapons and drugs raised incentives for asserting control over the territory.

The power vacuum created by the toppling of Gadhafi's dictatorship in September 2011 was quickly occupied by the militias that fought against him. They coalesced around geographic, ideological, tribal, and even family lines, pursuing a policy of "all for self and none for all". In places where the significance and power of tribes is strong, young men felt compelled to join the militia affiliated with their tribe. This was often in place of the professional and volunteer activities they would have rather continued to pursue. As a young Libyan civil society activist lamented:

A young man from a small town to the West of Zawiya used to work with me in a voluntary association. He also had a good job with a foreign company. However, due to his family reputation, he had to join a militia. Young men from important families have to join the militia affiliated to their tribe, otherwise the family loses power and the respect it enjoys within the community.⁵⁶

Since the end of the 2011 revolution, all meaningful territories and installations have come under the control of a non-state armed group. Furthermore, the dramatic

⁵⁶ Libyan civil society activist from Tripoli, Skype interview, June 17, 2016.

militarization of society and the abundance of small arms, which is unparalleled anywhere else in the world, have helped revive historical social rivalries.

To name a few examples, the citizens of Zawiya, a large town along the Mediterranean coast, just forty kilometers to the West of Tripoli, are age-old enemies of the Worshafana tribe, which dwells in the territory between these two urban centers. In Sebha, the most important city in the Southwest of Libya, and the gateway to Chad, Niger and the Sahel, the Qadhafa tribe – from which the Libyan dictator hailed, is opposed to the Awlad Suliman and the Warfallah tribes. This has resulted in periodic armed confrontations (Oleksy 2013; Sebha 2014). Two hours' drive south of Tripoli, historic tensions exist between the tribes of Zintan and Mashashya. The 2011 revolution also provided them with an opportunity to settle old scores. The stronger Zintan militias displaced Mashashya tribes and asserted their control over land and water (Amnesty International 2013, 5-7).

The rampant lawlessness, instability, and organized crime that ensued after the revolution have also had a detrimental effect by igniting several other conflicts between communities all across Libya. In just three years, it has even managed to break the century-old peace between the Touareg and the Tubu, two aboriginal populations that live in the small towns scattered across the Southern Libyan desert (Touareg 2016).

Despite its generally high level of linguistic and religious homogeneity, Libya's society is intimately fractured along class, cultural, ethnic, tribal, geographic, and ideological dimensions. While Libyans do give importance to these differences, the pervasive chaos and insecurity that have plagued the country since 2011 have also helped resurrect social cleavages that had been largely dormant prior to the revolution. Forty-two years of a violent and intrusive political regime had already implanted a strong sense of suspicion among Libyans. Nowadays, this attitude of suspicion is further reinforced by the difficult

existential conditions in Libya. Overall, the lack of security, and the activation of multiple, often overlapping social cleavages represent large obstacles to forming or joining voluntary associations that lay outside of homophilous ties. They also hinder the development of cooperation among communities.

Therefore, in terms of substantive social homogeneity, post-Gadhafi Libya does not offer a conducive environment to the development of a strong civil society.

Predominant political culture

The 2011 revolution played an important role in fostering a national spirit in Libya. For the first time, the vast majority of Libyans arose as a nation, bound by a common struggle. This level of national cohesion finds no historical precedent, even in the anti-colonial struggle against the Italians in the 1910s and '20s, as bitterly recounted by Libya's iconic resistance fighter, Mohamed Fekini (Del Boca 2010).

When asked in a 2013 national poll about the extent to which they see themselves as part of their nation, 78.6 percent of Libyans answered "strongly agree," which is higher than the average such response among Egyptians, Algerians, Tunisians, or Moroccans, which varies between 62 percent and 70 percent (WVS 2013).

However, this national spirit continues to contend with powerful communal attitudes. Individuals tend to hold multiple overlapping identities at any given time; what influences their perceptions and behavior is the relative importance they attach to different levels of identity. For the purpose of the emergence of a strong civil society, what matters is to what degree national identity trumps communal identity. In other words, the emergence

of a strong national network of voluntary associations, and the likelihood that their membership is socially heterogeneous, depends in part on the extent to which Libyans conceive their social identity in ways that go beyond their immediate community.

To many Libyans, the horizon of their identity and interests often extends only to the narrow limits of their immediate community. This was particularly visible during the 2011 revolution, when most armed groups formed around members of a tribe, a town, or even a neighborhood, which often directly supported them with funding and logistics. Most of these armed groups fought independently and shied away from campaigns extending beyond their territory of origin. This localized dimension of security in Libya has persisted and even been further reinforced since the revolution, owing to the failure to reinstate an effective national police force and army.

As a consequence, Libyans have increasingly turned toward their families, clans, and tribes to obtain some measure of justice and security—thereby, of course, reinforcing the identification and connection between individuals and their local community.⁵⁷ Thus, in the immediate aftermath of the toppling of the Gadhafi regime, the failure of newly formed state institutions, the resurgence of dozens of localized conflicts between communities across Libya, and the division of Libyans into two broad political-military coalitions has quickly eroded the national bond that was forged through the 2011 revolutionary struggle.

This may explain why, despite the reemergence of a national identity following the 2011 conflict, the level of identification with the nation relative to the local community is lower in Libya than in most other North African countries. The one exception is Egypt, which

⁵⁷ For a broader description of this phenomenon, see SAS (2014).

has the same level of identity differential as Libya (Table 4.2). This demonstrates that Libyans are less inclined to favor their national identity over their communal one, compared to their North African neighbors.

In terms of trust, among its diverse aspects, which I discussed in Chapter 2, I focus here on the level of general, unspecified trust. This is probably the best indicator of how easy it is for strangers to cooperate with each other. This is a key attitude for the development of a strong network of voluntary associations that can bind a nation together. Multiple existing social divisions coupled with the prevalent communal attitudes have a negative impact on the level of general trust that Libyans are willing to grant.

Forty-two years of a violent and intrusive political regime has also implanted a strong sense of suspicion and discord among Libyans, thus undermining the level of confidence between them.

As an example, in order to survey voluntary associations in six Libyan cities between 2012 and 2014, I needed to recruit a local team of civil society activists for each locality. Had I conducted the interviews through activists that were not from each respective community, my Libyan colleagues warned me that respondents would have either refused to answer the questions posed, or not answered them honestly. Nowadays, this suspicion between communities is further reinforced by the difficult existential conditions and the numerous ongoing conflicts in Libya.

As the data from the World Values Survey reported in Table 4.2 indicate, Libyans display a very low level of general, unspecified trust (i.e. the level of trust grant to unspecified others, such as “most people”). Only 11 percent of respondents think that it is possible to trust most people, compared to an average of 17 percent among citizens of North African countries.

Libyans have lived for four decades in virtual isolation from the world under the rule of the Gadhafi regime. The dictatorship totalitarian rule restricted the movement of citizens within the country and abroad. This confinement, and the absence of an open public space, deprived Libyans of exposure to different ways of being, thinking, and behaving. Additionally, Libya's challenging geography, 90 percent of which is uninhabited desert has also been an obstacle, creating a physical barrier to engagement among citizens. Interaction with other nations is also limited due to the fact that the country is bound by the Mediterranean Sea in the north, and by the Sahara Desert in the south.

I noticed this attitude among Libyans upon the first interactions I had with them in November 2011. During a series of interviews of randomly chosen individuals in cafes, hospitals and universities, I asked them about their social habits, political attitudes and religious inclinations. Invariably, my interlocutors insisted that all Libyans were like them: same habits, attitudes and inclinations. The problem was that each interlocutor had a different definition of what being Libyan meant. After interviewing several individuals in different cities, I started suspecting that most Libyans ignored the social diversity within their own country, given that, almost each time I suggested that other Libyans had reported very different characteristics, my interlocutor confidently asserted that they were not Libyans.

By and large, Libyans are oblivious to the plurality of religious attitudes, ethnic groups and cultural practices that exist among themselves. As a consequence, they often consider what is different from their narrow model as being foreign. Black Tubus are often considered Sudanese despite the fact that they have inhabited Southern Libya since immemorial times. Amazigh language and Ibadism (a school of Islam to which most Amazigh were historically affiliated) are usually ignored, often by Amazigh Libyans

themselves. The rich Touareg folklore and matrilineal social structure are frowned upon, and considered non-Libyan. As a result, attempts to include some of this diversity in the constitution has been met with skepticism and decision-makers have resisted granting veto power on key cultural issues to minorities in the Constitution Drafting Assembly (CDA) (Laessing 2013). This led to a widespread boycott of the 2014 CDA elections by the Tubu, Tuareg and Amazigh minorities that make up over 10% of the Libyan population.

This lack of familiarity with pluralism is compounded by a strong social pressure for conformity. In Libya, the concept of *aeb* (Arabic for socially unacceptable) is more pervasive than that of *haram* (Arabic for religiously prohibited). *Aeb* refers to inappropriate behaviors that would bring shame to those who are associated with them because they contravene broadly shared social norms and expectations. As a young female blogger from Benghazi commented “people mistake this for being religious, when it actually just means that Libyans care about what other people think” (What It Means To Be Libyan, 2014).

These socio-cultural traits and the lack of exposure to the rest of the world may help explain why the level of tolerance towards out-groups and non-mainstream or contentious behaviors is lower in Libya than in all other North African countries. As a key indicator, only 45 percent of Libyan respondents did not mind having people of a different race as neighbors, compared to an average of 83 percent among citizens of other North African countries (Table 4.2).

In terms of religion, almost all Libyans are Sunni Muslim, belonging to the Maliki school of jurisprudence. One might hastily conclude that Libyans are religiously conservative, as rituals of worship are followed fairly assiduously by the majority.

However, as explained above, it would be more accurate to say that Libyans are *socially* conservative: they possess a strong sense of what is acceptable and what is not. As religion has influenced society over centuries, in Libya many religious practices, such as praying five times a day, and religious principles, such as giving to the needy, have become widespread social practices (multiple author interviews, 2011-16). But their importance nowadays is grounded more in social conformity than religious precepts. The fact that many of these norms have a religious basis does not mean that religion *per se*, and religious leaders are at the center of Libyan life.

As a matter of fact, despite their conservativeness, Libyans tend to consider religion a private matter (author interviews and direct observation, 2011-2016; NDI 2014, 21). By and large, Libyans dislike having public figures telling them how to be a good Muslim and they do not trust religious leaders to improve Libya's future (NDI 2013, 15). In the words of former Libyan justice minister Salah El-Marghani (2012-14): "The characterization of "Muslim", "Islamic" or "Islamist" is very divisive in Libya. The country is predominantly Muslim and conservative. Many people reject using such affiliation or monopoly of the term "Islam" as a justification for political demands or to achieve political gains."⁵⁸ This explains in part why, to general surprise (and unlike in neighboring Egypt and Tunisia), the Muslim Brotherhood party lost all national elections in Libya, and by a wide margin (obtaining only 21% of party seats in the 2012 legislative election, and 15% of the seats in the 2014 legislative election). These results are all the more surprising given that, in the Libyan context marked by the lack of a political society and experience with politics, the Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated parties and candidates were the only ones who could count on an organized, nation-wide political apparatus.

⁵⁸ El-Marghani (2016, 5).

The World Values Survey data appear to confirm that Libyans are less religiously pious than their North African neighbors, except for Tunisia (gauged through the question: “Regardless of whether or not you attend religious rituals, do you think that you are 1) a religious person, 2) not a religious person or 3) atheist”, see Table 4.2).

However, low religious piety does not equate with high religious tolerance. In fact, Libyans appear to be the least open towards other religions (gauged by the level of agreement with the following statement: The only acceptable religion is my religion”, see Table 4.2).

This may be explained by the fact that Libyans were cut off from the rest of the world and could hardly travel across their own country for four decades, which dramatically limited their exposure to other Libyan communities, to people from other religions and to foreigners in general. The high level of religious intolerance that characterizes a part of the population in Libya became readily apparent in the aftermaths of the revolution, when groups of Islamic fundamentalists began to systematically destroy Sufi shrines throughout the country (AP 2011; HRW 2012), sometimes under the blind eye of state-sponsored armed groups (Zargoun 2012). Furthermore, since 2011 there have been numerous cases of arrest and detention motivated by religion (typically under accusations of proselytism or atheism), by both militias and government forces (USDoS 2013).

In short, although data on religiosity is more complex to analyze than data on other attitudes, Libyans also appear to be more conservative, and less open and tolerant towards other religions, compared to the other countries in North Africa. Surprisingly, however, Libyans also seem to conceive religion more as a private matter, rather than a public one, compared to their North African neighbors.

In terms of support for gender equality, the situation in Libya is very challenging compared to other countries in the world. Certainly, some of the reasons are to be traced

to deep-seated social and cultural attitudes (Pargeter 2010, 22). As the 2013 World Values Survey shows, Libyans display the second lowest level of support for gender equality in politics in the region, after Egypt (Gauged by the level of support for the statement: “Generally speaking, men make better political leaders than women do”, in Table 4.2). If all eight World Values Survey indicators of support for gender equality are taken into account, Libya appears to be around the average among North African countries.

When it comes to the level of political engagement, it is problematic to compare the situation in Libya in 2013 – only two years after its citizens were allowed to participate in political activities, to that in other countries in the region. Libya is the only country in North Africa in which its people were not allowed to engage in any form of political activity (i.e. voting; protesting; going on strike; signing petitions; forming or joining political parties or movements) for four decades. Thus, certain indicators, such as the level of interest in politics, may reflect the enthusiasm of first-timers, rather than a deep-seated political culture. This could explain why, in contrast to all other measures of civic culture thus far, Libyans display a greater interest in politics than their neighbors, except Egypt (Table 4.2).

Conversely, other indicators may suffer from a bias in the opposite direction. Those measuring elite-challenging actions (i.e. another key aspect of political engagement) assess whether respondents have engaged in a form of political activities (e.g. protesting; going on strike; signing petitions; joining boycotts), might do so, or would never under any circumstances do it. Given that the question did not set any time limit, respondents in countries where these actions had been allowed for decades had far more opportunity to engage in them compared to Libyans, who only had two years. This could be the reason

why the likelihood that Libyans may have signed a petition, or might do so in the future, is close to the regional average, despite the first-timer enthusiasm described above.

The average level of information consumption in Libya appears to be lower than in other North African countries. In particular, in the region, Libyans have the lowest level of newspaper readership and an average level of television use for the purpose of getting information (Table 4.2). This can be explained in part by the absence of independent media in Libya since the 1970s, and the fact that Gadhafi actively utilized the media as instruments of propaganda. As a result, on the eve of the 2011 revolution, “there were only two state-owned TV-channels left (al-Jamahiriya and al-Shababiya), two national radio channels (al-Jamahiriya and the religious Holy Quran) and four daily national newspapers (al-Shams, al-Fajr al-Jadid, al-Jamahiriya, al-Zahf al-Akhdar)” (Richter 2013). In the aftermaths of the 2011 revolution, media outlets mushroom throughout the country. Most of them have disappeared, but there are now dozens of TV channels, radios, and newspapers. However, Libyans have developed a high level of mistrust towards Libyan channels after having lived for two generations in a country where no media could be trusted (HRW 2006; BBC 2012).

As a result, Libyans – particularly the Libyan youth, trust international channels more than they trust Libyan channels. This was true under Gadhafi, when an empirical study conducted among students at Tripoli University between 2008 and 2010 found that students trusted pan-Arab channels, such as Al Jazeera, more than Libyan channels (Elareshi 2014, 68). This partly changed after the revolution, although Libyans continue to distrust Libyan news outlets in general.

In terms of active use of media, Libyans appear to be fairly present through social media, despite the very low level of internet penetration, which was estimated at 5.5 percent in

2011 (oAfrica. 2011). Data from the 2013 Arab Barometer survey indicate that, on average, Libyans use internet to express their political opinions to a greater extent than the average among North African countries, but they are less likely to participate in interactive or dialogue-based groups on social networking websites than their North African peers (Table 4.2).

In conclusion, the predominant political culture of Libyans in post-Gadhafi Libya is characterized by low levels of trust, tolerance, support for gender equality and religious openness in absolute terms, and in comparison to the other countries of North Africa. Compared to their North African peers, Libyans display a relatively high level of political engagement, and an average level of active use of media. Thus, from the perspective of the predominant political culture, post-Gadhafi Libya does not offer a favorable environment for the emergence of a strong civil society, especially in terms of the attitudes that are at the core of a civic culture, such as trust and tolerance. As long-time scholar Lisa Anderson warned in 2011, Libyans are kept apart by a culture of suspicion, tribalism and lack of trust (2011).

c. Political institutions

From the historical point of view, the emergence of a strong voluntary associational sector is often attributed to the extent to which a country has had a prior experience with democracy and voluntary associations, and to the historical development of effective institutions. Other scholars who support the institutional perspective argue that what matters is the quality of current democratic institutions, and the level of development of the rule of law. In particular, this perspective emphasizes the importance of effective

state institutions that defend the freedom of speech and of the freedom of association, for the strength of civil society.

Previous regime type and effectiveness

Since ancient times, Libya broadly indicated the region of North Africa to the west of Egypt (Wright 2010, xi). Libya existed as an administered territorial entity during the Ottoman empire, beginning in the sixteenth Century, however, its people was largely organized in tribes, and was not governed by a single entity. (D.C.C. 1946, 331). As the Libyan historian Ali Ahmida points out, the central state was weak, and, outside of the coastal towns, the territory was controlled by local tribes (2009, 11).

It was only in 1935, during the Italian occupation that the country was created as a single political entity. This process followed more than two decades of fighting and agreements with autochthone tribes, whose internecine division and rivalry paved the way to their defeat (Del Boca 2010). The rivalry and division between Cyrenaica, to the east, and Tripolitania to the west, surfaced again during World War II. For instance, even though both sides gave their support to British forces in their fight against the Axis powers, Libyan forces formed separate units, none of which claimed to fight for Libya as a whole (D. C. C. 1946, 336; Anderson 1986, 252).

Unlike all others North African countries, Libya did not gain its independence through a national struggle against colonial powers. It was granted independence by the United Nations on December 1951 as a result of protracted negotiations between regional and international powers. The Sanussi monarchy came into existence as an “accidental state”

(Vandewalle 2012, 43), and largely as the “child of the United Nations” (Wright 2010, 169).

As a consequence, Libyans found themselves citizens of a sovereign country, without the sense of national identity and the political mobilization that are typically fostered by a process of national liberation, and which serve as the basis for the development of political institutions. These were drafted by Libyan notables under the guidance of foreign powers, and were enshrined in a Constitution, which was adopted and promulgated upon the declaration of independence, on December 24th, 1951. King Muhammad Idris al-Mahdi al-Senusi was recognized as Chief of the State (Khalidi 1952). Although the Constitution established democratic political bodies and procedures, these did not enjoy substantial application.

On February 19, 1952, Libyans cast their vote in a general election for the first time in their history. Although the King had already disbanded the two largest parties in Libya ahead of the vote (Vandewalle 2012, 49), the 1952 election allowed for the participation of some political parties.⁵⁹ However, political parties were entirely banned a few months later (Bassiouni 2013, 43). Although another four national elections were held before the end of the Kingdom of Libya, in September 1969, Libyans did not experience another multi-party election until July 2012.

The executive and legislative powers, nominally in the hands of a cabinet and a two-chamber parliament, were *de facto* exercised through a small royal court called *diwan*. This explains the rapid turnover of cabinets and Ministers, which were shuffled to suit the

⁵⁹ Ahead of the 1952 national election, the King had already disbanded the National Congress Party in Tripolitania, and the Omar al-Mukhtar Club in Cyrenaica (Vandewalle 2012, 49), which were the two largest parties in Libya. This left substantially two parties, Bashir Bey Sadawi’s National Congress Party, and Salim al-Muntasser’s Istiqal party, to compete (Simmons and Bergamaschi 1993, 158).

desires of the King and his diwan. As Wright notes: “in the eighteen years of the monarchy, eleven national cabinets were formed and there were thirty-two reshuffles (one almost every six months)” (2010, 178).

The Libyan King, who had reluctantly taken on the responsibility to rule over the entire country, but whose heart and focus largely remained centered on Cyrenaica, did not pursue a state- or a nation-building endeavor. His objective was to hold the country together, and perpetuate the traditional, elite-driven system of governance his ancestors had successfully developed in eastern Libya over the course of a century, known under the name *Senousiyya*. Thus, King Idris utilized state institutions as an instrument of patronage to ensure stability, rather than developing a well-functioning state bureaucracy to administer the country efficiently (Anderson 1986, 256-8). Federal and regional administrations competed with each other, and grew in size but not in effectiveness. Thus, Libyan state institutions represented a source of rent through employment and embezzlement, while the effective power was exercised by a small elite surrounding the King.

In spite of the slogans accompanying the 1969 coup, which overthrew the Libyan monarchy, Muammar Gadhafi’s ruling principles did not differ greatly from the King’s. In fact, it pushed even further the development of hypertrophic, yet ineffective state institutions, and the concentration of substantive powers in the hands of a shadow, narrow elite.

Gadhafi’s political alchemy, theorized as the “third universal theory” in the green book⁶⁰, masked his sultanistic regime with the façade of direct popular rule. In the Libyan

⁶⁰ Putnam (2011) characterized the green book as “an archaic mixture of primitive socialism, 1960s-style “people power” rhetoric, and traditional Bedouin values; it has been the touchstone and straightjacket for politics in Libya for nearly four decades.”

Jamahiriya (i.e. a neologism he created to capture the concept of “rule through the masses”), the state and political organizations were hollow institutions. The substantive exercise of power was decoupled from the official representative bodies. All key decisions were made and enforced through a parallel set of highly personalized organizations. Qaddafi’s Libya, in other words, had the traits of a “stateless nation” (Davis 1988, 31 and 40-4). The state organizations were hypertrophic and ineffective agencies that were used to buy traditional allegiances at the local level in exchange for public employment.

The duality between official state institutions, and informal bodies that exercised personalistic power was particularly glaring in the defense sector. During the Gadhafi regime, the army was kept ill-equipped and dysfunctional, particularly after the 1987 debacle in Chad.⁶¹ Conversely, Gadhafi’s sons commanded a sort of Presidential Guard: large elite Brigades highly loyal to the regime.

In spite of Gadhafi’s rhetoric on the “state of the masses” and beyond the façade of institutions pretending to represent popular participation and power, Libyans had no access to the public space. Any public statement against the regime would quickly lead to imprisonment, torture, and often death. Libyans enjoyed no free press. In a public speech to the Libyan National Youth Conference in 2006, Gadhafi’s son and most probable heir Saif al Islam, declared: "We have no free press. There is no press in Libya at all. We deceive ourselves when we say that we have press. Does Libya have people's authority and a direct democracy really? ... All of you know that the democratic system that we dreamed of does not exist in the realm of reality" (Barber 2011).

⁶¹ See Ross (1987).

In sum, in light of its history, it is clear that Libya has never developed a strong set of centralized state institutions, except for those dedicated to overseeing investments and oil extraction.⁶² Moreover, Libyans never experienced democracy. Libyans hardly ever had any chance to engage in politics and to participate in the government of their country. Libyans do not have a history of political mobilization nor political participation. There was never a social contract between the Libyans and their ruler, whether it be the Ottomans, the Italians, the King, or Gadhafi. In short, until February 2011 there had never been a nation-wide political mobilization of the Libyan citizenry. Moreover, the Libyan society was actively de-politicized since the time of the kingdom. As a result, Libyans withdrew from the public space and limited their expression to the narrow domain of their private life.

Lastly, Libyans were never exposed to effective organizational models, excepted for a brief period of time under the Italians. However, colonial state institutions were not created to benefit them.

Prior experience with voluntary associations

Community organizations did exist for centuries amongst North African populations, as underscored by Liverani: “especially around ideas of mutual self-help (Touiza), charitable giving and community organization such as corporations, religious brotherhoods (turuq); religious lodges (zawa^{ya}) and village assemblies (jama^at)” (2010 269). Libya was not

⁶² Specifically, the Libyan Central Bank, the National Oil Corporation, and the Libyan Investment Authority.

an exception, and some historical accounts claim that associational life was quite active in the early 20th century.⁶³ As Ahmida points out: “nonstate civil institutions in Libya were merchant corporations, guilds, Sufi orders, and tribal organizations” (2009, 142). Furthermore, religious endowments – known as awqaf (singular, Waqf) – had developed for centuries in Libya, and provided a stable mechanism for philanthropy (AUC 2013, 34). However, since Gadhafi’s coup in 1969, religious endowments were confiscated, voluntary associations were severely restricted, and those existing were progressively coopted and controlled by the state. As the National Council for Voluntary Organizations reported, article 2 of the Revolutionary Council Decision dated December 11th, 1969 “provides for imprisonment of anyone involved in hostile action against the revolution, and defines "demonstrating, strike actions intended in opposition to the regime" and "disseminating rumors and news about the political or economic situation" as hostile actions” (NCVO 2015, 2). Furthermore, Article 3 of Law 71 of 1972, “provides for the death penalty for forming, joining, or supporting groups prohibited by law” (NCVO 2015, 1).

The state repression of any associational activity greatly accelerated after the 1977 protests by the student unions, which were brutally repressed, and opened a period of state terror marked by public executions. By the end of the 1970s, all associations had either been dissolved and banned, or taken over by the state. As a Benghazi activist lamented: “Even if we wanted to put on a children’s fair, we had to associate it with something political, related to one of Gaddafi’s claimed achievements” (IRIN 2011).

Student associations and workers’ unions became the mirror image and instrument of the regime. Workers unions were coopted by the state, and called professional associations.

⁶³ Author interview, Prof. Zahi Mogherbi, University of Benghazi, Faculty of Political Science. Tripoli, 01 Oct 2013.

They did not have the right to strike (BTI 2010, 8), and they became another social control tool in the hands of the regime.

Almost in parallel with these historical changes, in the early 1960s Libya discovered immense oil reserves under its soil. This rapidly turned the country into the rentier state it is today. In terms of fiscal sociology, this takes away another powerful driver of associationalism and civic engagement, which is the ownership and stake in the social contract conferred by taxation (Schumpeter and Swedberg 1991; Moore 2004).

This state of things spanned over two generations, thus producing what we can define as an institutional void in terms of associationalism. In other words, if young Libyans nowadays would like to learn about civil society in Libya, the only people who could share with them a direct experience are their grandparents.

By the turn of the century, Muammar Gadhafi became increasingly suspicious of voluntary associations, which he feared could be a means through which foreign powers could exercise their influence over Libya. Thus, in 2001, Law 19 was passed, whose article 14 severely restricted the provision of foreign funding to Libyan associations (Mikail 2013, 2).

In 2003, following the highly publicized Libya's renunciation of its alleged program to develop weapons of mass destruction, the Gadhafi regime re-established economic and diplomatic ties with the West. In the following years, a few non-profit associations were created. However, they were all under the control of a member of Gadhafi's family. The most prominent were the Gaddafi International Charity and Development Foundation,⁶⁴ founded in 2003, and chaired by Saif al-Islam, al-Qadhafi's second eldest son. It focused

⁶⁴ For more details, visit <http://www.gicdf.org/>.

on charity and human rights, but had the ambition to contribute to the reform of Libya's state and society. However, in 2010, the foundation was forced to renounce its political activities (BTI 2012, 22). Another two charity associations that were created in those years were Wa Attasemu Charity Association and Libya Ayadina, both under the control of Gaddafi's daughter, Aisha.

By the time of the 2011 uprisings, only 22 non-governmental organizations were registered in Libya (MCGN 2011, 7). However, except for the scouts and the Libyan Chapter of the Red Crescent, which enjoyed a status of quasi-independence, none of the existing voluntary associations functioned independently of the state.

Although associations started mushrooming since the beginning of the 17th February revolution, entire compartments, such as trade and workers' unions, have been slow to resuscitate, owing to their confusion about the role they ought to play, and to the lack of organizational and programmatic expertise.⁶⁵

Voluntary associations also struggle with the popular lack of awareness about the nature and role of civil society. There is a sense that many activists still don't know the meaning and role of civil society, let alone the broader population, which creates obstacles to the conduct of most activities.

Furthermore, besides depriving Libyans from the opportunity to experience associational life, the Gadhafi regime tarnished the very idea of civil society, portraying it as a dangerous foreign concept. During a televised address to the General People's Congress in January 2010, one year before his fall, Gaddafi stated that the idea of civil society "is a bourgeois culture and an imitation of the West that has no place here" (News24, 2010).

⁶⁵ Author interview, Prof. Zahi Mogherbi, University of Benghazi, Faculty of Political Science. Tripoli, 01 Oct 2013.

This propaganda found a fertile ground on the deep and pervasive suspicion of foreigners that Gadhafi had instilled among Libyans during four decades. As a result, after the toppling of the Gadhafi regime, many Libyans did not regard newly-founded voluntary associations with a favorable eye. As a member of a small town Branch of the Libyan Red Crescent stated in a public interview: “Non-mosque-based CSOs are an outcrop of popular Western culture which will corrupt our traditional way of life” (MCGN 2011, 8).

Current political institutions

Post-2011 Libya is characterized by weak state institutions and the inability to translate formal democratic steps, such as holding elections and establishing a parliament and a government, in substantive democratic practices, such as the promulgation of laws and the implementation of policies protecting rights and freedoms.

When the Gadhafi regime fell, it took with it the mechanisms through which power was exercised in Libya. The hypertrophic state organizations it left behind are highly centralized and poorly managed. They suffer from a widespread lack of technical skills, and they possess neither the culture nor the norms to carry out the public administration. As Younes Abouyoub, a Political Adviser to UNSMIL, lamented: “The 42 years of Gadhafi left no institutions and no state in place. [...] You cannot advise something or someone who doesn’t exist” (Quinn 2014).

The weakness of Libya’s state is most visible through the virtual absence of two of the most important institutions: police and army. Instead of rebuilding these institutions from the inside-out through training, equipment, funding and laws assigning them new roles

and legitimacy, rival political groups that accessed power after 2011 preferred to legitimize, fund and equip their own set of militias.

As an example, dozens of armored personnel carriers (APCs) delivered to the Ministry of Defense one year after the end of the 2011 revolution, were diverted to a militia supporting the party of the Minister of Defense. A few months later, a newly appointed Minister of Interior belonging to the opposing party gave orders to move several dozen APCs destined to equip police forces to the barracks of an affiliated militia. That minister resigned shortly thereafter but the vehicles were never recovered.

Instead of building the national defense and security apparatus and integrating fighters while dissolving their militia of origin, decision-makers empowered militias. They granted them government legitimacy and official affiliation with both the Ministry of Defense and Interior, thereby pursuing a reverse takeover of the public by the private. The Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Defense initiated separate registration programs and launched their own initiatives, creating the Supreme Security Committee⁶⁶ and the Libya Shield Brigades,⁶⁷ respectively, thereby assigning official roles to militias while allowing them to keep their own chain of command (Chivvis 2014, 18-20). Of course, the partisan piecing out of what were supposed to be the public guarantors of Libya's collective security further weakened state institutions, dramatically exacerbated the security dilemma and brought politics to a standstill.

Two episodes that occurred in the first and the second largest cities of Libya epitomize the inability or unwillingness of the government to protect the people. On September 21, 2012, in the wake of the killing of US Ambassador Chris Stevens, thousands of

⁶⁶ Established in September 2011 by the National Transitional Council through decree 41/2011.

⁶⁷ Officially recognized through The Ministry of Defense Decision No. 29, 8 March 2012.

demonstrators forced the most powerful militias out of their strongholds in Benghazi (Urquhart 2012). Just over a year later, on November 15th, 2013, in the first widespread protest since the revolution, thousands of citizens of Tripoli marched peacefully to the Tripoli headquarters of a powerful militia from Misrata that regularly committed abuses in the capital. Although peaceful protesters were confronted with anti-aircraft machine-guns, killing 43 in just a few hours, local citizens fought back and chased the ruthless militia out of town. In both instances, the government failed to prevent the killings, and was incapable or unwilling to harness the momentum and the popular mobilization to dislodge the other militias that controlled key installations in Tripoli and Benghazi (Whitson 2013).

As it is in all post-conflict settings, another crucial sector for the restoration of peace and stability is justice. This is also one of the key functions of a state. Although for once Libyans could count on a ministry leadership that had the sincere willingness to achieve the needed reforms and reassert the state control, they were ultimately unable to succeed (ICG 2013). Militias refused to follow the Ministry's directions and when the latter publicly spoke against the illegal detention of thousands of Libyans, militias stormed the Ministry of Justice (Eljarh 2013). Thus, in the aftermaths of the 2011 revolution, the Libyan government has been unable to limit the widespread human rights abuses, torture, forced displacement, mass arbitrary detentions, and politically motivated assassinations carried out by militias.

While millions of Libyans had placed their hopes in newborn democratic state institutions, these were unable to provide them with even the most basic services, including electricity, health, and education. What is worse, is that the highly centralized state was also unwilling to capitalize on the greater legitimacy and often greater capacity of local

governance mechanisms. During seven months of war, thousands of city and neighborhood councils had developed across Libyan cities to provide for the immediate needs of the people (Chorin 2012, 261). Instead of tapping on these existing mechanisms and conferring them democratic legitimacy by passing framing laws and conducting local elections, central authorities preferred to conserve centralized power and slow down the much needed decentralization.

During this time, most cities experienced increased insecurity, human rights abuses and lack of access to basic services such as water and electricity. The failure of state authorities to provide basic services (Chorin 2012, 261) and allow people to participate in the legislative process through effective consultation, communication and transparency, spurred a growing cynicism and discontent (Megirisi 2013). As a result, the government lost the already low popular legitimacy it had.

The town of Derna serves as a glaring example of the disastrous consequences of the total neglect of local state authorities. In October 2013, a Congressman lamented Derna no longer had either a functioning local council or Security Directorate” (Elumami 2013). After a protracted campaign of personal executions of local officials (Essul 2013), the town fell to the hands of extreme Islamic militias and was the first one to pledge allegiance first to Al Qaeda and then later to ISIS.

The dramatic weakness of Libya’s state institutions, and the low level of political rights and civil liberties in the country are confirmed by the most authoritative comparative indices in the world, such as the State Fragility Index; Polity IV; and Freedom House’s Freedom in the World.

The State fragility index assesses a country’s fragility in terms of its capacity to manage conflict; make and implement public policy; and deliver essential services. It also looks at

its systemic resilience in maintaining system coherence, cohesion, and quality of life; responding effectively to challenges and crises, and sustaining progressive development (Marshall and Cole 2014). In 2012, together with Algeria, Libya ranked lowest in North Africa according to this index (Table 4.3).

Table 4.3: Post-2011 political institutions in North African countries

	Morocco	Algeria	Tunisia	Libya	Egypt	Average (excl. Libya)
State Fragility Index (1)	18	11	20	11	15	16.0
Electoral Process (2)	4	4	9	0	2	4.8
Political Pluralism and Participation (3)	7	4	12	3	7	7.5
Functioning of Government (4)	4	3	4	0	2	3.3
Freedom of Expression and Belief (5)	8	7	10	5	8	8.3
Associational and Organizational Rights (6)	6	5	8	3	5	6.0
Rule of Law (7)	6	5	6	0	4	5.3
Personal Autonomy (8)	8	7	9	6	7	7.8
Corruption Perceptions Index (9)	37	34	41	21	32	36.0

Note (1): State capacity to manage conflict; make and implement public policy; and deliver essential services; systemic resilience in maintaining coherence, cohesion, and quality of life; responding effectively to challenges and crises, and sustaining progressive development. The score is the sum of the effectiveness and the legitimacy scores. Original scores were inverted. Scale from 0 (worst) to 25 (best). Year: 2012. Marshall and Cole (2014)

Note (2): Extent to which the national legislative representatives and the national chief authority are elected through free and fair elections. Scale from 0 (worst) to 12 (best). Year: 2012. Freedom House (2012)

Note (3): Extent to which people can freely organize in political parties; existence of an opposition; freedom from domination by the military, totalitarian parties or other powerful groups; and existence of full minority political rights. Scale from 0 (worst) to 16 (best). Year: 2012. Freedom House (2012)

Note (4): Extent to which national legislative and executive powers determine government policies; are free from corruption; and are accountable, open and transparent. Scale from 0 (worst) to 12 (best). Year: 2012. Freedom House (2012)

Note (5): Extent to which media are free and independent; freedom of religious groups to practice their faith and express themselves; academic freedom and freedom from extensive political indoctrination in the educational system; and ability of the people to engage in private (political) discussions without fear of harassment or arrest by the authorities. Scale from 0 (worst) to 16 (best). Year: 2012. Freedom House (2012)

Note (6): Degree of freedom of assembly, demonstrations and open public discussion; freedom for nongovernmental organization; and freedom for trade unions, peasant organizations and other professional and private organizations. Scale from 0 (worst) to 12 (best). Year: 2012. Freedom House (2012)

Note (7): Degree of independence of the judiciary; extent to which rule of law prevails in civil and criminal matters; existence of direct civil control over the police; protection from political terror, unjustified imprisonment, exile and torture; absence of war and insurgencies; and extent to which laws, policies and practices guarantee equal treatment of various segments of the population. Scale from 0 (worst) to 16 (best). Year: 2012. Freedom House (2012)

Note (8): Extent of state control over travel, choice of residence, employment or institution of higher education; right of citizens to own property and establish private businesses; private business' freedom from undue influence by government officials, security forces, political parties or organized crime; gender equality, freedom of choice of marriage partners and size of family; equality of opportunity and absence of economic exploitation. Scale from 0 (worst) to 16 (best). Year: 2012. Freedom House (2012)

Note (9): perceptions of the degree of corruption as seen by business people, risk analysts and the general public. Scale from 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean). Year: 2012. Transparency International (2012)

The comparison between Libya and other North African countries is even more striking when one looks at the key components of political rights and civil liberties that undergird democratic institutions. According to Freedom House, these are captured by an individual's ability to:

- Vote freely in legitimate elections;
- Participate freely in the political process;
- Have representatives that are accountable to them;
- Exercise freedoms of expression and belief;
- Be able to freely assemble and associate;
- Have access to an established and equitable system of rule of law;
- Enjoy social and economic freedoms, including equal access to economic opportunities and the right to hold private property.

According to this index, in 2012 Libya ranked the lowest among North African countries along all seven of these criteria, often scoring an absolute zero (Table 4.3). To be fair, Libyans were able to vote in national legislative elections on July 7th, 2012, and on June 25th, 2014, and in the February 2014 Constitutional Assembly elections, which were deemed reasonably free and fair (The Carter Center 2012; 2014). Thus, the first Freedom House criterion did not portray the reality in post-Gadhafi Libya.

However, the fact that elections were held, and Parliaments and governments were formed, does not imply that Libyans enjoyed substantive democratic institutions. After its term expired, and after a new Parliament was elected (aka the House of Representatives), the previous Libyan Parliament (aka the General National Congress) refused to dissolve. Thus, at the time of writing, Libya has two Parliaments and three governments. In fact, besides the two existing governments appointed by their respective Parliaments, a third

Government, named Government of National Accord was created under intense international pressure, and relocated to a Marine base in the capital city, where it only controls its own premises.

Lastly, Libya also struggles with a deeply ingrained culture of corruption. In 2011, Transparency International, which is an international non-governmental organization that annually produces one of the most authoritative corruption indices in the world, ranked Libya as the 168th most corrupt country in the world, out of a total of 182 (TI 2011). As we can see in Table 4.3, in 2012 Libya ranked as the most corrupt country in North Africa, measured through the degree of corruption as perceived by business people, risk analysts and the general public (TI 2012).

Thus, political institutions in Libya, whether in history or at the present time, are highly unfavorable to the emergence of voluntary associations.

a. international influence

As discussed in the previous chapter, the degree of international influence can have an important role in the development of civil society. This impact can be direct, through the provision of funds, or indirect, through the cultural diffusion of values, behaviors and organizational models.

During most of the Gadhafi regime, Libyans were cut off from the rest of the world. Gadhafi's paranoid suspicion against foreign influence and the totalitarian nature of his rule were compounded by decades of bilateral and international sanction regimes. The United States imposed the first sanctions on Libya in September 1975, and greatly

expanded the embargo on imports and exports between 1985 and 1986 (O’Sullivan 2004, 173-232; Vandewalle 2012, 138, 154, 166-170). The United Nations also imposed a multilateral sanctions regime in 1992 (UN 1992; 1993). Some of my Libyan friends in their late twenties recalled how, in the 1990s, some products were entirely absent in Libya, such as chocolate, bananas, and foreign sneakers. Furthermore, the teaching of foreign languages was banned for ten years following the 1986 bombing of Tripoli (Rose 2014, 32).

US sanctions were lifted progressively between 2001 and 2004, and the United Nations sanctions regime ended on September 12, 2003 (UN 2003) and Libya rapidly re-established commercial ties with the rest of the world. However, following three decades of isolation, Libyans were still culturally, economically, and politically detached from the rest of the world. As a comparison with its neighbors, in 2008 – which are the most recent data available, Libya was visited by just 34’000 international tourists, compared to an average of 7’250’000 among the rest of North African countries – two hundred times more (Table 4.4). It is quite remarkable for the third largest country in Africa, blessed with breathtaking beaches, mountains, deserts, and some of the most beautiful Roman and Greek and prehistoric archeological sites in the continent.⁶⁸

Thus, by the time the 2011 revolution erupted, compared to other countries in North Africa, Libya was among the least integrated in the globalized world (Table 4.4). To be sure, economic globalization greatly developed between 2001 and 2011, but as explained earlier, it only benefited a small share of the population. At the political level, Libya was still behind in terms of treaties signed, the presence of embassies and high commissions

⁶⁸ More information can be found at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Archaeological_sites_in_Libya.

on its soil, the number of international organizations of which it was a member, and the number of UN peace missions to which it had participated, compared to other North African countries (see political globalization in Table 4.4). Similarly, Libya's level of social globalization, measured through the level of telephone traffic and tourism, the number of Internet users, and indicators of cultural proximity, such as the level of trade in books, ranked among the lowest in North Africa (Table 4.4).

Another sign of Libya's relative isolation from the world is the share of the total population that accessed the internet over the course of 2011. In Libya, the World Bank estimates that 14 percent of the population used the Internet (from any location via a computer, mobile phone, personal digital assistant, games machine, digital TV etc.) in 2011 – the same as in 2010, compared to an average of 31 percent among North African countries (Table 4.4).

Of course, Libya's exposure to international influence greatly increased since the fall of the Gadhafi regime. In a matter of weeks following the end of the 2011 revolution, dozens of embassies and international organizations opened offices in Libya. They started distributing grants and providing all sorts of technical trainings to voluntary associations eager to respond to their "development agenda". Despite this influx of funding, between 2011 and 2013, Libya still received less international aid per capita than most North African countries, excepted Algeria (Table 4.4).

Table 4.4: International influence in North African countries

	Morocco	Algeria	Tunisia	Libya	Egypt	Average (excl. Libya)
Internet users (1)	46%	14%	39%	14%	26%	31%
Int.l aid received per capita (2011-13) (2)	362	31	555	121	160	277
Spent time in a Western country (Europe Canada, USA) in the past five years (3)	8%	22%	8%	15%	1%	10%
International inbound tourists (4)	788	177	705	3	1230	725
Economic globalization (5)	54	39	61	54	45	50
Social globalization (6)	57	35	42	37	41	44
Political globalization (7)	88	84	84	51	94	88

Note (1): Share of the population that have used the Internet (from any location) in the last 12 months. Internet can be used via a computer, mobile phone, personal digital assistant, games machine, digital TV etc.. Year: 2011. World Bank (2015)

Note (2): Total amount of loans or grants for projects or programs received from international donors per capita (based on 2011 population) between 2011 and 2013. Bilateral commitments are recorded in the full amount of expected transfer, irrespective of the time required for the completion of disbursements. Amounts are constant dollars, deflated to 2011 as a base year. Year: 2011-13. Tierney et al. (2011)

Note (3): "During the past five years, did you spend time in a Western country (European country, Canada, the United States)?" 0) No; 1) Yes. Year: 2013. Arab Barometer (2013)

Note (4): Number of overnight visitors who traveled to the country, divided by 10'000. Year: 2008. World Bank (2016)

Note (5): Level of trade and investment exchanges, and degree of restrictions on trade and capital such as tariff rates. Range between 0) lowest; and 100) highest degree of globalization. Year: 2011. Dreher (2006) and Dreher et al. (2008).

Note (6): Measured by: number of embassies and high commissions in a country, number of international organizations of which the country is a member, number of UN peace missions the country has participated in, and number of international treaties that the country has signed since 1945. Range between 0) lowest; and 100) highest degree of globalization. Year: 2011. Dreher (2006) and Dreher et al. (2008).

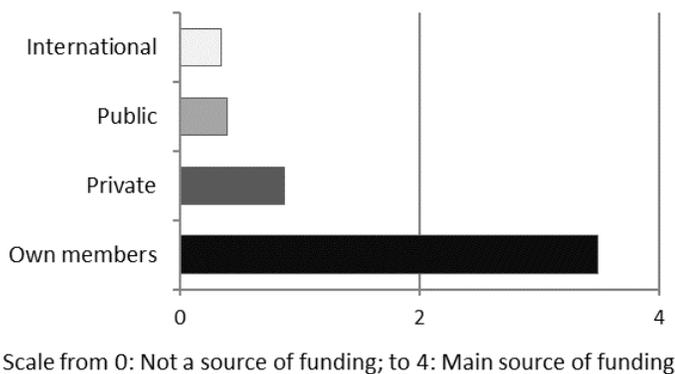
Note (7): Measured through personal contacts (e.g. telephone traffic and tourism); information flows (e.g. number of Internet users); and cultural proximity (e.g. trade in books and number of Ikea warehouses per capita). Range between 0) lowest; and 100) highest degree of globalization. Year: 2011. Dreher (2006) and Dreher et al. (2008).

Civil society also quickly became a way to gain public visibility through the myriad of workshops and conferences supported by international organizations. Lastly, young Libyans quickly understood that volunteering is well-regarded by Western academic institutions, and joining voluntary associations could help secure a study scholarship.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ As a Libyan activist lamented: "There is also a portion of volunteers who want to get scholarships abroad and know that volunteer is one of the requirements necessary for that, so that's also a factor why some Libyans volunteer." Author skype interview, June 2016.

However, a series of interviews with civil society activists across the country conveyed that only a minority of associations actually received money from international donors, which is confirmed by empirical data collected through the Leadership in Civil Society survey. Interviewees were asked to score their source of funding (i.e. own members, private, public, international) according to how central they were for their voluntary association. Average results presented in Figure 4.1, where 0 means that the association received no funding at all from that source, and 4 means that it is the association's main source of funding, show that international sources of funding were largely absent for most voluntary associations surveyed.⁷⁰

Fig. 4.1: Self-assessed, relative importance of each source of funding for voluntary associations in Libya (LCS 2013-14)

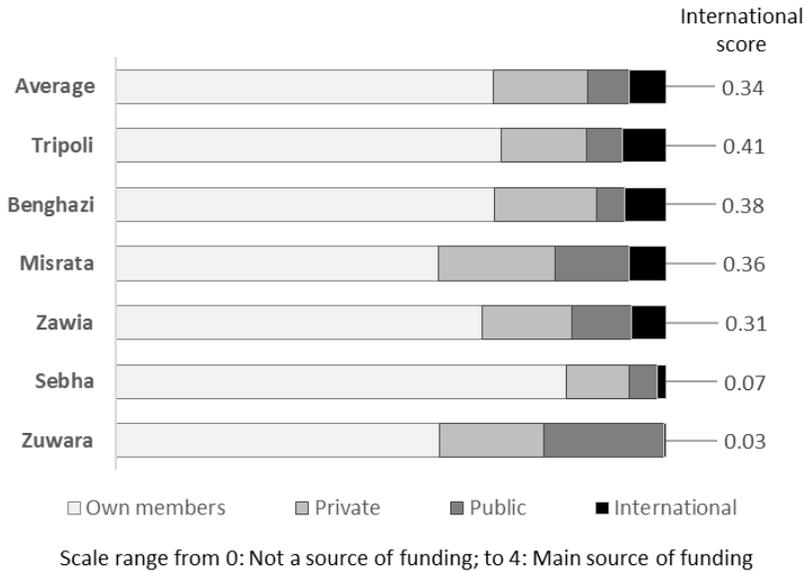


Libyan civil society activists lament that international organizations typically focus their efforts on a few well-known and established voluntary associations in the major cities, whose members speak English and are able to respond to the challenging requirements and nomenclature of grant proposals. As Figure 4.2 shows, the farther one moves from the largest cities, the lower the relative importance of international sources of funding

⁷⁰ Note that these data result from the subjective assessment of leaders of voluntary associations, rather than from the precise account of the actual amount of funding coming from each source.

for voluntary associations (Sebha is a town in the south of Libya, 500 miles south of Tripoli, and Zuwara is a small town at the border with Tunisia, 70 miles west of Tripoli).

Fig. 4.2: Self-assessed, relative importance of each source of funding for voluntary associations per Libyan city (LCS 2013-14)



It is readily apparent from these data that in 2013-2014 Libyan voluntary associations relied predominantly on contributions from their own members. Given the difficult security conditions in many parts of the country and the danger involved with traveling in Libya by road, the vast majority of international organizations limited their geographical scope to the two or three major cities. As a result of these compounded factors, the bulk of grass-root associations who make up the body of the Libyan civil society did not receive any funding and training from international organizations.

Furthermore, if international funds for the support of voluntary associations were a key driver of their emergence, we should see a higher number of them per capita in the largest Libyan cities (notably Tripoli, Benghazi, Misrata, and Zawia, which is only 20 miles from the outskirts of Tripoli), where these funds are more available (Table 4.2). Instead, the data from the Leadership in Civil Society survey show that the prevalence of voluntary

associations is as high, if not higher, in smaller, isolated towns, such as Sebha and Zuwara (Table 4.5).

Table 4.5: Prevalence of voluntary associations per Libyan city (LCS 2013-14)

	Tripoli	Benghazi	Misrata	Zawia	Zuwara	Sebha
Number of voluntary associations	378	336	118	50	40	100
Population (100'000s)	9.4	5.6	5.0	3.0	0.5	2.0
Voluntary associations/100'000 inhabitants	40.2	59.8	23.5	16.6	80.0	50.0

Note (1): Share of the population that have used the Internet (from any location) in the last 12 months. Internet can be used via a computer, mobile phone, personal digital assistant, games machine, digital TV etc.. Year: 2011. World Bank (2015)

Another important avenue through which international influence can be exercised on a people is the experience of living or traveling abroad. Individuals who spend time in another country can absorb values and behaviors, and observe modes of organization, which they bring back to their country. In turn, they can transmit them to other individuals around them. Despite their long-lasting isolation, the Arab Barometer survey data show that 15 percent of Libyans surveyed had spent time in a Western country (European country, Canada, the United States) in 2013, compared to an average of 10 percent of people surveyed in the rest of the countries in North Africa (Table 4.4). This is probably due, at least in part, to the large presence of diaspora Libyans who returned to the country after the 2011 revolution. It should be noted that following the dramatic worsening of the situation in Libya since 2014, these Libyans have largely left the country again.

Notwithstanding the comparatively unfavorable aspects of international influence discussed thus far, the experience of living abroad is more prevalent among Libyans than in most North African countries. As I will discuss in the concluding chapter, traveling

abroad, and other forms of exposure to foreign information and knowledge appears to have some influence on the emergence of voluntary associations in Libya.

, international influences appear to provide some grounds to explain the emergence of voluntary associations in post-Gadhafi Libya, especially in terms of direct exposure to attitudes, behaviors and modes of organization while traveling abroad or through the contact and cooperation with those who have.

However, this explanatory avenue cannot, alone, explain the widespread emergence of voluntary associations in large and small towns across Libya. Although members of Libyan voluntary associations are more likely to have lived abroad than non-members (see Table 8.1 in Chapter 8), most of them have not, and few have received any funding from international organizations or other foreign donors. Furthermore, when large scale conflict broke out again in the spring of 2014, all international organizations and embassies left, and with them most of the funding and workshops. At the same time, threats and violence against civil society activists far outweighed any social incentive to join voluntary associations. Yet, many voluntary associations continued to operate since then, and new ones are regularly being formed in spite of these unfavorable circumstances.

In conclusion, in this chapter I described the social, economic and political conditions that characterize Libyan history and the post-Gadhafi environment. I explained why these conditions are remarkably unfavorable to the development of a strong civil society, with the exception of international influence and support. However, I explained why the sudden arrival of international organizations and the opening of Libya to the world are not sufficient to account for the widespread emergence of voluntary associations since 2011. In the next section I will show that the political culture of a sub-national group of

individuals who constitute the membership of voluntary associations may open an explanatory avenue for the surprising emergence of a civil society in Libya.

Part II: Do Voluntary Associations in post-Gadhafi Libya possess a civic culture?

The scope of the following two chapters is to analyze quantitative data to ascertain, firstly, whether or not voluntary associations in post-Gadhafi Libya are an expression of a civic culture. I do so by verifying whether or not individuals who possess any of the traits identified earlier as constituting a civic culture, are more likely to be members of voluntary associations than those who do not.

If civic attitudes and behaviors correlate with membership in voluntary associations, these associations can be said to represent a civil part of society, that is, a *civil* society. In particular, if these correlations hold true even when controlling for the most likely individual- and context-level alternative explanatory variables, it means that there is a relationship between membership in voluntary associations and individual civic culture that is independent of age; gender; marital status, economic condition; level of education; religiosity; and socio-economic environing conditions. In other words, it means that something else must explain the correlation between engaging in voluntary associations and possessing a civic culture.

Secondly, my analysis seeks to verify whether or not voluntary associations as a whole embody a civic culture, which means that their members display a higher level of the key civic attitudes and behaviors that are at the core of a civic political culture, compared to non-members. If voluntary associations are created and operated by individuals who possess a more civic culture than the prevalent political culture in Libya, it means that they have the potential to serve as instruments of pro-democratic change.

I expand on these quantitative findings by drawing from qualitative evidence provided by interviews of key members of voluntary associations and by my direct participation in the creation and development of Libyan associations to give some meaning to these correlations, and to propose some avenues for causal interpretation.

Before I present the results of my analysis, I lay out the regression models I adopted and I present and discuss the quantitative evidence that justifies including the individual- and context-level control variables that I have chosen.

Regression models

In order to clarify the relationship between the eight traits of interest and membership in voluntary associations, I make use of four regression models that incorporate an increasing number of individual and district-level controls.

I add these control variables to the regression model in stages, from no controls to the most comprehensive group of control variables. The coefficient reported for Model 1 represents the overall difference in likelihood of being a member (AB) / active member (WVS) of a voluntary association for a one-unit increase in the civic culture variable included in the right hand side.

The coefficient presented for Model 2 is the difference in likelihood of being a member (Arab Barometer) / active member (World Values Survey) of a voluntary association for a one-unit increase in the civic culture variable, which still remains when keeping all control variables constant. In other words, it the amount of variation in membership in voluntary associations that remains after taking out the part of variation that is correlated to the

variation in socio-economic status; gender; age; level of education; marital status and religiosity.

The coefficient listed under Model 3 is adjusted for these individual-level controls and also for the district level of religiosity; level of education; level of crime (World Values Survey) / perception of security (Arab Barometer); socio-economic status; sense of empowerment (World Values Survey only); general trust and trust in the police. Lastly, the coefficient for Model 4 accounts for the variation in the individual-level control variables listed above and for any variation across districts.

The coefficients listed in the last four columns of my tables indicate how much more or less likely an individual is to be the member (AB) / active member (WVS) of a voluntary association, when she/he displays a one-unit higher level in the civic culture variable's indicator listed in the first column. Since the outcome is dichotomous – membership or non-membership in a voluntary association – the coefficients represent percentage points of variation correlated to a one-unit increase of that indicator.

Controls

In order to assess whether or not individual-level controls are relevant to the study of the relationship between the eight traits at the center of this analysis and membership in voluntary associations, it is sufficient to look at the difference in their mean value between non-members and members (AB) / active members (WVS) of voluntary associations. If the difference is substantial, it means that the variable varies according to whether or not an individual is a member of a voluntary association and therefore it warrants controlling for it.

Given that the scales vary and that the size of the variations is hard to evaluate, it is useful to gauge them in proportion of the standard deviation for that variable, which represents the level of variation of values for that variables, which I refer to as *standardized difference* between the mean values. It must be kept in mind that the standardized differences in means reported for the World Values Survey are between non-members and *active* members of voluntary associations, which is a specific subset of members of voluntary associations. Given that my objective is to look at the difference between those who do not engage in voluntary associations and those who do, for the World Values Survey I will focus on active members, given that they are more deeply involved in associational life. If there is a correlation between individual characteristics, civic culture and participation in associations, it should be most visible for those whose participation is most active. In fact, if one looks to the difference in means between non-members and non-active members for religiosity, marital status and age, the World Values Survey data also show little variation.

All individual-level variables selected vary between 14 and 27 percent of one standard deviation between active members and non-members of voluntary associations for the World Values Survey (for details, see Table A3.5 in Appendix 3). The variations are also high in the Arab Barometer data for half of the variables, while religiosity, marital status and age show a small to insignificant variation (Table A3.5 in Appendix 3). Thus, overall it is warranted to include all the individual-level variables selected as control variables.

For the district-level variables, since they are the average value of that variable for the entire district, it is useful to look at whether the variables selected present a large variation across the 22 districts of Libya. Here too, all district-level variables vary quite substantially across districts (for details, see Table A3.6 in Appendix 3). To understand

these numbers, refer to the variables' description and scale in Table A3.4 in Appendix 3. For instance, the measure for crime level in the World Values Survey is whether or not the respondent was victim of a crime in the past year. The variation across district goes from no victims at all for the districts of Sirt, Nalut and Ghat, to 14 percent victims for the district of Al-Gabal Al-Gharbi, at the border with Tunisia, which is a very large variation. Overall, all district-level controls selected show a large variation across districts.

Now that I have laid out the relevance of these control variables for the purpose of my research, it is useful to briefly analyze and discuss the type of relationship that each single control variable has with membership in voluntary associations. In order to single out the relationship between a single control variable and membership in voluntary associations, I conduct a regression analysis that includes all the individual-level variables and all individual districts (21 dummies and one district of reference), which is model 4.

The results of the regression of membership in a voluntary association on each one of the control variables are presented in Tables II.1 and II.2 below. Each coefficient indicates a magnitude, expressed in percentage points of greater or lesser likelihood of being the member of one or more voluntary associations (given that the outcome variable that is membership in a voluntary association is dichotomous, with (0) non-member and (1) member (AB) or active member (WVS)). Thus, each coefficient is the percentage point difference in likelihood that the respondent may be a member (AB) or active member (WVS) of a voluntary association when the value of the control variable of interest increases by one unit (according to the respective scale reported in Table A3.4 in Appendix 3).

However, the magnitude of the difference between members and non-members could be the result of either a spurious correlation or a highly statistically significant correlation.

The level of significance is indicated by the hat or the star(s) superscript by the coefficient. No superscript means that the correlation coefficient has a statistical significance level that is higher than 10 percent ($p \leq .10$). As a common good scientific practice, a significance level of 5 percent ($p \leq .05$) is used as the minimum threshold to determine that a coefficient is statistically significant. A significance level of 1 percent (two stars) or of 0.1 percent (three stars) indicate a very high statistical significance of the result.

The regression of membership in voluntary associations on all individual-level control variables show varying results. Some of them are very consistent across all four models for both the World Values Survey and the Arab Barometer (see Table II.1 below). The economic condition of respondents, often referred to as Socio Economic Status (SES) in the scholarly literature, shows a statistically significant, positive correlation with membership in voluntary associations. However, in both data sets its impact is fairly small: an increase from one SES category to another on a scale of four ordinal categories, such as from “Our household income covers our expenses without notable difficulties” to “our household income does not cover our expenses and we face some difficulties in meeting our needs” (question q1016 in the AB) increases the likelihood of being member of a voluntary association by 4 percentage points in the Arab Barometer data. The variation is similar for the World Values Survey. Other researchers also found empirical validation for this finding (see Brady et al. 1995 and Dacombe Rod 2010). Badescu and Neller (2007, 160) explain that “The common explanation of why higher status groups tend to have higher levels of organizational involvement is that they have the resources (time, money, contacts) and the verbal and cognitive skills to participate.”⁷¹

⁷¹ See also Kohn and Schooler 1982; van Deth and Kreuter 1998; Gabriel et al. 2002, cited in Badescu and Neller (2007, 160).

Among the individual-level control variables, gender is the factor which is most strongly and significantly correlated with membership in voluntary associations. At the most restrictive level of controls (model 4) reported in Table II.1, men are 8.4 percent more likely to be active members of voluntary associations (World Values Survey) and 14.7 percent more likely to be members of voluntary associations (Arab Barometer) than women, both significant at the 0.1 percent level. This may be due to the fact that Libya is a conservative society and participation in voluntary associations is arguably the first, widespread and accessible avenue for women to be active in the public space. However, these gender differences in civic participation are also found in modern and well-established democracies. For instance, Badescu and Neller also found a lesser likelihood to find women members of voluntary associations in their research on involvement in voluntary associations across 13 European societies.

The level of education also appears to have a statistically significant, positive impact on membership in voluntary associations. An increase of one category among nine levels of education provided, corresponds to 1.2 percentage points greater likelihood to be active members of voluntary associations according to the World Values Survey data (see the first column in Table II.1); and an increase of one category among six levels of education provided, corresponds to 4.4 percentage points more likely to be members of voluntary associations according to the data from the Arab Barometer (see the second column in Table II.1). This means that according to the World Values Survey, the highest educated are 9.6 percentage points more likely to be active members of a voluntary association than their lowest educated fellow citizens and that, according to the Arab Barometer, they are 22 percentage points more likely to be part of a voluntary association than their lowest educated fellow citizens. Both these correlations are significant at or above the 1 percent level. This comes with no surprise, since the level of education is considered

by most scholars as one of the strongest predictors of civic engagement (Verba and Nie 1972; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Brehm and Rahn 1997; Badescu and Neller 2007).

Data on the impact of age are not conclusive. The World Values Survey does find that active members of voluntary associations are on average two years younger than non-members and three and a half years younger than non-active members, but these differences disappear once controlling for other individual characteristics. If anything, the Arab Barometer finds that members of voluntary associations are on average slightly older than non-members. Clearly this discrepancy prevents from reaching conclusions on the effect of age on membership in associations. Several scholars have argued that age does influence civic engagement, but that this influence may be curvilinear, with middle-aged individuals participating more than the youngest and oldest (Smith and Freedman 1972),⁷² that it may be increased by important events in the life cycle, such as marriage and child-rearing (Rotolo 2000), or that these relationships may vary across societies (Badescu and Neller 2007).

Marital status also does not appear to have a significant effect on the likelihood of being the member of a voluntary association. The World Values Survey does show that active members are more likely to be bachelors than non-members, but this correlation does not remain significant once controlling for other individual characteristics.

The results on the effect of the level of religiosity on membership in associations are not entirely conclusive. However, both the Arab Barometer and the World Values Survey show that both members and active members of voluntary associations are less religious than non-members. Furthermore, the World Values Survey data show that the increase

⁷² Cited in Bonikowski and McPherson (2006, 199)

from one category to the next, such as from (1) “religious person” to (2) “not a religious person” leads to a 5.7 percentage points greater likelihood to be the active member of a voluntary association, with a significance at the 5 percent level. As the differences in findings across the literature show,⁷³ it is difficult to compare with other countries and empirical studies, given the different nature of indicators adopted to measure religiosity and the large variation on the public and private relationship with faith across societies.

⁷³ When looking at the US and / or Canada, Smidt (1999), Wuthnow (1999) and Gibson (2008) find a positive correlation between religiosity and civic engagement. However, when analyzing the correlation between church attendance and civic engagement across 13 European societies, Badescu and Neller (2007, 182-3) find that the correlation varies according to the type of associations and across countries. These variations are even more likely to vary when studying non-Western countries with different religious beliefs and social structures.

Table II.1: Coefficients on individual-level control variables in a regression of membership (AB) or active membership (WVS) in voluntary associations (1)

	Differences in means relatively to non-members of voluntary associations (times 100) (2) (3)	
	World Values Survey 2013	Arab Barometer 2014
Economic condition	3.1* (1.4)	4.2*** (1.2)
Gender (male=1)	8.4*** (2.0)	14.7*** (2.4)
Age	-0.1 (0.1)	0.2* (0.1)
Level of education	1.2** (0.4)	4.4*** (0.8)
Marital status	0.9 (2.3)	-5.1 (3.3)
Religiosity	5.7* (2.2)	-1.8 (2.1)
Smallest N	1880	1154

Note (1): The measure of each individual control variable differs across the two surveys. See Table A3.4 in Appendix 3 for the specific questions used. Moreover, the WVS refers to active members whereas the AB refers to any member of voluntary associations

Note (2): Entries are unstandardized coefficient and standard error (in parentheses), both multiplied by 100.

Note (3): Multiple linear OLS regression model 4: Includes all individual-level and district (dummies) controls

***Significant at the 0.1% level ($p \leq .001$); **1% level; $p \leq .01$; *5% level ($p \leq .05$); ^10% level ($p \leq .10$), two-tailed.

For the sake of exhaustiveness, I also reported the coefficients for the regression of membership in voluntary associations on each of the district-level control variables (Table II.2). However, it must be noted that the number of respondents per district varies between 5 and 427 for the World Values Survey and between 10 and 230 for the Arab Barometer, which is often insufficient to have a reliable result on the district-level variation of membership in voluntary associations according to each district-level variable. This may explain the substantial difference in results deriving from the two surveys. Thus, these results should not be used as a reference.

Table II.2: Coefficients on district-level control variables in a regression of membership (AB) or active membership (WVS) in voluntary associations (1)

	Differences in means relatively to non-members of voluntary associations (times 100) (2) (3)	
	World Values Survey 2013	Arab Barometer 2014
Religiosity	-1.4 (18.0)	31.7*** (9.8)
Education	-9.2** (3.4)	14.2** (5.2)
Crime level (WVS) / Feeling of security (AB)	104.7** (37.3)	-1.6 (4.6)
Economic condition	16.1* (8.0)	-19.0** (6.4)
General trust	-18.4 (30.7)	29.6^ (15.3)
Trust in the police	-27.7*** (7.9)	10.2 (6.2)
Empowerment	0.8 (2.9)	N/A
Smallest N	1879	1154
District-level n (min-max)	(5-427)	(10-230)

Note (1): The measure of each individual control variable differs across the two surveys. See Table A3.4 in Appendix 3 for the specific questions used. Moreover, the WVS refers to active members whereas the AB refers to any member of voluntary associations

Note (2): Entries are unstandardized coefficient and standard error (in parentheses), both multiplied by 100.

Note (3): Multiple linear OLS regression model 4: Includes all individual-level and district (dummies) controls

***Significant at the 0.1% level ($p \leq .001$); **1% level; $p \leq .01$; *5% level ($p \leq .05$); ^10% level ($p \leq .10$), two-tailed.

In the following two chapters, I will ascertain whether or not the specific attitudes and behaviors that characterize a civic culture, as determined by Inglehart, Dalton and Welzel, are associated with membership in associations, even after controlling for the alternative explanatory variables just discussed.

Chapter 5

Attitudes

In this chapter I focus on the following five attitudes: individual-level social identity; radius and level of trust; tolerance; religious openness; and support for gender equality. All questions drawn from the World Values Survey and the Arab Barometer for the purpose of this research are listed in Appendix 4.

a. Identity

1. Measurement of identity

The Arab Barometer had no questions regarding identity. In the LCS survey, I measured the primary social identity radius of leaders of voluntary associations by asking: “To which of these geographical groups do you identify as being from primarily?” and allowing them to choose only one option among the following: 1) Town or city where you were born; 2) Region you were born (Tripolitania, Cyrenaica, Fezzan); 3) Country you were born (Libya); 4) Arab / Amazigh / Toubou people (each of these groups is an ethnic minority group); 5) Africa; and 6) The world as a whole.

The World Values Survey did not ask a similar question to assess the primary social identity radius. However, it asked three questions about identity that can help us gauge the radius of the primary social identity by comparing the rating attributed to the communal identity to that attributed to the national one.

Lastly, I created a variable that measures the differential between the level of identification with the nation minus the level of identification with the local community. I created this last variable in order to gauge the strength of the sense of national belonging against the sense of belonging to the local community. This variable “normalizes” the strength of an individual’s national identity by utilizing the level of identification with her/his local community as the baseline reference of the subjective level of identification with any group. This allows me to compare the relative strength of an individual’s national identity versus the strength of her/his communal identity, across countries.

2. Libyan identity and membership in associations: empirical evidence

When comparing members of voluntary associations to non-members in terms of identity, is civil society any different from the overall Libyan society? According to my first hypothesis, on average, members of voluntary associations should display a set of identity attitudes that betray a more civic culture as defined above. In practice, this means that the sample means in the second and third columns of Table 5.1 (i.e. non-active members and active members of voluntary associations, respectively) should be higher to the sample means in the first column (i.e non-members). In fact, empirical data from the World Values Survey show that active members of voluntary associations are less proud of being Libyan than non-member. The difference, which is 0.182 on a scale of 1 to 4, is not large, although responses are almost exclusively either 3 or 4. In fact, this small difference is still equivalent to 22 percent of the standard deviation among answers.

In terms of intensity of identification with their community, members of voluntary associations do not appear to be different from non-members. Conversely, they show a higher level of identification with the Libyan nation. As a result, the sample means of the

identity differential (i.e. national id – communal id) show, on average, that members of voluntary associations possess a slightly larger difference between the sense of national identity and the sense of communal identity, compared to non-members.

Table 5.1: Effect of social identity on membership in voluntary associations (World Values Survey 2013)

	H1: Comparison between sample means			H2: Correlation coefficients for the difference in means (times 100) (1) (2)			
	Non-member	Non-active member	Active member	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Nationalism (3)	3.73	3.47	3.55	-4.0*** (1.2)	-2.3^ (1.3)	-2.3^ (1.3)	-2.9*(1.3)
Communal identity (4)	3.64	3.54	3.66	1.9 (1.6)	2.5 (1.7)	3.1^ (1.7)	2.2 (1.8)
Libyan identity (5)	3.76	3.72	3.81	5.1** (2.0)	4.0^ (2.1)	5.1* (2.1)	4.1^ (2.1)
National id - Communal id (6)	0.11	0.17	0.15	2.6 (1.9)	0.9 (2.0)	1.0 (2.0)	1.3 (2.0)

Note (1): Difference (active members - non-members). Entries are unstandardized coefficients and std errors (in parentheses), both multiplied by 100.

Note (2): Smallest N = 1671. Regression models include the following controls: 1=No controls; 2=Individual-level controls; 3=Individual- and specific district-level controls; 4=Individual-level controls and districts as dummy controls.

Note (3): "To what extent you are proud of being a Libyan?" Scale from 1) Not at all proud; to 4) Very proud.

Note (4): Agreement with statement: "I consider myself part of my local community." Scale from 1) Strongly disagree; to 4) Strongly agree

Note (5): Agreement with statement: "I consider myself part of the Libyan nation." Scale from 1) Strongly disagree; to 4) Strongly agree

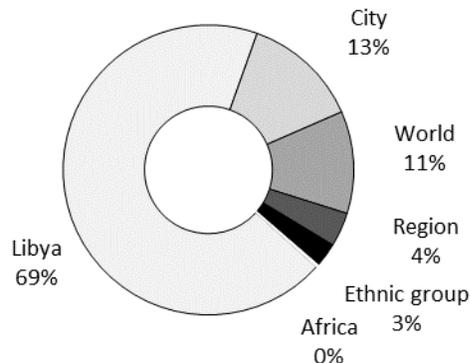
Note (6): Difference between the answers to question cited in notes 5 and 4 above.

***Significant at the 0.1% level ($p \leq .001$); **1% level; $p \leq .01$; *5% level ($p \leq .05$); ^10% level ($p \leq .10$), two-tailed.

Color code : Contradicting my hypotheses, and where applicable, statistically significant at or above the 10% level ($p \leq .10$; two-tailed).

Unfortunately, it is not possible to compare the descriptive statistics for leaders of voluntary associations asked in the LCS survey to the general population because neither the World Values Survey or the Arab Barometer asked this question. However, the clear-cut LCS results on the primary social identity radius are quite instructive. When CSO leaders were asked to select the geographical

Fig. 5.1: Primary identity



group they identified as being from primarily, a large majority (69 percent) selected Libya, whereas only 13 percent selected their hometown and almost as many selected “the world” (Fig. 5.1). The strong sense of national belonging among members of voluntary associations that emerges from their answers supports the hypothesis that they possess a higher level of national identification.

But is national identification correlated to membership in voluntary associations, even after controlling for alternative explanatory variables? In order to confirm my second hypothesis - that Libyan voluntary associations are means of expression of a civic culture - individuals who possess a more pronounced sense of national identity should be more likely to be members of voluntary associations than those who do not. At the same time, based on the hypothesis laid out earlier, individuals who possess a more civic rather than ethnic-based nationalism should be less proud of being Libyan, given the terrible performance of Libyan state institutions since 2011. These individuals should also be more likely to be members of voluntary associations.

The regression results show that Individuals who are more proud of being Libyans (labeled “Nationalism”) are less likely to be active members of voluntary associations, even after controlling for individual and context-level variables (Table 5.1). In fact, the difference is statistically significant throughout the four models and is still significant at the 5 percent level in the most restrictive model. In particular, in the most inclusive level of controls (model 4), individuals who are one unit more proud of being Libyans on a scale from 1 to 4, are 2.9 percentage points *less* likely to be active members of a voluntary association. Overall this is not a large difference, but it is a statistically significant result that supports the counter-intuitive argument about national pride.

The degree of identification with the local community does not show any statistically significant correlation with membership in voluntary associations, which means that the likelihood of one does not influence the likelihood of the other.

Conversely, individuals who show a higher sense of belonging to the Libyan nation (labeled “Libyan Identity”) are more likely to be active members of voluntary associations. Specifically, after controlling for all individual-level variables and cross-district variations, as displayed by the results under model 4 in Table 5.1, a one-unit increase on a scale from 1 to 4 in the strength of identification with the Libyan nation, corresponds to a 4.1 percentage points higher likelihood of being an active member of a voluntary association, albeit with a relatively low level of statistical significance (10 percent level).

Lastly, although the data show a positive correlation between the identity differential (national identity minus communal identity) and membership in associations, it is not statistically significant for any model, and the coefficients are very small (1.3 percentage points). The variability in this difference is enough to prevent us from concluding that it is not due to chance.

I have shown that there is a positive correlation between a national sense of identity and membership in voluntary associations and a negative correlation between the latter and the sense of national pride.

To be sure, the emergence of a sentiment of national belonging is not confined to Libyan activists. In fact, the strengthening of national identity is a common phenomenon among a people that confront a common enemy and suffer common hardship. The history of Europe in the early 20th Century offers a vivid example of the rise of nationalisms through

crises and transnational wars. However, I argue that the strengthening of the national identity and more broadly the widening of the identity radius are more pronounced for individuals who believe in social change and that are more engaged with their fellow countrymen to achieve it. In particular, anecdotal evidence leads to think that the greater the level of civic engagement was during and after the 2011 revolution, the more Libyans developed a sense of national belonging and identification and the more likely they were to expand their identity radius. In other words, a more civic culture leads to a greater level of civic engagement, and in turn, voluntary activities foster a more civic culture.

The narrative provided by several accounts of Libyan doctors, citizen-journalists, and activists who played a role during the 2011 conflict lend support to the hypothesis of a self-reinforcing circle between national identification and civic engagement. These individuals made the choice to be on the forefront of the conflict, trying to help their fellow Libyans and their country. Their stories best explain how working together with other Libyans and providing them with support changed their sense of identity.

Aisha, head of the hematology unit in a health center in Benghazi, helped coordinate the extraordinary medical assistance to the wounded at the Benghazi Medical Center. She had this to say about the feelings towards Libya before and after the 2011 revolution:

“We have discovered the wonderful love we have for our great country. We loved it but not its flag or its national anthem because we associated these with Qaddafi, who made Libya belong to him, not vice versa. We all volunteered to cook for the rebels, to transport supplies, to aid the wounded, and even to clean the streets. When the rebels entered the city, everyone clapped and sang songs of the revolution. Women threw flowers, chocolates, and dates. They kissed the

hands of the rebels and thanked them for defending and protecting them” (Al-Saleh 2015, 155-56).

The unprecedented appropriation of the public sphere and the feeling that the fate of the social commons she shared with other Libyans was now in their own hands, fostered a sense of national solidarity and ownership. To many, the revolution thus brought about an entirely new feeling: Libyan pride and a sense of national unity.

Libyans had never mobilized as a nation in their history, not even during the struggle against Italian occupation that saw communities on opposing sides and switching of alliances. The struggle against the Gadhafi regime united and mobilized the large majority of Libyans⁷⁴ for the first time in their history. When the conflict broke out, Ezedrin, a 35-year-old cardiothoracic surgeon from Benghazi, went to the front lines to treat the wounded and almost got killed. This experience changed his attitude towards his country. The feelings he felt when Benghazi was freed in mid-March 2011 are telling: “This moment ended a very long three weeks of “sweet” tiredness mixed with a feeling we never experienced before: being proud to be a Libyan” (Al-Saleh 2015, 152).

This enthusiasm was short-lived and many of the gains of the revolution were reversed, leading to a situation that is in many senses worse than life under Gadhafi. National pride has morphed into shame and despair. However, the newly acquired awareness of belonging to a national community called Libya and the feeling of sharing hardship and destiny remain besides pride or shame.

⁷⁴ It must be noted that important parts of the nation were left out of the “new Libya”, cities such as Sirt and Riqdalin, large tribes such as the Tarhouni and the Gadhafda were identified as pro-Gadhafi and largely cut out from the new Libyan identity.

Hawazin⁷⁵ a young woman from Derna, never felt that she belonged there because everything was wrong, repressive, and unjust. She clung to the fact that she was born abroad while her parents lived there for a couple of years. Although she had spent almost her entire life in Derna, she felt different and she realized that she had a serious problem with society. However, if she had been asked about her primary identity, she would have identified first and foremost with her city, a fierce bastion of opposition against Gadhafi. She loved her city and felt that she belonged to its community, in spite of all her grievances with it. If anything, she was ashamed of being Libyan, citizen of a system that was so deeply wrong and corrupt. These feelings changed as soon as the 2011 uprising started. She immediately joined voluntary groups and civic initiatives. In late February 2011, just days after the first protest in Benghazi, she established an association to promote women's rights together with another 15 women from Derna. In the following months, she co-founded a women's union, a teachers' union and a voluntary association that provided humanitarian support to internally displaced people. When asked about her attitude towards Libya as a community, she noted that "It changed when I felt like things could change, that we could make Libya like our dreams."⁷⁶ She felt Libyan and she increasingly identified with fellow Libyans. Today, her feelings are complicated. Her sense of identification with Libya as a nation is marred with bitterness, anger and shame. However, her actions and the emotions she went through during the revolution have changed her identity more deeply than the negative feelings she experiences today in the face of the disastrous unraveling of the situation in Libya. Her reflections on these mixed feelings provide valuable avenues to explain the differences in attitudes towards identity between members of voluntary associations and non-members:

⁷⁵ Her real name was changed for questions of security.

⁷⁶ Author interviews, Tripoli, November 2012; Boston, October 2015.

“The 2011 revolution allowed me to learn about the other Libyan communities, from other cities and from other ethnic groups like the Amazigh and the Tubu. I didn’t know much about them, if they felt Libyan. During the revolution and the many civil society meetings I attended, I learned about them and about their suffering. I felt solidarity.

Also, I lost my brother, who was killed during the revolution. [...] The pain for his loss brings me close to the other Libyans who lost their loved ones. Today I have lost the pride and the feeling of being Libyan, because I am ashamed of the current situation. I realized that the problem was not just Gadhafi, it was also us. But like many others who lost loved ones, I feel a responsibility towards Libya, so that the sacrifice of our martyrs was not wasted.”

The first element Hawazin points out to explain her changed attitude is information: gaining knowledge about the members of other Libyan communities. Meeting other Libyans, working together with them, and pursuing common goals develops the sense of belonging to the nation. Since the 2011 revolution, members of voluntary associations like Hawazin often traveled across Libya and abroad to receive training, engage in dialogue at conferences, and conduct joint projects with Libyans from other ethnic, religious and geographical groups.

The second aspect evoked by Hawazin is ownership and responsibility: investing efforts and experiencing hardship and pain for a common struggle increases the stake in and the sense of responsibility for the outcome. Individuals who have invested time and energy for the sake of an imagined community called Libya, or even more so those who lost a dear one for it, develop a sense of ownership and responsibility towards this community. This can cut both ways, since individuals can also sacrifice for the sake of a narrow

community or interest. This is clearly the case of the majority of *thuwwar* (i.e. freedom fighters) who fought in disconnected and often highly localized small armed groups during the 2011 revolution. In a rare empirical research study of 179 revolutionary fighters conducted during the 2011 revolution, Whitehouse et al (2014, 17784) showed that these fighters displayed a remarkably high level of identification with their family (99 percent) and with members of their own battalion (97 percent) and other battalions (96 percent) but also a remarkably low level of fusion (1 percent) with ordinary Libyans who supported the revolution but did not join battalions. As they point out, “The dismissive attitudes of fighters toward ordinary Libyans may have sown the seeds for the dissension that emerged among the revolutionaries after the war”.

The reason why most members of voluntary associations in Libya developed feelings of identification that are the mirror opposite of most *thuwwar* is because they were much more likely to meet, discuss and cooperate with activists from other sub-groups in Libya. Young fighters joined a militia in their neighborhood or city and a few joined militias of other cities. These groups became units tied to a specific territory and line of allegiance, which then confronted each other for the control over key infrastructure and sources of wealth. The “community of action” of members of voluntary associations is more likely to be larger and more porous than that of fighters and the motive underlying their engagement is more likely to be elective rather than ascriptive. As I will show in the following chapters, not all associations are equal from this point of view, but overall, aggregated data show that members of voluntary associations are less proud of being Libyan but their sense of Libyan identity is stronger than non-members.

These findings are supported by a wealth of anecdotal evidence that I gathered through direct observation and participation in the life of voluntary associations in Libya since

2011. Since the beginning of the revolution Libyan activists have been organizing countless local, national, and international campaigns promoting a sense of national belonging, unity and engagement for national goals, such as women's rights, environmental protection and transparency. As an example, the "My city is Libya" initiative undertaken by Volunteer Libya in 2014 seeks to promote the unity of Libya and bridge across divides through recreational activities, volunteerism, and a media campaign. The aim of overcoming prejudice that divide Libyans clearly emerges from the description of the initiative:

*"In Libya recently, have you realized that within yourself your natural reaction is to respond with a positive attitude towards other civilians? But as soon as you ask them about their background and their ethnicities you begin to look at them differently? You start to pre-judge them? You think that you've figured them out? Well, you are wrong! This stops with our campaign and event! At My_City_Is_Libya we will show you that there is more to the person than what meets the eye and that underneath all the insecurities and all of the rough edges we are all the same."*⁷⁷

In a similar spirit, the "This is my Libya" (#MyLibya) campaign highlights all the beauty in Libya's land and people by sharing pictures and short stories on social media.⁷⁸ This movement continues to this day, with hundreds of Libyans sharing pictures of an all-lady café, elders in traditional clothes, roadside vendors with typical local produce, traditional dishes, beautiful beaches, canyons, olive tree fields, village alleyways, and that of an old

⁷⁷ For more information, see <https://www.facebook.com/VolunteerLibya?fref=nf&pnref=story>.

⁷⁸ See a sample of the campaign pictures at <http://www.buzzfeed.com/sumayyahg/this-is-mylibya-s0g8>, or https://www.facebook.com/hashtag/mylibya?source=feed_text&story_id=10203139174417550.

man kissing the ground upon his return to Libya after the revolution, for the first time in more than 30 years. These powerful images and short stories provide an endless message of Libyan beauty in diversity, and a call for peace and coexistence, which resonates in Libya and abroad.⁷⁹ The initiator of this campaign, 21 years-old Khadija Ali, is a bright and engaged civil society activist and freelance journalist from Tripoli. She is a young woman with a big smile, always wearing an impeccable hijab and an abaya (a typical Muslim long robe), happy to engage in respectful and open conversation on society or politics.

In the new Libya, musicians-turned-activists have also started playing an important role in promoting national unity and tolerance of diversity. For instance, rock bands such as Guys Under Ground produce songs and videos articulating collective grievances and weaving common experiences into a narrative that binds Libyans together.⁸⁰ Many of these songs have had several hundred thousand hits. These rap, pop, and rock songs have given a new voice to Libyan youth, in a country where youth makes up over half of the total population, and are helping rally Libyans around ideas of pluralism, diversity, and a united Libyan nation.

To recapitulate the findings on identity, active members of voluntary associations identify with their local community as much as their non-member peers. At the same time, they show a consistently higher sense of belonging to the Libyan nation than non-members, even after controlling for key individual-level and district-level variables, although the difference is small. In spite of this higher level of Libyan identity, active members of

⁷⁹ The initiative has since been covered by media around the world. See for example “#MyLibya shows there’s more to nation than unrest” on USA Today, available from <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2014/06/12/my-libya-twitter-hashtag/10321829/>; and “#BBCtrending: Amid chaos, Libyans look on the bright side” on BBC Trending. Available from: <http://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-trending-27796839>.

⁸⁰ For example, see MC SWAT Featuring Guys UnderGround, “Lies & Pain,” at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fL4M4HloPQo>.

voluntary associations are less proud of being Libyan than non-members, which can be ascribed to a civic-based sense of nationalism. Lastly, leaders of voluntary associations display a broad radius of identity, with only 20 percent choosing a sub-national geographical group (i.e. ethnic, city or region) as their primary source of identity.

b. Trust

1. Measurement of trust

The World Values Survey includes several questions on trust. This battery of questions was devised by Christian Welzel and was first introduced in the fifth wave of the World Values Survey to distinguish between in-group and out-group trust (Delhey et al. 2011, 790-791). The first three groups (i.e. family; neighbors; people you know personally) gauge in-group trust, which I refer to as particular trust, whereas the last three (i.e. people you meet for the first time; people from a different religion; people from a different nationality) measure various aspects of out-group trust, which I refer to as general trust, in line with the term used by Delhey et al. I created a variable titled “General trust differential” by subtracting the level of trust in family from the level of trust in strangers. I created this last variable in order to gauge the level of general trust against the strongest type of kinship-based trust. My purpose in subtracting the level of trust in family from the level of trust in strangers is to “normalize” the level of trust in strangers (i.e. general trust) by utilizing trust in family as the baseline reference of the subjective individual trust level. The Arab Barometer only asked one question aimed at gauging the level of general trust, which is very similar to the two general questions asked by the World Values Survey (see Appendix 4 for the specific questions).

In the LCS survey, I asked three questions about general trust, either the exact question from the World Values Survey or some small variations from them.

2. Trust and membership in associations: Empirical evidence

My first hypothesis would see members of voluntary associations as a whole possess a higher level of trust compared to the rest of society in Libya. A comparison among World Values Survey data and between the World Values Survey and the LCS survey results, reported in Table 5.2, shows that both members and leaders of voluntary associations display a greater level of unspecified general trust (i.e. likely to believe that most people can be trusted) than is typical among non-members (2 percent and 13 percent more than non-members, respectively).

Similarly, members and leaders of voluntary associations consistently have a higher level of trust towards people they met for the first time, people of another religion and people of another nationality compared to non-members.⁸¹ Members and leaders of voluntary associations display roughly the same level of trust in their family as non-members do. However, they have a *lower* level of trust in their neighbors compared to non-members, and contradictory results for trust in people they know personally (i.e. members of voluntary associations show a higher level of trust in people they know personally, compared to non-members, whereas leaders display a lower level of trust in people they know personally compared to non-members).

⁸¹ The scales used for these questions are not binary, therefore the difference in sample means do not represent percentage points.

Table 5.2: Means of trust by membership in a voluntary association (LCS 2013-14 and WVS 2013)*

	Non-members (WVS) (1)	Active members (WVS) (1)	Leaders (LCS) (2)
Personal trust			
Family	3.94	3.92	3.94
Neighbors	3.22	3.19	3.15
People you know personally	3.12	3.24	2.94
General trust - Unspecified			
Most people can be trusted	0.10	0.12	0.23
General trust - Specified			
People you meet for the first time	1.81	1.83	2.30
People of another religion	1.72	1.73	2.69
People of another nationality	1.82	1.91	2.75

* answers to the question: "I would like to ask you to what extent you do trust people from various groups. For each group, can you tell me whether you trust it completely, somewhat, not very much, or not at all?"

Note (1): Smallest N = 922; "don't know" and no answer are excluded.

Note (2): Smallest N = 781; "don't know" and no answer are excluded.

The lower level of personal trust (a.k.a. particular trust, that is trust towards in-groups) that members of voluntary associations have compared to non-members (as shown by the means for trust in family and trust in neighbors in Table 5.2) is surprising in light of the evidence that members and leaders of voluntary associations have, by and large a higher level of general trust. This counter-intuitive finding could be related to the criteria that individuals adopt to define the multiple in-groups and out-groups and how strong the distinction is. Typically, in-groups are based on ascriptive criteria, criteria in which the individual is born into.

According to my second hypothesis, individuals who have a higher level of trust in general and a larger radius of trust – indicated by a higher level of general trust – should be more likely to be members of voluntary associations, even after controlling for alternative

explanatory variables. In other words, individuals who display a more positive cognitive bias towards trust, when asked a general question on whether or not they trust unspecified others and more specifically, individuals who show a greater inclination towards trusting people that belong to out-groups, should be more likely to be members of voluntary associations, after controlling for potential alternative explanations, that is, including all the individual- and district-level variables (model 4).

In fact, the results of the multiple regression analysis (see Table 5.3) using two separate samples and different questions show that general trust does correlate positively with membership in voluntary associations. The evidence from the World Values Survey shows that individuals who believe that it is possible to trust most people are 5.5 percentage points more likely to be active members of voluntary associations than those who believe that one should be very careful when dealing with people, with a significance at the 10 percent level ($p \leq 0.1$).

The data from the Arab Barometer also show a positive correlation between general trust and membership in a voluntary association, and with an even stronger effect. Individuals who believe that most people are trustworthy are 8.4 percentage points more likely to be members of voluntary associations than individuals who do not think that people are trustworthy, with a very strong significance - at the 0.1 percent level, in the most restrictive model (4). The regression results for two of the three specific out-groups that respondents are asked about (i.e. people met for the first time, and people of a different nationality) also confirm that individuals who have a higher level of general trust are more likely to be members of voluntary associations. Individuals who display more trust in people they met for the first time (significant at the 10 percent level) and those who display trust in people from a different nationality (significant at the 5 percent level) are

2.2 and 2.3 percentage points more likely to be members of voluntary associations, respectively.

Lastly, trust in both family and neighbors appear to be negatively correlated with membership in voluntary associations, although the effect is weak and the regressions do not provide evidence that this correlation may not be due to chance. However, individuals that have a smaller gap between the trust they grant to people they meet for the first time and the trust they have in their family (i.e. “general trust differential”) are more likely to be members of voluntary associations, with a significance at the 5 percent level. Specifically, individuals who have a smaller gap in the trust they grant to family and the trust they grant to strangers, by one unit on a scale from -3 to 3, are 2.3 percentage points more likely to be members of voluntary associations. This correlation shows that, even when the degree of trust in strangers is normalized relatively to a baseline of trust in family, which may control for a generally higher propensity to trust anyone, it correlates with the likelihood of being member of a voluntary association.

Table 5.3: Effect of trust variables on membership in voluntary associations

	H1: Comparison between sample means			H2: Correlation coefficients for the difference in means (times 100) (1) (2)			
	Non-member	Non-active member	Active member	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
World Values Survey 2013							
It is possible to trust most people (3)	0.10	0.10	0.12	4.4 (3.1)	3.9 (3.3)	5.7^ (3.3)	5.5^ (3.3)
Trust your family (4)	3.94	3.91	3.92	-2.0 (3.0)	-3.9 (3.1)	-3.2 (3.1)	-2.9 (3.1)
Trust your neighbors (4)	3.22	3.21	3.19	1.0 (1.2)	-0.9 (1.3)	-0.6 (1.3)	-0.5 (1.3)
Trust people you know personally (4)	3.12	3.10	3.24	3.0*** (1.1)	3.2** (1.2)	3.3** (1.1)	4.0*** (1.2)
Trust people you meet for first time (4)	1.81	1.73	1.83	0.8 (1.1)	1.5 (1.2)	1.5 (1.2)	2.2^ (1.2)
Trust people from different religion (4)	1.72	1.77	1.73	0.1 (1.1)	0.1 (1.2)	-0.6 (1.2)	0.2 (1.2)
Trust people from different nationality (4)	1.82	1.81	1.91	2.0^ (1.1)	1.8^ (1.1)	1.6 (1.1)	2.3* (1.1)
General trust differential (5)	-2.13	-2.18	-2.10	0.9 (1.1)	1.8 (1.1)	1.8 (1.1)	2.3* (1.1)
Arab Barometer 2014							
	Non-member	Member					
Most people are trustworthy (6)	0.26	0.38	--	9.8*** (2.6)	9.1*** (2.6)	8.3*** (2.6)	8.4*** (2.6)

Note (1): Entries are unstandardized coefficients and standard errors (in parentheses), both multiplied by 100.

Note (2): Smallest N = 1771 (WVS) and 1144 (AB). Regression models include the following controls: 1=No controls; 2=Individual-level controls; 3=Individual- and specific district-level controls; 4=Individual-level controls and districts as dummy controls.

Note (3): 0: "Need to be very careful"; 1: "It is possible to trust most people".

Note (4): Scale from 1: "Do not trust at all" to 4: "Trust completely".

Note (5): Difference between trust in people you meet for the first time and trust in family.

Note (6): 0: "Most people are not trustworthy"; 1: "Most people are trustworthy". Entries refer only to non-membership and to general membership.

***Significant at the 0.1% level ($p \leq .001$); **1% level; $p \leq .01$; *5% level ($p \leq .05$); ^10% level ($p \leq .10$), two-tailed.

Color code : Contradicting my hypotheses, and where applicable, statistically significant at or above the 10% level ($p \leq .10$; two-tailed).

I have shown that general trust, specific trust towards in-group and specific trust towards out-group (i.e. people met for the first time and people of another nationality) all positively correlate with membership in voluntary associations, even after controlling for alternative explanatory variables.

The voluntary act of associating with other individuals opens the space to establishing new communities based on elective criteria (i.e. "chosen" by individuals, in opposition to

ascriptive criteria that individuals are born into), with three by-products. Firstly, members of voluntary associations have more opportunities to get in contact and establish ties with other individuals who do not necessarily belong to their natural in-groups (e.g. family, neighborhood, city). Secondly, cooperating with individuals who were not members of any of the natural in-groups helps weaken the distinction that members of voluntary associations make between the similar and the different, which is traditionally based on kinship, tribal and geographic criteria. Thirdly, contact with members of out-groups provides information and narratives that often differ from what is broadly accepted and shared within the traditional in-groups. The combined effect is that having access to different perspectives and meeting trustworthy people who may share little else than passions or beliefs in a social cause, may lead members of voluntary associations to question or at least to put in perspective the information and narrative that are provided by the members of the in-groups. This, in turn, may affect the level of trust in in-group members.

I have shown that there is a strong correlation between multiple types of trust and membership in voluntary associations. However, the direction of causality between them can go both ways. More trusting individuals and individuals who are more open to trusting members of out-groups may be more likely to join voluntary associations, or individuals who participate in voluntary associations may develop more general trust and a smaller trust differential between in-groups and out-groups. The story and evolution of the most prominent and dynamic civil society activist from Zuwara provides valuable insight on these processes. Hussein, a 39-year-old micro-biologist, learned about civil society and its vast array of activities from the internet. His appetite for learning pushed him to approach other young men from Zuwara who had studied in Dubai and Singapore. He picked their brains and learned team management skills, photography and website design, which they

had learned in management school. During the 2011 revolution, when the public space opened up for voluntary associations, he joined forces with them and founded the Zuwara media center, the Union of Zuwara CSOs, and the Zuwara Corruption Fighting Union.⁸² Reflecting on some traits that made him and his group of friends different from others, he pointed out that most of his friends and fellow activists had been traveling across Libya and abroad much more than the average young men in Zuwara. Hussein's account shows that the bonds of trust and cooperation were forged over the years, well before they could engage in public activities and found voluntary associations.

In general, Libyan CSOs bring the country's people together across a multitude of activities and interests. Thus, as it did for women's empowerment and participation, civil society in Libya has created a space for individuals who care about the environment to initiate efforts to clean up their cities, and to spread love and respect for the environment across their country. Some of these movements are "The Libyan Wildlife Trust," "The Cleaning Revolution," "Cleaning up Tripoli," and "Cleaning Up Benghazi."⁸³ These groups span across the country and bring together people from different communities that would have not met otherwise. Voluntary associations often provide opportunities for members of a factionalized society to work together in the pursuit of collective goals, such as environmental protection, charity, the promotion of human rights, youth empowerment, and fighting corruption.

For the purpose of social and political change, a higher level of general trust may reflect a lesser inclination towards social acceptance and conformity. In other words, it may

⁸² Author interview, Zuwara, November 2013. The name has been changed for reasons of security and confidentiality.

⁸³ For more information, see <https://www.facebook.com/LIBYANWILDLIFETRUST>, <https://www.facebook.com/CleaningUpTripoli>, and <https://www.facebook.com/CleaningUpBenghazi>.

betray a greater propensity to challenge traditional and familial figures and a greater openness towards establishing ties based on common, elective interests. These attitudes are precisely what may drive the transition from a *Gemeinschaft* (i.e. a “community” or “communal society”) to a *Gesellschaft* (i.e. a “society” or “associational society”), which Max Weber described as necessary for the development of a consensual and rational agreement on which a national system of governance can be built.

c. Tolerance

1. Measurement

In order to measure tolerance, I make use of two clusters of questions posed by the World Values Survey, which ask about attitudes towards different groups of people. I did not aggregate the results into a composite index for two reasons. First, it makes it harder to understand what the mean values and the coefficients mean. Secondly, each category represents a distinct basis for diversity, such as drug consumption, sexual preference and religion. Tolerance towards one group may not imply more tolerance towards another.

The second cluster of questions in the World Values Survey asks the extent to which different actions are justifiable or not. This question is similar to the previous, although it does not present a specific scenario (such as being neighbors) and therefore has a more general, hypothetical framing. The Arab Barometer asks only one question on tolerance, specifically on religious tolerance.

2. Empirical evidence

According to my first hypothesis, voluntary associations embody a civic culture if their members display more tolerance than non-members. As the mean values in Table 5.4 show, the data support this hypothesis. Eleven out of twelve indicators across both surveys indicate that members of voluntary associations are more tolerant than non-members. The only category that is an exception is immigrants / foreign workers, towards whom members of voluntary associations show a very slightly lower level of tolerance than non-members.

Table 5.4: Effect of tolerance variables on membership in voluntary associations

	H1: Comparison between sample means			H2: Correlation coefficients for the difference in means (times 100) (1) (2)			
	Non-member	Non-active member	Active member	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
World Values Survey 2013							
"Please select groups you would not wish to have as neighbors." 1) Selected; 2) Not selected							
People of a different race	1.42	1.44	1.53	7.5*** (1.9)	7.1*** (2.0)	6.5*** (1.9)	6.7*** (2.0)
People infected with HIV	1.28	1.35	1.34	4.8* (2.0)	6.3** (2.2)	5.5* (2.2)	6.1** (2.2)
Immigrants/foreign workers	1.42	1.39	1.39	-1.6 (1.9)	-2.1 (2.0)	-2.0 (2.0)	-1.0 (2.0)
Homosexuals	1.21	1.28	1.29	7.3*** (2.2)	10.0*** (2.4)	9.0*** (2.4)	8.9*** (2.4)
People of a different religion (3)	1.45	1.46	1.47	1.2 (1.9)	0.5 (1.9)	0.1 (1.9)	0.4 (1.9)
Alcoholics	1.16	1.21	1.20	4.1^ (2.4)	6.0* (2.6)	3.5 (2.6)	4.7^ (2.7)
People who speak a different language	1.60	1.56	1.65	4.7* (1.9)	3.8^ (2.0)	4.3* (2.0)	4.3^ (2.0)
"For each of the following actions, please tell me which is 1) not at all justifiable, or 10) always justifiable, or falls in between."							
Homosexuality	1.65	2.07	2.47	3.1*** (4.0)	3.3*** (0.5)	3.0*** (0.5)	2.5*** (0.5)
Divorce	3.29	3.56	3.29	-0.1 (0.3)	-0.2 (0.4)	-0.3 (0.4)	-0.4 (0.4)
Pre-marital sex	1.37	2.05	1.91	3.0*** (0.6)	2.6*** (0.6)	2.0** (0.7)	1.4^ (0.8)
Suicide	1.44	1.83	1.73	1.6** (0.6)	1.9** (0.6)	1.2^ (0.7)	0.4 (0.8)
Arab Barometer 2014							
	Non-member	Member					
"To what extent do you agree with this statement: Religious minorities such as Christians and Shi'a have the right to practice their religion freely?" Scale ranging from 1) "Strongly disagree" to 4) "Strongly agree"							
Religious minorities (3)	2.61	2.83	--	3.0** (1.1)	2.3* (1.1)	2.4* (1.1)	2.3* (1.1)

Note (1): Entries are unstandardized coefficients and standard errors (in parentheses), both multiplied by 100.

Note (2): Smallest N = 1879 (WVS) and 1089 (AB). Regression models include the following controls: 1=No controls; 2=Individual-level controls; 3=Individual- and specific district-level controls; 4=Individual-level controls and districts as dummy controls.

Note (3): Individual-level control variable "religiosity" was omitted from all models to avoid cancelling part of the variation of the outcome variable.

***Significant at the 0.1% level ($p \leq .001$); **1% level; $p \leq .01$; *5% level ($p \leq .05$); ^10% level ($p \leq .10$), two-tailed.

Color code : Contradicting my hypotheses, and where applicable, statistically significant at or above the 10% level ($p \leq .10$; two-tailed).

Do the data support my second hypothesis as well? Despite the conflicting findings in the empirical literature on the subject, data for both the World Values Survey and the Arab Barometer presented in Table 5.4 show unequivocally that individuals who display a higher level of tolerance towards any of the seventeen out-groups or non-mainstream and contentious behaviors, are more likely to be members of voluntary associations (for

the sake of conciseness I have only included eleven in the Table above, however all results are consistent with those presented. The complete list of indicators can be found in the survey questions listed in Appendix 4). There are only two exceptions: people who are more tolerant towards divorcees and towards immigrants/foreign workers do not appear to be more likely to be members of voluntary associations, however the correlations are not statistically significant in any of the levels.

Even after controlling for both individual-level and district-level variables (model 4), nine out of the seventeen tolerance indicators across different questions, including the only one available for the Arab Barometer, show a positive correlation with membership in voluntary associations, at least at the 10 percent level of significance (eight out of the eleven indicators included in the table below). Individuals who are open towards having neighbors from the following categories: People of a different race; people infected with HIV; homosexuals; unmarried couples living together; people who speak a different language - are more likely to be members of voluntary associations. More specifically, even at the most restrictive level of controls and at the 0.1 percent level of significance, the multivariable regression analysis shows that individuals who are open towards having people of a different race and homosexuals as neighbors are 6.7 and 8.9 percentage points more likely to be members of voluntary associations (Table 5.4). These are two categories of people towards whom there is a widespread discrimination and intolerance across Libya.

Individuals who are one point more likely to justify homosexuality as an acceptable behavior on a ten-point scale are 2.5 percentage points more likely to be members of voluntary associations, at the 0.1 percentage level of significance. Similarly, individuals who are one point more likely to justify pre-marital sex as an acceptable behavior on a

ten-point scale are 1.4 percentage points more likely to be members of voluntary associations, at the 10 percentage level of significance. This means that compared to those who consider these two behaviors not at all justifiable (1 on the answer scale), those who think that homosexuality and pre-marital sex are always justifiable (10 on the answer scale) are 22.5 and 12.6 percentage points more likely to be members of voluntary associations, respectively. Lastly, individuals who are one point more likely to agree with the right of Christians and Shi'a to practice their religion freely on a four-point scale, are 2.3 percentage points more likely to be members of a voluntary association, with a significance at the 5 percent level.

In short, more than half of the indicators of tolerance show a positive and statistically significant correlation with membership in voluntary associations, while the rest do not show any statistically significant results. Thus, there is strong empirical evidence that tolerance is positively correlated with membership in voluntary associations.

As anecdotal evidence, I believe that one of my first experiences with the Libyan society and with members of voluntary associations is worth sharing. I was marked by this experience and others, which highlighted the contrast between the very unusual and courageous tolerance and openness of some civil society activists, and the socially prevailing intolerance and close-mindedness (confirmed by the data in Table 4.2 presented in Chapter 4, comparing levels of conservativeness, tolerance, and openness to other religions in Libya to those in other countries in the region).

In January 2012, I was the director of capacity-building program funded by the National Endowment for Democracy that I had designed to help young Libyan activists design and implement their civil society initiatives. I interviewed dozens of young men and women, and examined the goals they wanted to achieve for their community, in order to select

twelve participants for the program. Among them I selected Omar,⁸⁴ a young health worker at the Tripoli Center for Disease Control and a dynamic civil society activist. His project was officially to provide health education to youth. In reality, his objective was to reach out to homosexuals in Tripoli, to provide them with a space for discussion and give them means of protection against HIV, under the cover of a socially acceptable project. As a health worker on infectious diseases he knew that homosexuals were the population most at risk to contract HIV, and also that they were violently persecuted and had no public space to find counseling and socialize.

My deputy at the Libyan-American Non-Governmental Organization NGO, a well-traveled and open-minded 30 years-old professional, and other Libyans I consulted, explained that within weeks of the beginning of the program, neighbors would have noticed the passage of young men and would have found out about their sexual orientation. Libyan interlocutors I consulted, also civil society activists, had sympathy for the project, but they assured me that once the information had spread, a militia would have come to attack and close the NGO training center I managed and kidnap its participants. Despite the fact that the project was much needed and very well thought-through, I had to decline his application. After that episode, during the two years I spent in Libya, I noticed that hardly anyone showed tolerance towards homosexuals except for several members of voluntary associations and well-traveled individuals.

This anecdote serves to show that many Libyan members of voluntary associations show tolerance towards homosexuals and some want to develop programs to address their

⁸⁴ His real name was changed to ensure his safety.

needs, while the prevailing social attitude towards homosexuals among Libyans is marked by intolerance, and often violent repression.

d. Religiosity

I expect religious openness and secularism to be positively correlated with membership in voluntary associations, even after controlling for individual- and context-level variables. The correlation of civic engagement with religious piety depends on the specific aspects of religiosity in Libya. In principle, religious piety understood and exercised individually and privately should not have an impact on the level of civic engagement. Instead, those aspects of religious piety that affect attitudes towards others and involve social practices should be positively correlated with membership in voluntary associations.

Secondly, overall I expect members of voluntary associations to be less pious, display more religious openness and be more secular than non-members.

1. Measurement

The measurement of religious openness is a problematic issue, given that it relates to subjective spiritual attitudes whose exterior manifestations (e.g. church or mosque attendance) and practices (e.g. prayers) are influenced by demographic and environmental factors (e.g. age; gender; surrounding social conservativeness) and traditions. Unfortunately, most questions on religiosity used in the World Values Survey and in the Arab Barometer (listed in Appendix 4) are not ideal measures of religious

openness. However, they are helpful in gauging indirectly religious openness and also other aspects of religiosity.

I try to gauge religious openness in the Leadership in Civil Society survey through a novel question that Libyan researchers, civil society activists and I designed collaboratively. Respondents were asked: "Talking about religion, would you mind telling me which of the following most applies to you?" Responses are ranked along increasing levels of autonomy in the search for religious guidance as follows: (1) I take my religious guidance from a specific religious sheikh; (2) I follow a specific religious approach; (3) I choose from different religious interpretations; (4) I follow my own mind/reason. This novel question seeks to gauge the level of religious openness on a spectrum ranging from narrow observance and unicity in the source of guidance to openness and autonomy. The rationale is that more religious autonomy and openness to multiple sources of religious guidance is conducive to greater tolerance towards different religious beliefs and practices, and more broadly towards different social behaviors.

Other World Values Survey and Arab Barometer questions gauge the level of religious piety and some aspects of secularism.

2. Empirical evidence

As mentioned earlier, the data on religiosity and membership in voluntary associations in Libya are more complex to analyze than data on other attitudes. For this reason, it is particularly important to understand the cultural context in order to interpret the survey results.

Firstly, religion and religious practices are part of the social practices, therefore it is difficult to confine religion in the private realm. Secondly, the “political society” is only beginning to emerge in Libya. At the time when these surveys were administered, only two to three years had passed since the end of the Gadhafi regime and Libyans had only voted twice in a general election, in July 2012 and February 2014. Over the span of these few years, major divisions across religious lines started to emerge among political parties, leading many Libyans to appreciate the consequences of mixing politics and religion in the public realm. Lastly, and most importantly, for over four decades, Libyans were not free to associate. The only form of public voluntary associations that were somewhat tolerated by the regime were charities, in observance of zakat, one of the five pillars of the Islamic faith. Therefore, associational life and religiously-based charity became solidly intertwined in the collective consciousness. As a result, a majority of Libyans today still believe that the only function of civil society is charity, in accordance with the religious precepts. This cultural trait found empirical support in the LCS survey I conducted among 1022 leaders of voluntary associations, as shown in the chapter describing voluntary associations in Libya.

In response to the second hypothesis, let us see how, as a whole, members of voluntary associations compare to non-members along religious attitudes and behaviors without keeping any other variable constant.

Indicators of religious piety provide conflicting evidence regarding members of voluntary associations. The only one that shows consistent evidence for non-active and active members and across both surveys is one’s own perception of religious piety: Members of voluntary associations are less likely to describe themselves as religious persons than non-members.

The data are much more conclusive for religious openness. All measures of religious openness (two from the WVS, and two in the AB) show that members of voluntary associations are more open than non-members. Lastly, all four indicators of secularism show that members of voluntary associations are *less* secular than non-members. Specifically, they are more likely to agree that imams should have an influence over government decisions; they are more likely to disagree with separating religious practices from social and political life; they are more likely to agree with allowing religious associations and institutions (excluding political parties) influence voters' decisions in elections; and they are also more favorable to the use of mosques for election campaigning.

Overall, members of voluntary associations are less likely to consider themselves as religious persons but they are more likely to attend religious rituals. As discussed above, this may be explained by the fact that, besides its religious meaning, going to the mosque has a social value and meaning that has to do with integration and participation in the life of the community. The most conclusive findings on religiousness and civic engagement regards religious openness, which show that members of voluntary associations display more religious openness than non-members. Finally, members of voluntary associations are less secular than non-members, meaning that they are more likely to agree with the interference of religion in politics and society.

Table 5.5: Effect of religiosity on membership in voluntary associations (World Values Survey 2013)

	H1: Comparison between sample means			H2: Correlation coefficients for the difference in means (times 100) (1) (2)			
	Non-member	Non-active member	Active member	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Religious piety							
Perception of own piety (3)	1.25	1.25	1.32	6.1** (2.1)	5.5* (2.2)	5.7* (2.2)	5.7* (2.2)
Pray (4)	1.29	1.46	1.52	21.2** (6.7)	13.6* (6.5)	11.6^ (6.5)	13.2* (6.4)
Attend religious rituals (5)	3.63	3.71	3.32	-32.0** (11.6)	-23.8* (11.6)	-21.7^ (11.5)	-26.1* (11.5)
Importance of religious faith (6)	0.19	0.22	0.26	7.3*** (2.3)	6.4** (2.3)	6.0** (2.3)	6.2** (2.4)
Religious openness							
Religion as observance or altruism (7)	1.67	1.61	1.71	4.0^ (2.1)	5.1* (2.1)	6.1** (2.1)	6.4** (2.2)
Only acceptable religion is my religion (8)	1.17	1.23	1.24	4.5* (1.9)	4.9* (2.0)	3.6^ (2.0)	4.2* (2.0)

Note (1): Entries are unstandardized coefficients and standard errors (in parentheses), both multiplied by 100. Smallest N = 1805. Regression models include the following controls: 1=No controls; 2=Individual-level controls; 3=Individual- and specific district-level controls; 4=Individual-level controls and districts as dummy controls.

Note (2): "Religiosity" was omitted from all models as an Individual-level control to avoid controlling for part of the variation of the outcome variable.

Note (3): "Regardless of whether or not you attend religious rituals, do you think you are 1) a religious person, 2) not a religious person or 3) atheist"

Note (4): "Besides on wedding ceremonies and funerals, how many times do you pray?" Scale: 1) several times a day; to 8) never, practically I don't pray

Note (5): "Besides wedding ceremonies and funerals, how often do you attend religious rituals these days?" Scale from 1) more than once a week; to 7) practically never

Note (6): "This is a list of habits children may be encouraged to learn at home. If you do not think they are all not important, what do you consider particularly important? Please choose up to five habits: Religious faith." Options are 0) Mentioned or 1) Not mentioned

Note (7): "Which of the following statements do you agree with most? The basic meaning of religion is: 1) observance of religious ceremonies and rituals, or 2) doing good to others."

Note (8): "Please tell us whether you 1) strongly agree, 2) agree, 3) disagree or 4) strongly disagree with the following statements: The only acceptable religion is my religion"

***Significant at the 0.1% level ($p \leq .001$); **1% level; $p \leq .01$; *5% level ($p \leq .05$); ^10% level ($p \leq .10$), two-tailed.

Color code : Contradicting my hypotheses, and where applicable, statistically significant at or above the 10% level ($p \leq .10$; two-tailed).

Table 5.6: Effect of religiosity on membership in voluntary associations (Arab Barometer 2014)

	H2: Comparison between sample means		H1: Correlation coefficients for the difference in means (times 100) (1) (2)			
	Non-member	Member	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Religious piety						
Perception of own piety (3)	1.85	1.89	2.0 (2.0)	-0.2 (2.1)	-1.7 (2.1)	-1.8 (2.1)
Pray (4)	1.13	1.11	-1.8 (3.0)	-0.9 (3.1)	-0.5 (3.0)	-0.5 (3.1)
Attend Friday prayers (5)	1.24	1.15	-5.3* (2.7)	-2.2 (2.7)	-2.6 (2.7)	-1.7 (2.7)
Listen to or read the Quran (6)	1.87	1.83	-0.9 (1.5)	-1.7 (1.5)	-1.5 (1.5)	-0.7 (1.5)
Religious openness						
Opinion on Shari'a (7)	1.21	1.27	6.4* (2.9)	3.4 (2.9)	2.2 (2.9)	2.1 (2.9)
Opinion on religious interpretation (8)	2.82	2.98	2.5* (1.2)	1.1 (1.2)	1.1 (1.2)	1.0 (1.2)
Secularism						
Opinion on public religious practices (9)	2.92	2.87	-1.2 (1.4)	-0.3 (1.4)	-0.7 (1.4)	-0.3 (1.4)
Opinion on public role of religious associations (10)	3.10	3.03	-1.9 (1.6)	-2.7^ (1.6)	-2.8^ (1.5)	-2.4 (1.5)
Opinion on political role of mosques (11)	3.45	3.34	-3.0* (1.5)	-3.9** (1.5)	-3.5* (1.5)	-3.1* (1.5)

Note (1): Entries are unstandardized coefficients and standard errors (in parentheses), both multiplied by 100. Smallest N=803. Regression models include the following controls: 1=No controls; 2=Individual-level controls; 3=Individual- and specific district-level controls; 4=Individual-level controls and districts as dummy controls.

Note (2): "Religiosity" was omitted from all models as an Individual-level control to avoid controlling for part of the variation of the outcome variable.

Note (3): "Generally speaking, would you describe yourself as (1) Religious; (2) Somewhat religious; or (3) Not religious."

Note (4): "Do you pray daily?" Scale from (1) Always; to (5) Never.

Note (5): "Do you attend Friday prayer?" Scale from (1) Always; to (5) Never.

Note (6): "Do you listen or read the Quran?" Scale from (1) Always; to (5) Never.

Note (7): "I will read two sentences; I want you to tell me which one is closer to what you think even if neither one of them captures your opinion exactly: (1) Shari'a is the word of god; (2) Shari'a is the human interpretation of the word of God."

Note (8): "To what extent do you agree with each of these statements: Difference and variation between Islamic scholars with regard to their interpretation of religious matters is a good thing." Scale from (1) I absolutely disagree; to (4) I strongly agree.

Note (9): "Religious practices are private and should be separated from social and political life" Scale from (1) Strongly disagree; to (4) Strongly agree.

Note (10): "Religious associations and institutions (excluding political parties) should not influence voters' decisions in elections." Scale from (1) Strongly disagree; to (4) Strongly agree.

Note (11): "Mosques and churches should not be used for election campaigning." Scale from (1) Strongly disagree; to (4) Strongly agree.

***Significant at the 0.1% level ($p \leq .001$); **1% level; $p \leq .01$; *5% level ($p \leq .05$); ^10% level ($p \leq .10$), two-tailed.

Color code : Contradicting my hypotheses, and where applicable, statistically significant at or above the 10% level ($p \leq .10$; two-tailed).

To confirm my second hypothesis, I would expect to find that religious piety is negatively correlated to membership in voluntary associations, whereas religious openness and secularism are positively correlated with it, even after controlling for alternative explanatory variables. Note that some of the original scales were inverted so that all the indicators have coherent scales in which higher values represent less religious piety, more religious openness and more secularism. At any rate, the final scales are all presented in the tables' footnotes.

The World Values Survey provides evidence that religious piety is negatively correlated with membership in voluntary associations. Individuals who are one point less likely to define themselves as a religious person on a three-point scale (e.g. the difference between seeing one's self as a religious person and seeing one's self as not being a religious person) are 5.7 percentage points more likely to be active members of voluntary associations (Table 5.5). This difference is statistically significant at the 5 percent level. A similar question in the AB does not provide any statistically significant evidence.

A one-point decrease in the frequency of praying on an eight-point scale corresponds to a 13.2 percentage points greater likelihood of being an active members of a voluntary association. In other words, the frequency of prayer strongly negatively correlates with active membership in voluntary associations. Similarly, individuals who *did not* choose "religious faith" among habits they consider important to teach children at home are 6.2 percentage points more likely to be active members of voluntary associations. Note that, as for other indicators, the scale was inverted ((0) shows that faith was mentioned and (1) that it was not mentioned).

Both these correlations with active membership in associations are statistically significant across all regression models and remain significant at least at the 5 percent level in the

most restrictive model. Similar questions in the Arab Barometer show the opposite direction of correlation, but the effects are very small and none of them shows any statistical significance in any of the multivariable models, when controls are added. Overall, the only statistically significant evidence shows that individuals who are less pious are more likely to be active members of voluntary associations, except when the indicator is attendance of religious rituals.

In fact, a one-point decrease in the frequency of attendance of religious rituals on a seven-point scale corresponds to an impressive 26.1 percentage points *decrease* in likelihood of being an active member of a voluntary association, with a significance at the 5 percent level for the most restrictive regression model (model 4).

The positive correlation between attendance of religious rituals and active membership in voluntary associations is surprising when compared to the negative correlation with the frequency of praying. This may be due to the fact that attendance of religious rituals is more an indication of the degree of involvement and integration in the life of the community, than a higher level of religious piety. As Yousef K. B. notes: “Mosques [...] are much more than strictly religious institution to be used only for religious rituals. Mosques tend to serve as open spaces in neighborhoods around the Muslim world, where people gather for religious services, prayers, but also to meet others, hang out, take a break from work” (2011). Thus, it is understandable that individuals who are more civically engaged are also more engaged in social practices writ large, such as attending gatherings at the mosque.

This discrepancy between religious practices and religious piety became clear during the first survey I conducted in Libya in November 2011, one month after the official end of the revolution that toppled Gadhafi. One of the questions I asked was: “how many times

do you go to the mosque for prayer?” After almost all the respondents had chosen “five times a day”, I tried to elicit comments on their religiosity from a few of them after the interview, noting that they were quite pious. Most of them told me that they were not religious at all, but that praying at the mosque five times a day was a healthy practice to take a break and disconnect from the rush of life, that it was an opportunity to see neighbors, friends, and family, and that it was also an issue of preserving their public image and reputation in their community.

In light of these explanations, and based on the significant evidence offered by the World Values Survey, it can be said that overall religiously pious individuals are less likely to be active members of voluntary associations than less pious or atheist individuals. At the same time, individuals who participate more often in religious rituals are much more likely to be active members of voluntary associations. The fact that either one of these activities is a form of social participation may explain this apparent paradox. Individuals may participate in religious rituals as a sign of integration and participation in the life of their community, rather than as an expression of piety.

In terms of religious openness, the World Values Survey data show that individuals who agree with the statement that the basic meaning of religion is doing good to others and disagree with the statement that their religion is the only acceptable religion are 6.4 and 4.2 percentage points more likely to be active members of voluntary associations than those who have the opposite opinion, with a significance at or above the 5 percent level when controlling for all individual and district-level variables.

These findings are somewhat supported by the Arab Barometer data, which show that respondents who agree that Shari’a is the human interpretation of the word of God (rather than being the word of God) and those who think that the difference and variation

between Islamic scholars with regard to their interpretation of religious matters is a good thing are more likely to be members of voluntary associations than those who hold the opposite views. The correlation between these differences in means and membership in associations is positive and statistically significant in the simple regression (model 1), but neither one of these correlations remain significant when adding controls. Therefore, the Arab Barometer evidence is not conclusive in showing a statistically significant correlation between religious openness and membership in voluntary associations, independent of other explanatory variables.

Nevertheless, based on the statistically significant empirical evidence provided by the World Values Survey and the consistent evidence available in the descriptive statistics of the Arab Barometer data, it is possible to conclude that there is a positive correlation between religious openness and membership in associations. In other words, individuals who are more open in the religious profession of their faith and in the interpretation of its scriptures are more likely to be members of voluntary associations compared to individuals who have a more rigid and closed attitude towards faith.

Despite the fact that membership in voluntary associations seems to be correlated with lower levels of religious piety, it also appears to be correlated with a greater propensity towards the mixing of religion and politics in both associational life and in mosques, which is a non-secular attitude. Individuals who are less likely to separate politics and religion in the public realm, as indicated by the four indicators in the Arab Barometer table (Table 5.6) are more likely to be members of voluntary associations. However, of these four indicators, only one shows a statistically significant correlation (at the 5 percent level) across the regression models. Here too, it is important to take into consideration the specific cultural context in Libya.

In summary, individuals who are less religiously pious are more likely to be active members of voluntary associations than those who are more pious. However, those who attend religious rituals more often are much more likely to be active members of voluntary associations. Most importantly, individuals who are less likely to be rigid in the religious profession of their faith and in the interpretation of its scriptures are more likely to be members of voluntary associations. Lastly, individuals who support the idea that mosques may be used for election campaigning are also more likely to be members of voluntary associations.

If secular attitudes and attendance of religious rituals are set aside for the specific reasons explained above, these findings show that religious piety and conservativeness (i.e. the opposite of religious openness) are negatively correlated with active membership in voluntary associations. However, the divergence of findings among different aspects of religiosity confirm that it is a multifaceted trait, whose correlation with civic engagement is complex. If anything, these findings invite to pushback against dominant and univocal Western liberal notions about religiosity and civic participation.

e. Support for gender equality

Based on the definition and theoretical premises, I expect to find that support for gender equality correlates positively with membership in voluntary associations, even when individual and context-level alternative explanatory variables are kept constant. I also expect members of voluntary associations to be more supportive of gender equality than non-members.

1. Measurement

In order to gauge the level of support for gender equality, the World Values Survey and the Arab Barometer ask two batteries of questions each (see Appendix 4). As in previous sections, for the sake of consistency I have recoded all the scales so that a higher mean value for any of the questions indicates a greater support for gender equality.

2. Empirical evidence

In Libya, women's empowerment and public participation have been one of the most impressive immediate gains from the 2011 revolution. Libyan women were at the forefront of the 2011 uprising, beginning with the February 2011 protests in Benghazi that started it. The seven months of fighting that culminated with the toppling of the Gadhafi regime witnessed Libyan women preparing meals for the fighters on the frontlines, providing medical assistance to the injured, smuggling arms, and conveying important information to commanders. The important role that many women played during the revolution empowered them and changed their ideas about their participation in the public space. Following a set of focus group discussions with Libyan citizens in the months following the revolution, an international NGO worker noted that "women were particularly proud of the roles that they had played in the revolution and were looking forward to actively participating in the next phase of Libya's transition."⁸⁵

As a consequence of the important public role Libyan women played during the revolution, many of them formed voluntary associations and have been advancing the role of women in Libyan society and politics. As an example, while the revolution was still

⁸⁵ Doherty (2012, 3).

ongoing, prominent women lawyers and professors in Benghazi founded the Attawasul Institute for Women, Youth and Children and organized weekly dialogues on women's rights as well as public events to discuss Libya's unfolding transition. In November 2011, just one month after the official end of the revolution, Attawasul organized the first national women's conference, together with the Voice of Libyan Women, a prominent women's association founded in Tripoli at the end of the revolution by returning diaspora young women.

The large presence of women associations is confirmed by the Leadership in Civil Society survey I conducted in Libya in 2013-14. Among all voluntary associations surveyed, 12 percent identified themselves as women associations. This is a remarkably high prevalence of women associations if one compares it with Tunisia, where only 1 percent of associations were women organizations.⁸⁶ However, the proportion of women associations in civil society is at least in part a function of the specific cultural context, and a better condition of women in society may actually result in a smaller number of women associations. Furthermore, a large presence of women associations does not necessarily equate with a strong movement for women's rights. In other words, the participation of women in civil society is one thing, while their engagement in activities aimed at furthering gender equality and empowering women is another. In fact, only 28 percent of voluntary associations that self-identified as women associations chose "gender equality and women empowerment" as one of their three areas of work. This discrepancy was most visible in the conservative city of Misrata, where only 5 percent of women associations focused on gender equality and women empowerment. Strikingly, in

⁸⁶ 2015 data, from the Information Centre, training, research and documentation on associations (IFEDA), available at: <http://www.ifeda.org.tn/fr/>.

Misrata, more non-women's associations focused on gender equality and women empowerment than women's associations. Nonetheless, 15 percent of all associations in the six cities surveyed indicated gender equality and women's empowerment as one of their three main work areas.

The situation has certainly changed since 2014, given that discrimination against women and their marginalization from the public space has redoubled since the euphoric first two years following the 2011 revolution, largely because of the deterioration of security, the rise of religious extremism, and the complete absence of protection on behalf of state institutions. However, women associations continue to be some of the most engaged, dynamic and innovative voluntary associations in Libya, such as the Libyan Women Platform for Peace,⁸⁷ Project Silphium,⁸⁸ the Voice of Libyan Women,⁸⁹ and hundreds of other less known women associations.

Besides these women associations, the bulk of Libyan voluntary associations are contributing to provide a space for women to participate in the social and political life of their country, and a series of opportunities to develop their skills, gain knowledge, and express their potential. Men activists work alongside with women activists despite the prevalent social conservatism and the very tangible threats against gender diversity in public settings and against women playing a public role.

A telling episode occurred in Tripoli in September 2013, just one week after our research team began interviews. In all cities where I conducted the LCS survey, I partnered with a local voluntary association. Together, we would select the members of the research team, making sure that at least half of them were women. In Tripoli, a few weeks after the

⁸⁷ See <http://lwpp.org/>

⁸⁸ See <https://projectsilphium.wordpress.com/>

⁸⁹ See <http://www.vlwlibya.org/#>

beginning of the research, the presence of a mixed team of young men and women activists working long hours in the lobby of a large hotel raised the suspicion of a very powerful and conservative Islamist militia that was in charge of the hotel security. Some militia members stopped a few researchers and questioned them about their work, asserting that women were not supposed to stay outside their house after dark and that they should not be conducting surveys alongside men. Moad, the young activist I appointed as the research Team Leader, gathered some of his friends from his neighborhood militia and came back to speak with the head of the local militia patrol that had questioned the researchers.⁹⁰ He defended the legitimacy and legality of the research and the role of the women activists as members of voluntary associations and as researchers for this project. Despite the threat posed by this well-known Islamist militia, all the team members stood by their women colleagues; a few days later, we were able to resume the research without further incidents.

Libyans commonly make the link between voluntary associations and the promotion of gender equality. Abdul, a young civil society activist from Misrata, a city known for its conservative social mores, noted that “most of the women who don’t wear the hijab [i.e. the veil covering the hair] are members of a civil society organization”. He also lamented that the association that many Libyans make between voluntary associations and the emancipation of women led to the private derogatory joke that some Libyans make, by

⁹⁰ This sort of posturing is common practice in Libya when dealing with militias. It signals that their interlocutors are backed by their own affiliated militias and / or tribes, which typically opens the way for discussions and mediation. In this case, we produced the official documents authorizing the research and we explained its nature and scope.

distorting the name for civil society into a very derogatory name that presents it as a society of women with libertine social mores.⁹¹

In fact, voluntary associations in Libya are at the forefront of advancing gender equality and allowing women to enter the public space and influence society and politics. This observation is supported by the World Values Survey and the Arab Barometer data, which are both consistent in showing that members of voluntary associations display greater support for gender equality than non-members and that support for gender equality is positively correlated with membership in voluntary associations even after controlling for alternative explanatory variables.

In response to my first hypothesis on the civic nature of voluntary associations, five indicators out of seven in the World Values Survey show that active members of voluntary associations have a higher level of support for gender equality (i.e. higher sample mean) than non-members (see Table 5.7). One indicator shows almost no variation across these two groups (i.e. "Job as independence"). Conversely, active members of voluntary associations are more likely to think that, in general, men make better business executives than women do (i.e. "Women business executives").

The evidence from the Arab Barometer is less supportive of my first hypothesis. In fact, all three indicators of gender equality show that members of voluntary associations are less likely to support gender equality than non-members.

However, these contradicting results are due to other influencing factors. In particular, 61 percent of active members of voluntary associations (WVS), and 66 percent of members of voluntary associations (AB) are men, compared to 48 percent (WVS) and 45

⁹¹ Author interviews, skype, April 2016. The name has been changed for reasons of security and confidentiality.

percent (AB) of non-members. When this gender imbalance is controlled for, members of voluntary associations show a greater level of support for gender equality than non-members along all indicators.

Table 5.7: Effect of attitude towards gender equality on membership in voluntary associations (WVS 2013)

	H1: Comparison between sample means			H2: Correlation coefficients for the difference in means (times 100) (1) (2)			
	Non-member	Non-active member	Active member	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
"Do you 1) agree, or 2) neither agree or disagree, or 3) disagree with the following statement:							
Equality in employment (3)	1.46	1.49	1.48	0.5 (1.2)	0.7 (1.3)	0.4 (1.3)	0.1 (1.3)
Equality in income (4)	1.89	1.91	2.00	2.8* (1.1)	3.6** (1.2)	3.8*** (1.2)	3.4** (1.2)
Job as independence (5)	2.31	2.25	2.30	-0.3 (1.1)	0.6 (1.2)	0.0 (1.2)	-0.6 (1.2)
For each of the following statements, which I will read out, could you tell me to what extent you 1) strongly agree, or 2) agree, or 3) disagree, or 4) strongly disagree:							
Working mothers (6)	1.99	2.12	2.17	3.0** (1.0)	2.9** (1.1)	2.2* (1.1)	2.0^ (1.1)
Equality in education (7)	2.76	2.56	2.79	0.9 (0.9)	1.9^ (1.0)	2.3* (1.0)	1.9^ (1.0)
Women business executives (8)	1.94	1.86	1.84	-1.5^ (0.9)	-1.0 (1.1)	-1.0 (1.1)	-0.8 (1.1)
Housewife versus employed (9)	2.12	2.09	2.34	3.8*** (0.9)	4.3*** (1.0)	4.0*** (1.0)	3.9*** (1.0)

Note (1): Entries are unstandardized coefficients and standard errors (in parentheses), both multiplied by 100. Regression models include the following controls: 1=No controls; 2=Individual-level controls; 3=Individual- and specific district-level controls; 4=Individual-level controls and districts as dummy controls.

Note (2): Smallest N = 1803. Regression models include the following controls: 1=No controls; 2=Individual-level controls; 3=Individual- and specific district-level controls; 4=Individual-level controls and districts as dummy controls.

Note (3): "When jobs are scarce, men should have more right to get a job than women"

Note (4): "If the wife earns more money than her husband most likely this will create problems."

Note (5): "Getting a job is the best way for a woman to be an independent person.". Scale was inverted for consistency.

Note (6): "When a mother earns a job, the children suffer."

Note (7): "University education is more important for a boy than for a girl."

Note (8): "In general, men make better business executives than women do."

Note (9): "Housewife chores are just as fulfilling as a paid job"

***Significant at the 0.1% level ($p \leq .001$); **1% level; $p \leq .01$; *5% level ($p \leq .05$); ^10% level ($p \leq .10$), two-tailed.

Color code : Contradicting my hypotheses, and where applicable, statistically significant at or above the 10% level ($p \leq .10$; two-tailed).

Table 5.8: Effect of attitude towards gender equality on membership in voluntary associations (AB 2014)

	H1: Comparison between sample means		H2: Correlation coefficients for the difference in means (times 100) (1) (2)			
	Non-member	Member	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Freedom of employment (3)	3.26	3.14	-2.8* (1.3)	-0.1 (1.5)	-0.4 (1.5)	0.1 (1.5)
Women as leaders (4)	1.84	1.79	-1.0 (1.3)	0.8 (1.3)	1.0 (1.3)	1.0 (1.3)
Equality in education (5)	3.08	3.03	-0.8 (1.2)	2.5* (1.3)	2.4^ (1.3)	2.5* (1.3)

Note (1): Entries are unstandardized coefficients and standard errors (in parentheses), both multiplied by 100. Regression models include the following controls: 1=No controls; 2=Individual-level controls; 3=Individual- and specific district-level controls; 4=Individual-level controls and districts as dummy controls.

Note (2): Smallest N=1083

Note (3): "I will read a set of statements that relate to the status of women in our society in order to gauge the extent of your agreement or disagreement with each statement: A married woman can work outside the home." Scale from (1) strongly disagree to (4) strongly agree.

Note (4): "I will read a set of statements that relate to the status of women in our society in order to gauge the extent of your agreement or disagreement with each statement: In general, men are better at political leadership than women. Scale from (1) Strongly agree; to (4) Strongly disagree

Note (5): "I will read a set of statements that relate to the status of women in our society in order to gauge the extent of your agreement or disagreement with each statement: university education is more important for a boy than for a girl." Scale from (1) Strongly agree; to (4) Strongly disagree

***Significant at the 0.1% level ($p \leq .001$); **1% level; $p \leq .01$; *5% level ($p \leq .05$); ^10% level ($p \leq .10$), two-tailed.

Color code : Contradicting my hypotheses, and where applicable, statistically significant at or above the 10% level ($p \leq .10$; two-tailed).

Does this apparent correlation between support for gender equality and membership in voluntary associations hold when controlling for other explanatory variables (H2)? While keeping alternative explanatory variables constant, five indicators of support for gender equality show a statistically significant, positive correlation with membership in voluntary associations, while no indicator shows a statistically significant, negative correlation.

In particular, the World Values Survey data show that individuals who are one point (on a three-point scale) more likely to disagree with the statement: "If the wife earns more money than her husband most likely this will create problems" are 3.4 percentage points more likely to be active members of voluntary associations, after controlling for individual- and district-level alternative explanatory variables (Table 5.7, model 4). This correlation is statistically significant in all models, and is significant at the 1 percent level in model 4, which includes the most restrictive level of controls. The results for model 4

regressions also show a statistically significant, negative correlation between support for any of the following statements and membership in associations: "When a mother earns a job, the children suffer"; "university education is more important for a boy than for a girl"; and "housewife chores are just as fulfilling as a paid job". The first two correlations are significant only at the 10 percent level in the most restrictive model 4, whereas the last shows a very strong 0.1 percent level of significance across all regression models.

The Arab Barometer data show that members of voluntary associations have *lower* sample means than non-members for all three indicators of support for gender equality, with all scales ordered so that high values indicate favorable attitudes towards gender equality (Table 5.8). However, after controlling for individual and context-level factors, none of the indicators show a negative and statistically significant correlation with membership in voluntary associations. In fact, one indicator shows a positive and statistically significant correlation with membership in voluntary associations. It is the question on equality in education: "University education for males is more important than university education for females". A one-point increase (i.e. towards disagreement) on a four-point scale for this question results in 2.5 percentage points greater likelihood of being a member of a voluntary association, with a significance at the 5 percent level, when controlling for district variation and all individual alternative explanations (model 4).

This body of evidence allows us to conclude that individuals who are more supportive of gender equality in terms of freedom to work despite mother and housewife duties, level of income and access to education are more likely to be members of voluntary associations than those who are not supportive of gender equality.

The correlation between support for gender equality and civic engagement finds a large echo in the new public role that Libyan women have started playing since 2011, largely

through voluntary associations. Many of these women have formed civil society organizations and continue to advance the role of women in Libyan society and politics. Nowadays, women organizations include some of the most engaged, dynamic and visible CSOs in Libya.

The Libyan Women's Platform for Peace, for example, provided an arena within which women from across the country and abroad could join forces to advance women's rights.⁹² Recently, it launched a Charter of Libyan Women's Constitutional Rights that was drafted collectively by Libyans in the country and abroad.⁹³ This project to include women in the process of drafting a Constitution is one of many such efforts, including the "Dastoor" project, carried out by the the Libyan Women's Union and the Libyan Forum for Civil Society, and the Women's Charter Project, designed and conducted by Voice of Libyan Women.⁹⁴ Many other initiatives, such as "Project Silphium," empower women, provide them with platforms to share their experience and learn from each other and organize workshop to equip them with the skills they need to succeed in the academic and the professional environments.⁹⁵ These projects are changing the public's perception of the role of Libyan women, thereby paving their way to start playing an active role in the economy, in society, and in politics.⁹⁶

⁹² The Libyan Women's Platform for Peace (LWPP) was launched in October 2011 by over thirty-five women from different cities and backgrounds. It has since grown to a network of over one hundred organizations and people. More information can be found at: <http://www.LWPP.org>.

⁹³ Available from:

<https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/74893646/CHARTER%20OF%20LIBYAN%20WOMEN.pdf>.

⁹⁴ For more information, see

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.200344886731200.40111.135705886528434&type=1>.

⁹⁵ A detailed description of Project Silphium and of its activities is available in Chapter 9.

⁹⁶ For a short video summarizing the activities and challenges of women in Libya, see "Our Revolution, Our Constitution," available from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zJofWs--CVo&feature=youtu.be>.

Hala considers herself a Tamazight activist.⁹⁷ Her first experience with civil society was in refugee camps as a community mobilizer. She then volunteered to work with IDPs. Hala co-founded Tiwatriwin Association for Libyan Women (TIWA) based in Yefren. TIWA advocates for equality and political participation of women. TIWA opened a center for women empowerment that Hala managed between 2011 and 2014. Alongside her work with TIWA, Hala worked as a project officer for Mercy Corps. She focused on the protection and monitoring program for IDPs. In 2013, she was also project manager for the OECD program “Supporting women as economic actors in the transition period in Libya”. Hala was the focal point for the “1325 network”, a coordination initiative for NGOs in the Nafusa mountains.⁹⁸ Hala was also a radio presenter at the Tamazight Yefren local radio (Awal FM).

⁹⁷ a.k.a. “berber”, the autochthone population of North Africa.

⁹⁸ 1325 network brings together voluntary associations focusing on gender equality and women participation in the public life. It was named in reference to the landmark UN Security Council resolution S/RES/1325 adopted in October 2000 on women, peace and security.

Chapter 6

Behaviors

Besides the important attitudes I analyzed in the previous chapter, government performance and civic engagement also rest on key practices and behaviors. In this chapter I will focus on the following behaviors: political engagement; Information consumption; and active use of media. All questions drawn from the World Values Survey and the Arab Barometer for the purpose of this research are listed in Appendix 4.

a. Political engagement

In line with my hypotheses, I expect to find a positive and statistically significant correlation between multiple measures of political engagement and membership in voluntary associations while controlling for the most important alternative explanatory variables for membership in voluntary associations. I also expect to find that, on average, members of voluntary associations are more politically engaged than non-members across all indicators.

1. Measurement

As mentioned, several attitudes and behaviors can be taken as indicating individuals' engagement in the political life of their polity. These range from the level of interest in

and importance accorded to politics, to relatively passive activities, such as voting and talking about politics, to the very active actions of protesting and going on strike. Besides the World Values Survey and the Arab Barometer, the Libyan Civil Society survey also asked a question gauging the level of interest in politics. Respondents were asked whether or not they discussed politics: “Do you regularly discuss (more than once a week) politics and administration (discussing how the local or national government is doing what it can or should do to improve your welfare)?” (1: Yes; 2: No).

The World Values Survey and the Arab Barometer also asked questions about voting and conducting elite-challenging actions, such as: signing a petition; joining boycotts; participating in peaceful demonstrations; joining strikes; and any other actions of protest (for the exact questions see Appendix 4).

2. Empirical evidence

The data from both surveys provide a very strong body of evidence showing that all members of voluntary associations (active or non-active) display a higher level of political engagement along any and all of eighteen indicators across both surveys, which supports my first hypothesis (H1). For instance, 23 percent of members of voluntary associations attended a meeting during the previous parliamentary elections (in 2012) compared to only 7 percent of non-members (Table 6.2 below). Almost all members of voluntary associations (94 percent) participated in a demonstration or a rally in 2011 or 2012, compared to 45 percent among non-members. Lastly, 37 percent of members of voluntary associations voted in the February 2014 Constitutional Assembly elections, compared to just 20 percent among non-members.

Table 6.1: Effect of political engagement on membership in voluntary associations (World Values Survey 2013)

	H1: Comparison between sample means			H2: Correlation coefficients for the difference in means (times 100) (1) (2)			
	Non-member	Non-active member	Active member	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Interest and participation in politics (3)							
Importance given to politics	2.67	2.70	2.76	1.3 (0.9)	3.3*** (0.9)	3.3*** (0.9)	2.9** (0.9)
Level of interest in politics	2.54	2.68	2.73	3.0*** (0.9)	3.8*** (1.0)	3.8*** (1.0)	3.2*** (1.0)
Elite-challenging actions (4)							
Likelihood of signing a petition	1.24	1.43	1.41	7.3*** (1.7)	5.5** (1.8)	4.9** (1.8)	4.6* (1.8)
Likelihood of joining boycotts	1.26	1.38	1.40	6.9*** (1.6)	5.6** (1.8)	6.1*** (1.8)	6.1*** (1.8)
Likelihood of participating in peaceful demonstrations	1.69	1.96	2.13	9.6*** (1.1)	9.2*** (1.2)	9.1*** (1.2)	9.9*** (1.2)
Likelihood of joining strikes	1.23	1.40	1.37	6.6*** (1.7)	6.3*** (1.8)	5.7*** (1.8)	5.8*** (1.8)
Likelihood of joining any other actions of protest	1.25	1.36	1.40	8.4*** (1.7)	8.4*** (1.8)	8.2*** (1.9)	7.5*** (1.9)
Vote (5)							
Vote at the local level	2.14	2.26	2.33	4.5*** (1.1)	3.9** (1.2)	4.3*** (1.2)	4.9*** (1.2)
Vote at the national level	2.12	2.22	2.35	5.5*** (1.1)	5.2*** (1.2)	5.8*** (1.2)	6.4*** (1.2)

Note (1): Entries are unstandardized coefficients and standard errors (in parentheses), both multiplied by 100. Smallest N = 1805. Regression models include the following controls: 1=No controls; 2=Individual-level controls; 3=Individual- and specific district-level controls; 4=Individual-level controls and districts as dummy controls.

Note (2): Smallest N = 1597 (WVS) and 538 (AB). Regression models include the following controls: 1=No controls; 2=Individual-level controls; 3=Individual- and specific district-level controls; 4=Individual-level controls and districts as dummy controls.

Note (3): Scale ranging from 1) Not at all important / not at all interested; to 4) Very important / very interested.

Note (4): "I will read out some forms of political action that people may take. For each one, I would like you to tell me whether you have done it, might do it or you would never under any circumstances do it." Scale: 1) I will never do it; 2) I might do it; 3) I have done it.

Note (5): Scale: 1) Never; 2) Occasionally; 3) Always.

***Significant at the 0.1% level ($p \leq .001$); **1% level; $p \leq .01$; *5% level ($p \leq .05$); ^10% level ($p \leq .10$), two-tailed.

Color code : Contradicting my hypotheses, and where applicable, statistically significant at or above the 10% level ($p \leq .10$; two-tailed).

Table 6.2: Effect of political engagement on membership in voluntary associations (Arab Barometer 2014)

	H1: Comparison between sample means		H2: Correlation coefficients for the difference in means (times 100) (1) (2)			
	Non-member	Member	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Interest and participation in politics						
Attended a meeting during last parliamentary elections (3)	0.07	0.23	27.4*** (3.8)	25.2*** (3.8)	24.1*** (3.8)	24.6*** (3.8)
Interest in politics (4)	2.30	2.63	4.9*** (1.1)	3.6*** (1.1)	3.3*** (1.1)	2.9** (1.1)
Follows politics (4)	2.74	3.00	4.2*** (1.1)	2.9* (1.2)	2.6* (1.2)	2.4* (1.2)
Member of a political party (3)	0.01	0.04	26.0** (9.1)	13.0 (9.7)	10.6 (9.6)	12.1 (9.7)
Elite-challenging actions						
Attended a political meeting during the past three years (5)	0.13	0.44	18.0*** (2.1)	12.7*** (2.2)	12.0*** (2.2)	12.6*** (2.2)
Participated in a protest, march or sit-in during the past three years (5)	0.45	0.94	11.9*** (1.4)	9.3*** (1.5)	9.2*** (1.5)	9.3*** (1.5)
Participated in any demonstrations and rallies in 2011 and 2012 (3)	0.28	0.53	19.1*** (1.5)	13.2*** (2.7)	13.5*** (2.7)	14.4*** (2.8)
Vote						
Voted in the July 2012 parliamentary elections (3)	0.54	0.66	8.1*** (2.4)	3.1 (2.4)	4.1^ (2.4)	4.5^ (2.4)
Voted in Feb 2014 Constitutional Assembly elections (3)	0.20	0.37	16.8*** (2.7)	10.3*** (2.8)	11.7*** (2.8)	12.1*** (2.8)

Note (1): Entries are unstandardized coefficients and standard errors (in parentheses), both multiplied by 100. Regression models include the following controls: 1=No controls; 2=Individual-level controls; 3=Individual- and specific district-level controls; 4=Individual-level controls and districts as dummy controls.

Note (2): Smallest N=1125. Regression models include the following controls: 1=No controls; 2=Individual-level controls; 3=Individual- and specific district-level controls; 4=Individual-level controls and districts as dummy controls.

Note (3): Answers: 0) No; 1) Yes

Note (4): Scale from 1) Not at all; to 4) Very interested / Follow to a great extent.

Note (5): Scale: 0) Never participated; 1) Once; 2) More than once.

***Significant at the 0.1% level ($p \leq .001$); **1% level; $p \leq .01$; *5% level ($p \leq .05$); ^10% level ($p \leq .10$), two-tailed.

Color code : Contradicting my hypotheses, and where applicable, statistically significant at or above the 10% level ($p \leq .10$; two-tailed).

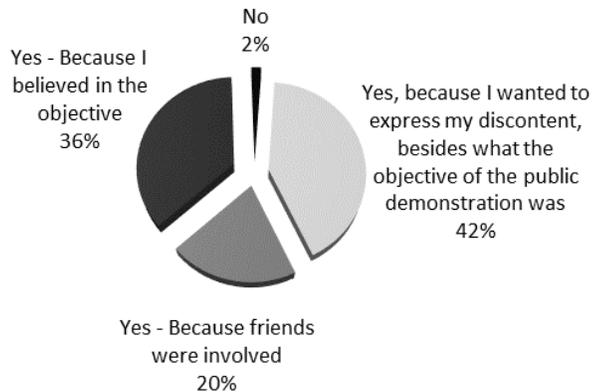
These findings are also supported by the survey I conducted among leaders of voluntary associations. The LCS survey shows that 86 percent of them discuss politics more than once a week. Data on the same question is not available for non-members. While conclusions cannot be drawn based on cross-national comparisons, nonetheless, as a

reference, the Pew Research Center reports that only 42 percent of Americans discuss government and politics a few times a week or more (Pew 2014, 51).

Other indicators of political engagement show large differences between members and non-members. For instance, the AB shows that 23 percent of members of voluntary associations attended one or more meetings or activities related to any electoral campaign during the 2012 parliamentary election, compared to just 7 percent among non-members (Table 6.2). The difference is even more pronounced with more active expressions of political engagement: 53 percent of respondents who were members of voluntary associations participated in a demonstrations or a rally in 2011 and 2012, compared to 28 percent of non-members (Table 6.2).

The results are even more impressive among leaders of voluntary associations. The LCS survey found that almost all of them had participated in a public demonstration in the 6 months preceding the interview, although their motive for

Fig. 6.1: Participated in a public demonstration in the last 6 months



participation differed (see Fig. 6.1). Only 36 percent of them declared having taken part in a public demonstration because they believed in its objectives. However, the near unanimous participation of CSO leaders in these form of protest is a strong sign of their eagerness to make their voice heard.

In fact, the share of CSO leaders that participated in a peaceful demonstration is much higher than the share of Libyans that ever participated in one, despite the fact that Libyans

displayed a much greater propensity to engage in this type of activity compared to both their neighbors and countries such as Germany and the US (see Table 6.3).

Table 6.3: Participation in a peaceful demonstration (WVS wave 6, 2010-14)

	Morocco	Algeria	Tunisia	Libya	Egypt	Yemen	Germany	USA
Have done	9%	20%	11%	31%	7%	18%	21%	14%
Might do	10%	30%	22%	20%	4%	19%	48%	56%
Would never do	81%	50%	66%	49%	89%	63%	31%	31%

A very popular indicator of political engagement is voting. A comparison between the LCS survey data and the official data for the 2012 elections shows that leaders of voluntary associations had a much greater turnout than the overall population. On average, 86 percent of CSO leaders surveyed between August 2013 and April 2014 had voted in the 2012 national election (Fig. 6.2), compared to 49 percent of the voting age population in

Fig. 6.2: Voted in the 2012 GNC elections



Fig. 6.3: Intends to vote in the next election



Libya (Voter turnout data for Libya, 2012).

Leaders of voluntary associations also expressed a much greater propensity to vote in future elections compared to the overall Libyan population. In 2013, 79 percent of those surveyed intended to vote in the next election (Fig. 6.3) compared to 70 percent and 58

percent among Libyans polled in September and November 2013, respectively⁹⁹ (NDI 2014, 20).

Data from both the World Values Survey and the Arab Barometer also support my second hypothesis (H2). In fact, seventeen out of eighteen indicators of political engagement drawn from both surveys show unequivocally that political engagement is correlated with membership in voluntary associations, even after controlling for alternative explanatory variables (Tables 6.1 and 6.2 above). The correlation between political engagement and membership in voluntary associations is strong and highly statistically significant for almost all indicators in both the Arab Barometer and the World Values Survey surveys across all regression models, which control for an increasing level of alternative explanations. Twelve of the eighteen indicators of political engagement even show a positive correlation with membership in voluntary associations at a level of statistical significance equal or greater than 0.1 percent ($p \leq .001$).

Whether this shows that voluntary associations are a cause or an expression of greater political engagement is an intriguing question, which may not have a clear answer. What *is* clear is that voluntary associations provide a means for the expression and development of political engagement, and that they are active agents promoting political engagement among the broader population.

In fact, Libyan voluntary associations such as “Sharek” (Participate) actively worked across the country to educate and inform citizens about elections, and to foster political participation before each election. Some associations organized debate sessions with the candidates; others published their information and political platforms, articulated a

⁹⁹ All figures exclude “don’t know” and “no answer”.

“goodwill charter” laying out a contract between voters and candidates, or set up and promoted meetings between candidates or elected officials and the electorate. These are only a few examples of many trust-building measures that Libyan CSOs have organized to develop political engagement.

Moreover, when election day came, hundreds of voluntary associations across Libya deployed to polling centers to observe the electoral process, so as to ensure it was free and fair. The two largest volunteer networks were Shahed, and the Libyan Association for Elections Observation, a group formed by Libyan women, who covered 13 and 10 administrative districts,¹⁰⁰ respectively (The Carter Center 2012, 13).

Other organizations helped develop state-citizen dialogue and foster transparency and accountability. Probably, the most impactful project is “Eye on the GNC”, carried out by H2O Team and Bokra Youth Organization, two youth CSOs based in Tripoli and Benghazi, respectively. For two years, this internet platform publicly provided unprecedented and systematic information on the discussions and decisions of the legislative body.¹⁰¹

The correlation between voting and membership in voluntary associations is likely to reflect specific individual attitudes and values that appear to be connected to both civic and political engagement.

When I asked Khadeja, the co-founder of a very dynamic and innovative voluntary association promoting equality and women’s rights, if she had voted in the 2012

¹⁰⁰ Of a total of 13 districts.

¹⁰¹ See <http://www.h2o.org.ly/> and <http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/9857/eye-on-the-libyan-general-national-congress-first->. The original website of the “Eye on the GNC” project has been temporarily suspended on account of domain and server issues; the CSO activists are working on launching the project again on a new site and launch a parallel project called “Eye on the HoR”, to cover the activities of the new Parliament as well as those of the old one.

parliamentary election, she told me “yes, unfortunately”.¹⁰² She explained that she was not proud of having elected a Parliament that refused to disband at the end of its term and that still holds on to power to this day. She also lamented the terrible job they had done. So when I asked if she had voted for the following parliamentary election in June 2014, I expected a negative answer. Instead, she had voted again. Although she knew that the new Parliament would probably not do better than the previous, she explained that she wanted her voice to count and that she saw voting as a form of collective responsibility.

Like Khadeja, those who tend to vote are also likely to engage in volunteer activities, because they may possess a sense of responsibility, and a sense of ownership towards public matters. Individuals who feel a sense of duty towards addressing collective issues and feel empowered to make a difference can be expected to be more likely to engage in the civic and the political life of their country.

This sense of responsibility can also explain why the difference in voter turnout between members and non-members grew over time between 2012 and 2014, while the overall electoral turnout sharply decreased in Libya. During these two years, the political scene became increasingly polarized, factious and incapable of delivering governance. The Parliament and the Government turned against each other and political parties made an increasing use of militias to advance their interests and agendas, while remaining completely blind and deaf towards public demands. The level of trust in politics plummeted and with it, the electoral turnout also.

¹⁰² Skype interview, June 17, 2016.

In the February 2014 election of the Constitutional Drafting Assembly, the voter turnout dropped to a fraction of the turnout for the Parliamentary election less than two years earlier.¹⁰³ However, this decline in turnout affected members and non-members of voluntary associations differently. According to the AB data, 37 percent of members of voluntary associations surveyed had voted in the February 2014 election, compared to 20 percent of non-members¹⁰⁴ – a 17 percent difference compared to the 12 percent difference the same survey observed for the 2012 election (Comparing sample means on Table 6.2). When external incentives for voting largely disappeared, those who resisted to withdrawal and apathy relatively better probably drew from internal motivations, such as the sense of responsibility and ownership of collective matters.

Overall, two distinct sources of empirical evidence show that all forms of political engagement display a strong and statistically significant correlation with membership in voluntary associations even after controlling for alternative explanatory variables, as the summary of findings in Tables 6.1 and 6.2 show. Furthermore, this correlation is supported by several individual accounts.

¹⁰³ The Carter Center reported a turnout of only 12 percent of the voting age population (The Carter Center 2014, 6), compared to 49 percent in the 2012 Parliamentary election (IDEA 2016).

¹⁰⁴ These turnouts are higher than the overall turnout of 12 percent reported for the entire population (The Carter Center 2014, 6), which is due to the response bias of survey data, whereby individuals surveyed have a tendency to give the answer which is considered socially more acceptable (i.e. voting). This bias does not exist for national turnout data, which are computed arithmetically.

b. Information consumption

Firstly, I expect that individuals who display a higher level of information consumption over multiple media are more likely to be members of voluntary associations. In addition, since empirical findings in the literature show a negative impact of television watching on the level of trust and civic participation, I expect that the correlation between the frequency of watching television and membership in voluntary associations will be weaker than for other media, or absent, while keeping alternative explanatory variables constant. Conversely, empirical studies showed the positive relationship between newspaper readership and civic engagement. Therefore, I expect the correlation between the time spent reading the newspapers and membership in voluntary associations to be stronger than those relative to the use of other media, while keeping alternative explanatory variables constant.

Secondly, I expect members of voluntary associations to display, on average, a higher level of information consumption across all media, compared to non-members, without keeping any other variable constant.

1. Measurement

The World Values Survey and the Arab Barometer gauge the level of information consumption through different means, such as: Daily newspapers; printed magazines; television news; radio news; mobile phone; email; internet; speaking with friends and colleagues.

In the Leadership in Civil Society survey I ask respondents to rank by order of importance the media they use to get information about what happens. The options I provide are: Television; newspaper; radio; internet (both websites and specific social media); mosque; their own community group (i.e. tribe / clan / neighborhood friends); and other sources they may want to specify. Finally, I also asked leaders of voluntary associations to indicate their daily use of the top four sources of information by asking: "On average, how many hours a day do you watch TV; listen to radio; use internet; read newspapers."

2. Empirical evidence

As highlighted earlier, for 42 years Libyans were cut out from the world. This contributed to the development of a closed and intolerant political culture based on suspicion and communitarianism. The slow diffusion of internet access and the widespread access to foreign channels through satellite TV since the late nineties, coupled with the appearance of cellphones (and ultimately of smart phones), offered Libyans many new channels to access and share information.

However, Libyans did not fully comprehend and exploit the potential of these new media until the 2011 revolution. While the claim that the 2011 uprisings were "Facebook revolutions" attributed to the new role played by social media is largely inflated, it is beyond doubt that social media played a crucial role in getting information out of Libya and distributing it publicly. The daily coverage of the conflict "from the ground" by foreign correspondents and by newly appeared Libyan "citizen journalists" through cellphones

and Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) softwares like Skype taught them about the power of the media, and about the diversity of sources of information.¹⁰⁵

In the immediate aftermaths of the 2011 revolution, this greater awareness about the power of media was quickly followed by the rapid appearance of hundreds of information outlets across all media. This was a sudden and dramatic change after several decades during which there was no independent media to speak of. By the summer of 2012, it is estimated that there were “over 200 registered newspapers, over 20 TV channels and 200 radio stations” in Libya (de Préneuf, 2012).

As of 2015, Libya has one of the highest market penetration rates in Africa for cellphones, with an estimated rate that varies between 142 percent (Lancaster 2015) and 161 percent (International Telecommunications Union, 2014).¹⁰⁶ In fact, mobile phones have quickly become the main tool to access internet, although it is not always accounted for in statistics on internet penetration.¹⁰⁷

The prevalence of satellite television in Libya is also among the highest in Africa, with estimates varying between 76 percent of households in 2011 (Dubai Press Club. 2012, 193) and 78 percent of households in 2014 (Dataxis 2015). Al Jazeera alone claims a level of penetration of its channel of 55 percent of the total population, although it does not specify the date to which these data refer (Al Jazeera. 2016).

¹⁰⁵ For more information and analysis on the role of media in the 2011 Libyan revolution, see Scott-Railton (2013).

¹⁰⁶ The latter source reports: Morocco 132%, Algeria 93%; Tunisia 128%; and Egypt 114% in 2014.

¹⁰⁷ According to the International Telecommunication Union standards, “An “Internet User” is therefore defined as an individual who can access the Internet, via computer or mobile device, *within the home where the individual lives*” (emphasis added).

In terms of access to the internet, the most recent estimated penetration rates in Libya (2014) vary between 18 and 37 percent,¹⁰⁸ which are significantly lower than neighboring Egypt and Tunisia (32% and 46%, respectively according to International Telecommunication Union's estimates). Nonetheless, these figures represent a major increase of internet penetration compared to pre-revolution levels, estimated at 5.5 percent (oAfrica. 2011). Also, while historically internet was accessible only to the elite, the steady appearance of internet cafes since the year 2000 increasingly offered cheap internet access to lower classes in both urban and rural areas (Freedom House 2015, 2).¹⁰⁹

Of all media, one of the most successful stories in the two years following the 2011 revolution is the emergence of radio stations. Owing to the ability to broadcast through existing state-owned infrastructure, dozens of radio outlets appeared throughout Libya, many staffed by local volunteers.

In spite of this remarkable wave of media outlets that appeared in 2011 and 2012, it must be noted that a counter-tide started in 2012 already, leading to the closing of a majority of the newspapers, radio and TV stations. The post-revolution enthusiasm had to confront a reality in which funding is not available, trained journalists and media professionals are very rare, and most importantly, no state protection exists against the increasing violent and repressive threat posed by militias. A dozen journalists were killed since 2011, tens

¹⁰⁸ 17.8 percent at the end of 2014 according to the International Telecommunication Union and the world Bank (available from <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.P2?locations=LY>); 37.4 percent in November 2015 according to Internet World Stats. A more realistic estimate is probably that of Internet Live Stats, which reports an estimated 17.8 and 21.1 percent of internet users among the Libyan population for 2014 and 2016, respectively. Available from <http://www.internetlivestats.com/internet-users/libya/>

¹⁰⁹ "A dial-up internet subscription cost LYD 10 (US\$8) per month, an ADSL subscription was LYD 20 (US\$ 16) for a 20 GB data plan, and WiMax service was LYD 40 (US\$ 31) for a 15 GB data plan, after initial connection fees. By comparison, gross national income per capita was US\$ 1,078 per month." Freedom House (2015, 4).

were abducted, and more than one hundred suffered attacks since 2011.¹¹⁰ After two years of improvement since the Gadhafi years, Libya plunged again to the rank of 164th out of 180 countries in Reporters Without Borders 2015 World Press Freedom Index.

However, as highlighted by the data reported above, a number of outlets have survived and continue to operate, albeit with a high level of self-censure or with outright partisanship. Moreover, the brief period during and after the revolution during which many outlets appeared and disappeared did not leave behind simply a number of new media platforms affected by partisanship and self-censorship; it left a lasting appetite for information, a greater knowledge of the diversity of media outlets and channels available, and an awareness about the power of media.

Many Libyans fully embraced the need to consume information and to do so through a multiplicity of information outlets. The findings from the data on information consumption from both the World Values Survey and the Arab Barometer, which are summarized in Table 6.4 below, show that members of voluntary associations are among them.

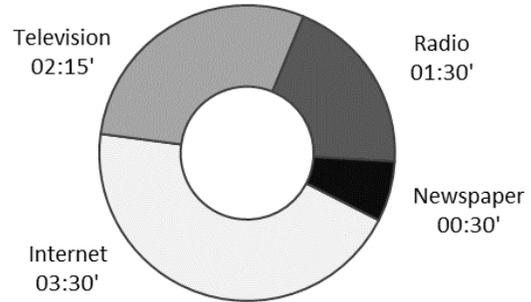
Firstly, members of voluntary associations consume more information than non-members, which supports my first hypothesis. Empirical evidence is unanimous across both surveys: Both regular members and active members of voluntary associations make a larger use of all media to get news, as can be seen by comparing the sample means for members and non-members in Table 6.4. Interestingly, here too the difference between active members of voluntary associations and non-members among all eight news sources listed in the World Values Survey and among the five listed in the Arab Barometer

¹¹⁰ See multiple reports by Reporters Without Borders at <https://rsf.org/en>

is smallest for the consumption of television news, in proportion of the mean value. This finding also appears to confirm the proposition discussed earlier, which purports that watching television may be less conducive to civic engagement compared to other media.

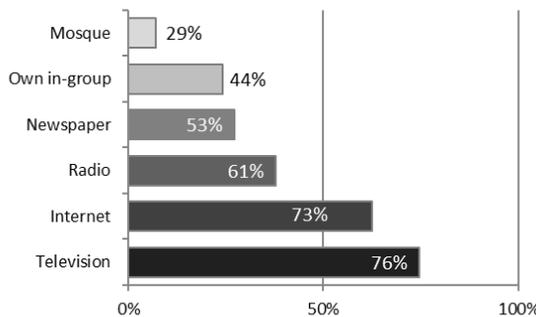
Data from the LCS survey confirm the findings obtained from the analysis of the World Values Survey and the Arab Barometer data in terms of the level of information consumption and the use of multiple sources. Leaders of voluntary associations seem to make use of multiple sources of information in order to keep abreast with the news (Fig. 6.4).

Fig. 6.4: Relative use of media (hours per day)



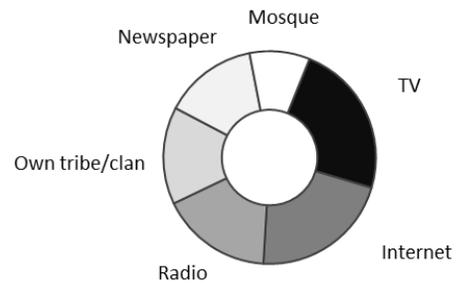
According to their own ranking the most important sources of information for them are the television and internet, followed by the radio, their own group (tribe or clan), the newspaper and the mosque – in that order (Fig. 6.5). A more exhaustive representation of the ranking distribution in Figure 6.6 shows that for the vast majority of leaders of voluntary associations, television and internet are the two primary sources of information, and that radios and newspapers are their secondary sources. Their own in-group, that is their tribe, clan and neighborhood friends, constitutes a tertiary source of

Fig. 6.5: Ranking of information sources



Percentage of respondents who ranked that option as 1, 2 or 3

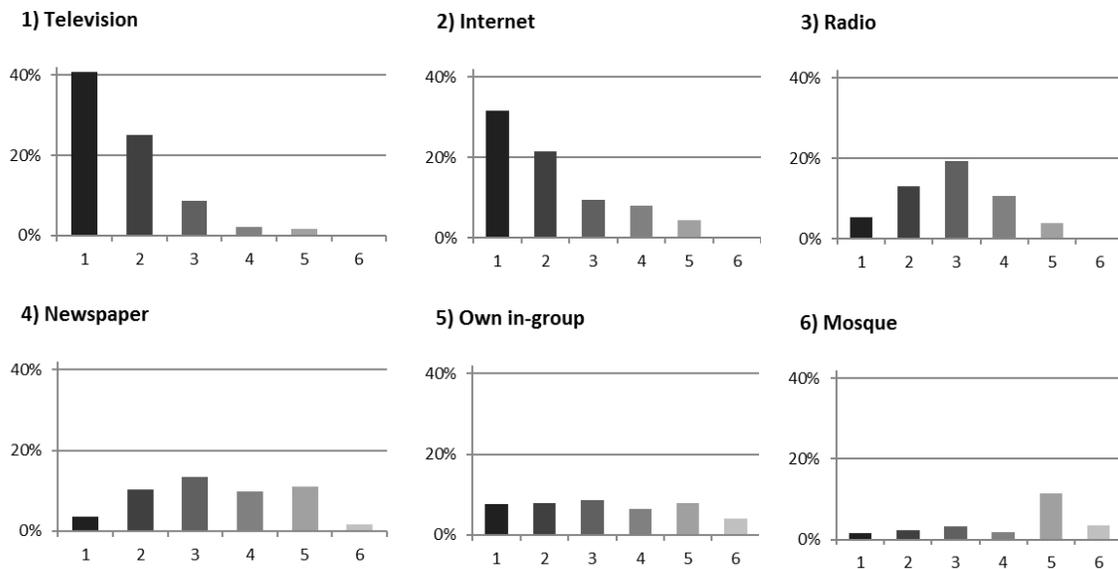
Fig. 6.6: Relative importance of sources of information*



*Means of ranking (1-7)

information. However, the ranking distribution shows that, unlike most leaders of voluntary associations, about 10 to 15 percent of respondents use their in-group as their primary source of information. This is visible by the percentage of respondents who ranked this source of information either as number 1 or 2 in histogram 5) in Figure 6.7 below.

Fig. 6.7: Ranking of information sources by percentage of respondents*



* Respondents were asked to rank each source of information from 1 to 6.

This ranking among sources of information is also reflected by the daily use of media by CSO leaders, as presented in Figure 6.4, for which only the four main sources were considered. Internet is the most often used. In particular, leaders of voluntary associations make most use of social media platforms such as Facebook. However, it should be kept in mind that the internet is also largely used for communication, besides its use as a source of information.

Taken together, these data show that leaders of voluntary associations are large consumers of information, with an average of almost eight hours per day spent using the internet, watching the television, listening to the radio or reading newspapers. Libyan leaders of voluntary associations estimated using internet an average of three hours and a half per day. As a comparison, a French survey conducted in 2014 showed that French adolescents – arguably the age group that makes most use of internet – uses internet about one hour and forty-five minutes a day.¹¹¹ These are different categories – members of voluntary associations versus teenagers – but the comparison provides some perspective on the extent to which Libyan members of voluntary associations make use of the internet. Although these figures are hard to believe, and it may very well be that they are higher than reality since they are based on interviewees’ own self-assessments. However, it must be kept in mind that they include access to the internet through mobile phones, and that Libyans suffer from an absolute lack of places and opportunities to socialize in the physical space. Therefore, social media are a prime tool through which they fill this void.

¹¹¹ Data from IPSOS 2014, more information available from <http://www.blogdumoderateur.com/etude-ipsos-junior-connect-2015/>

Table 6.4: Effect of information consumption on membership in voluntary associations

	H1: Comparison between sample means			H2: Correlation coefficients for the difference in means (times 100) (1) (2)			
	Non-member	Non-active member	Active member	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
"People get knowledge of what happens in this country and the world from different sources. For each of the following sources, please specify whether you are using it to get information 5) on a daily basis, 4) weekly, 3) monthly, 2) less than monthly, or 1) you never use it."							
Daily newspapers	1.66	1.78	1.87	2.0** (0.8)	1.6* (0.8)	1.4^ (0.8)	2.0* (0.8)
Printed magazines	1.46	1.53	1.66	3.1*** (0.9)	4.0*** (1.1)	3.6*** (1.1)	4.4*** (1.1)
Television news	4.48	4.76	4.69	2.7** (0.9)	2.8** (0.9)	2.6** (0.9)	2.6** (0.9)
Radio news	3.48	3.67	3.77	1.6** (0.5)	1.1^ (0.6)	1.2* (0.6)	1.5* (0.6)
Mobile phone	4.11	4.41	4.45	2.4*** (0.6)	1.8** (0.7)	1.6* (0.7)	1.6* (0.7)
Email	2.35	2.43	2.86	2.6*** (0.5)	1.6** (0.6)	1.7** (0.6)	2.0*** (0.6)
Internet	2.93	3.12	3.49	2.8*** (0.5)	1.5* (0.6)	1.4* (0.6)	1.6* (0.6)
Speaking with friends and colleagues	4.38	4.43	4.73	4.5*** (0.8)	3.4*** (1.4)	3.1*** (0.9)	3.3*** (0.9)
Arab Barometer 2014	Non-member	Member					
"In general, do you follow political news through: _____" Scale ranging from 1) "I do not follow political news at all" to 4) "Daily"							
Television	4.15	4.39	--	2.5** (0.9)	1.8^ (1.0)	1.5 (1.0)	1.3 (1.0)
Daily press	1.54	1.95	--	6.5*** (1.1)	3.6** (1.1)	3.4** (1.2)	3.5** (1.2)
Weekly press	1.41	1.78	--	8.6*** (1.4)	6.6*** (1.4)	6.3*** (1.4)	6.3*** (1.4)
Radio	2.72	3.37	--	65 (11.4)***	1.9** (0.7)	2.0** (0.7)	2.6*** (0.7)
Internet	2.31	3.14	--	4.8*** (0.7)	3.9*** (0.8)	4.1*** (0.8)	4.2*** (0.8)

Note (1): Entries are unstandardized coefficients and standard errors (in parentheses), both multiplied by 100. Regression models include the following controls: 1=No controls; 2=Individual-level controls; 3=Individual- and specific district-level controls; 4=Individual-level controls and districts as dummy controls.

Note (2): Smallest N = 1597 (WVS) and 538 (AB). Regression models include the following controls: 1=No controls; 2=Individual-level controls; 3=Individual- and specific district-level controls; 4=Individual-level controls and districts as dummy controls.

***Significant at the 0.1% level ($p \leq .001$); **1% level; $p \leq .01$; *5% level ($p \leq .05$); ^10% level ($p \leq .10$), two-tailed.

Color code : Contradicting my hypotheses, and where applicable, statistically significant at or above the 10% level ($p \leq .10$; two-tailed).

Is this difference in the level of information consumption between members of voluntary associations and non-members a coincidence or the result of other variables influencing membership in voluntary associations?

The regression results for the data from both surveys show that correlations between information consumption on any medium, and membership in voluntary associations are statistically significant and remain so at or above the 5 percent level ($p \leq .05$), even when including the most comprehensive controls (model 4), which supports my second hypothesis. The only exception, out of thirteen indicators, is with the frequency of television use as measured by the Arab Barometer, which does not show a statistically significant correlation with membership in voluntary associations. Regression results presented in Table 6.4 above show that individuals who display a higher level of any or all of the following are more likely to be members of voluntary associations: Read daily newspapers; read printed magazines; watch television news; listen to radio news; get news on the mobile phone; consult email; get information from the internet; and speak with friends and colleagues about political news.

The same is true for the data from the Arab Barometer. Here, regression results show that individuals who follow political news more often on daily press; weekly press; radio; and internet are more likely to be members of voluntary associations. As an exception, the regression shows that, when keeping all individual-level and district-level controls constant, members of voluntary associations do not have a statistically significant different consumption of television news compared to non-members (AB). This confirms the specific hypothesis on the weaker relationship between television watching and civic engagement.

The strongest correlation between media use and active membership in voluntary associations (WVS) is with reading printed magazines. A one-unit increase on a five-point scale, such as between no use at all to a less-than-monthly use equates with a 4.4 percentage points greater likelihood of being an active member of a voluntary association. This means that, on average, individuals who read printed magazines on a daily basis are 17.6 percent more likely of being members of voluntary associations than those who never read them. This correlation is highly statistically significant (0.1 percent level, $p \leq .001$).

Similarly, the Arab Barometer shows that a one-unit increase in frequency of reading weekly magazines on a four-point scale, such as from “rarely” to “a few times a month” equates with a 6.3 percentage points higher likelihood of being the member of a voluntary association, with a significance at the 0.1 percent level ($p \leq .001$). This is the largest impact among the media listed.

These findings confirm the two specific sub-hypotheses drawn from prior empirical studies, which highlight a particularly positive relationship between the frequency of reading print media and civic engagement, and a comparatively weak or absent relationship of the latter with watching television.

It is interesting to note that daily newspapers and printed magazines are the two media that are least used to get information about what happens, as the low values of the relative sample means in both surveys show. The reason is that printed media are highly under-developed in Libya. Those that exist are typically local papers and magazines covering little other than benign local news. This probably explains why printed newspapers and magazines have a very low number of readers in Libya.

It is all-the-more interesting that weekly magazines are the source of information that correlates most strongly with membership in voluntary associations. It may show that individuals who are most willing to explore even minor sources of information are all the more likely to engage in voluntary associations.

Interviews with Libyan civil society activists offer valuable insights on the meaning and impact of the different information consumption behavior they display compared to non-members.

Abdulrahman is a 24 year-old electronic engineering student from Tripoli. Together with another 9 young men from across Libya, either photographers or media operators, he founded a media company that produces pictures and videos both for profit and as a non-profit organization in support of other voluntary associations.¹¹² The company allows them to earn enough money to buy equipment, earn a small salary and promote the work of voluntary associations. One of the first events that they covered was the “For me” campaign for youth affected by cancer. Similarly, they helped the “Tripoli good” initiatives by covering their events and providing them with media services for free. Given that media is his passion, Abdulrahman had a lot to say about it.

Similarly to most of his fellow countrymen, he does not trust Libyan media, so he combines information from multiple national and international outlets with direct information he tries to get from friends in the government, the Army and in media companies. He listens to the radio, watches multiple TV channels, regularly consults news websites on the internet and - unlike most Libyans - reads printed newspapers.

¹¹² The name has been changed for reasons of security and confidentiality.

When I questioned him on the use of media, he highlighted a revealing aspect that distinguishes him from some of his peers and from the older generations. When a question absorbs him, Abdulrahman tries to figure out the answer by using his own thinking and reasoning, often looking for answers in books and on the internet. He believes that this attitude represents a major difference between generations, a significant change between him and his parents.

He believes that access to information played a major role in this shift and that access to the internet may have been particularly influential. Unlike most of his peers who started having access to the internet between the years 2000 and 2003, Abdulrahman accessed internet for the first time in late 1997, when he was just eight years old, thanks to his father who was a communication engineer and had a coffee shop with internet. What he has to say about the role of internet is particularly instructive:

“Internet taught me a lot of things. It gave answers to my questions outside of asking my parents, my friends, or simply the society around me.”¹¹³

This sentiment was shared by many other activists I interviewed. Exposure to realities and perspectives within and outside of their country appears to have fostered openness and tolerance, in a manner similar to how daily exercise makes a body strong and flexible. In this “mental exercise”, the multiplicity of media and the access to diverse information (i.e. from other communities; other countries and other ideological perspectives) seem to be as important as the level of information consumption, if not more.

Access to information also has a more instrumental role, beyond the cognitive impact just highlighted. Hussein is the remarkable civil society activist from Zuwara mentioned

¹¹³ Author interviews, Tripoli, December 2013

earlier, who founded the town's most popular media center and community radio and created a voluntary association fighting for transparency. He pointed out that internet was an invaluable source of information that allowed him to learn what civil society was about and how to engage in society. In his opinion, the internet granted him access to knowledge, which was instrumental to translate his aspirations and ideas about social engagement into actual projects and activities. In other words, access to information helped foster and structure his civic engagement.

For instance, Mohamed, Tareq and Mahmoud are three friends in their late twenties from Zawia, a medium-size town twenty miles West of Tripoli. They are all engaged in social activities through voluntary associations. I sat down with them at the Zawia cultural center. When I asked what led them to join voluntary associations and work with people they did not know, unlike so many of their peers who do not trust anyone outside their friends and family, they pointed out that access to information had played an important role. It had shaped their attitude towards other Libyans and the role they thought individuals could play in society. In their words:

“Internet has helped us overcome social barriers. It has allowed us to meet people and exchange ideas”.¹¹⁴

Similar to Abdulrahman, they argued that access to satellite television and to the internet had great impact in leading to a generational change between the youth and the older generations. Mohamed, Tareq and Mahmoud had started accessing the internet in the early 2000s when they were teenagers. They argue that these are pivotal years in defining one's own identity and the perception of society. Nowadays, the first teenagers who had

¹¹⁴ Author interviews, Zawia, November 2013. Names have been changed for reasons of security and confidentiality.

access to satellite TV and internet are in their early thirties. Those who made a larger use of media, and particularly of the Internet, were better able to overcome the atomization of society deliberately conducted by Gadhafi for over four decades. The exchange of information probably helped them transcend the social cleavages created by Gadhafi's "social alchemy", which pitted ethnic groups, cities, tribes, families and even brothers against each other.

It must be noted that in the months following the end of the data collection – i.e. in the spring of 2014, the media landscape changed dramatically. Some channels were closed and many others were coerced to change their message or taken over by force.¹¹⁵ At the same time, most embassies and international government and non-government organizations closed their offices in Libya and relocated in neighboring countries. Airports were closed or destroyed by fighting – such as the Tripoli international airport – and official border crossings restricted movements in and out of Libya. The cut down on the ability to travel within Libya and abroad, the dramatic decrease of foreigners visible in the country and the increased difficulty to access the internet had a combined impact on the attitudes of Libyans and on the nature of the public space, as lamented by members of voluntary associations.

In May 2015, over 30 Libyan civil society activists gathered in Tunis for a workshop I helped organize with the United Nations. They spent an entire day engaging in open conversations on a series of themes relevant to their work as leaders or active members of voluntary associations. I organized the conversations through the "world café" methodology that allows multiple small groups to discuss a theme around a table for 20

¹¹⁵ For a more detailed account of the continuous degradation of the situation of media freedom and security in Libya since the 2011 revolution refer to the reports by Reporters Without Borders. Available from <https://rsf.org/en/libya>. In particular, see RSF (2014).

to 30 minutes before moving to a new table and theme. Two of the themes I submitted to them were “media and civil society” and “civil society challenges”. Each group compiled the main points that emerged from their conversations. One of them reads as follows:

“The lack of security, physical mobility and communication with the rest of the world has given new strength to the most conservative and patriarchal visions of society. One consequence of the increased conservatism is the increased gender discrimination and the drastic reduction of the public space for women and for the discussion about their rights.”

In terms of access to information and exposure to each other and to the world, members of voluntary associations in Libya today are certainly more isolated than in the three years following the 2011 revolution, when the empirical research I ground this study on was conducted. As it comes across in the above statement, many members of voluntary associations believe that the diminished level of communication and exposure to the world reinforces conservative tendencies across society.

Nonetheless, scores of Libyan civil society activists have learned where and how to look for information about what happens. They supplement national news outlets with international ones; with social media; and with direct contacts with journalists they met during the 2011 revolution. They also share information, check its reliability, and share their opinion with the network of Libyan activists they met during the hundreds of conferences, trainings and workshops that were organized since 2011.

c. Active use of media

1. Measurement

The World Values Survey does not include any question gauging the active use of media. Fortunately, the AB compensates this lack of information with two very targeted questions, notably asking about the participation in interactive or dialogue-based groups or pages on social media; dialogue forums on the internet; Facebook pages; Twitter accounts; and private blogs.

Each of these indicators are aspects of the level of active engagement of individuals through internet platforms to share or receive information, engage in conversations and express opinions.

Since all these internet activities imply the use of internet, without gauging the level of use, I included in this analysis the question on the overall frequency of internet use as a reference, although I included it as one of the indicators of information consumption.

2. Empirical evidence

Overall, I expect members of voluntary associations as a whole to be more active on all media compared to non-members (H1). I also expect the active use of media to be correlated to membership in voluntary associations even after controlling for other explanatory variables (H2).

When Doug Saunders visited Libya in 2004, he was struck by how men did not gather in cafes and at street corners as he had seen in all Arab countries he had visited. However, he had noticed something else as well:

“Everyone I met under 20, including those in fairly poor communities, spent their spare time at the Internet café. In the freedom of those places, in detailed conversations, I found teenagers forming intimate communities online, discussing cars and rap lyrics and sex and especially the restrictions on Internet freedoms in neighbouring countries (Libya's Net was wide open then), and often coalescing in physical meet-ups.” (Saunders 2011)¹¹⁶

For many young Libyans, the internet had already allowed them to develop the quasi-public social space discussed above. However, the real explosion in the use of social media only happened after the overthrow of the Gadhafi regime in the fall of 2011. As Scott-Railton highlights: “Metrics of Facebook penetration rates indicate that Libya briefly became Facebook’s fastest growing country in terms of national users, with a 588.86% increase in users from June to December 2011, to 316,000 users.” (2013, 40). Voluntary associations created media platforms for gathering and distributing information through multiple media, often reaching over a million followers (as a reference, the Libyan population does not exceed 6.5 millions). Voluntary initiatives such as “Feb17.info”; “Day of rage”; “Your face”¹¹⁷ “LibyaAlHurra”¹¹⁸ and “ShababLibya”¹¹⁹ served as key information hubs for those who could access internet during the revolution. Some of these initiatives and groups have since disappeared, but many others continue to operate, responding to

¹¹⁶ Although it is fair to say that when internet first accessible in Libya in the early 2000s the level of control and repression over this medium was lower than that in the physical space, this was increasingly less true in the lead up to the 2011 revolution.

¹¹⁷ Available from: <https://www.facebook.com/wagakawesome/>

¹¹⁸ Libya Al Hurra was the first free TV broadcaster in Gadhafi-free Libya. The TV channel no longer operates, but the Twitter account still does, with the help of volunteers in Libya and abroad. It has 120 thousand followers and is available from <https://twitter.com/libyaalhurratv?lang=en>.

¹¹⁹ ShababLibya (i.e. the Libyan Youth Movement in Arabic) has been operating since February 2011 until today. I will describe its work in a dedicated vignette in the pertinent chapter. It is available on Facebook from: <https://www.facebook.com/LibyanYouthMovement/>; on Twitter from: <https://twitter.com/ShababLibya>; on a website available from www.shabablibya.org; and on skype, gmail and other media.

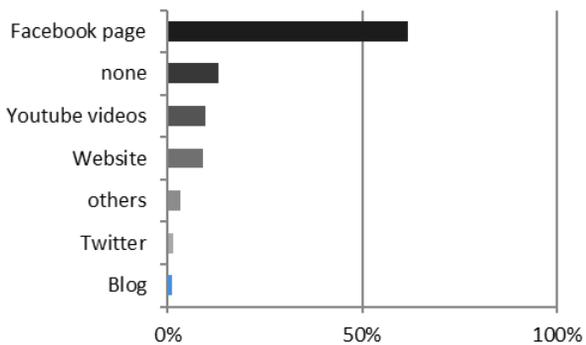
evolved information and communication needs and adapting to the very difficult security environment.

In fact, voluntary activism on social media did not die down after the revolution. Quite the opposite, it grew exponentially. In 2012, according to Socialbakers, a social media tracking website, Libya has been the second fastest growing country on Facebook in the Middle East and North Africa after Qatar, adding more than 86% new users in the span of twelve months (*Facebook in the Middle East and North Africa*. 2012). This validates the argument put forth by Wolfsfeld et al. who argue that “a significant increase in the use of the new media is much more likely to follow a significant amount of protest activity than to precede it” (2013, 115).

These data show a rapid and widespread increase in the use of social media in Libya. But more specifically, do members of voluntary associations taken as a whole display a more active use of media compared to the rest of the population? The data provided by the Arab Barometer provide unequivocal evidence that they do. Members of voluntary associations show on average a much larger use of all types of communication platforms listed in nine distinct indicators (i.e. comparing the sample means listed in the first two columns of Table 6.5).

Facebook is clearly the social medium preferred by Libyan members of voluntary associations. Data from the LCS (referring to data gathered mainly in 2013) show that 62 percent of leaders of voluntary associations in the major Libyan cities possess a Facebook page (Figure 6.8).

Fig. 6.8: Web tools possessed



The Arab Barometer survey, which was administered less than one year later, also shows that 69 percent of respondents who are members of voluntary associations possess a Facebook page, compared to 59 percent of non-members (see Table 6.5).

Regarding Twitter, another popular social medium, it is true that “#Libya” was the third most popular hashtag in the Arab region in the first 3 months of 2011 (Dubai Press Club 2012, 225). However, most of those who twitted about Libya were not in Libya, since only 1% of the population had a twitter account in 2011 (Dubai Press Club 2012, 196). As pointed out by Libyans who are active on this social medium, most Libyans active on twitter belong to the diaspora. Data I collected through the LCS survey two years after the revolution also show that Twitter is far less popular than other social media among activists, with only 1.6 percent of leaders of voluntary associations declaring that they possess an account.

The Arab Barometer data on Twitter instead are surprisingly high, showing that 24 percent of members of voluntary associations are members of, or participate on Twitter. This is a much higher rate than reported by non-members, among whom only 9 percent use Twitter. Given the high values, it is possible that some responses may suffer from response biases, such as a social desirability bias (i.e. respondents pick answers that they think are considered more favorably by the enumerator). However, what matters for the purpose of this research is the difference between members and non-members of voluntary associations. Since there is no reason to believe that these two categories would be disproportionately affected by response biases, the difference between their average responses is not affected.

Similarly, the Arab Barometer data show that 10 percent of members of voluntary associations possess a private blog, 23 percent participate in dialogue forums on the

internet or in interactive or dialogue-based groups or pages on social media, compared to 3 percent and 13 percent of non-members, respectively (Table 6.5).

Table 6.5: Effect of active use of media on membership in voluntary associations (Arab Barometer 2014)

	H1: Comparison between sample means		H2: Correlation coefficients for the difference in means (times 100) (1) (2)			
	Non-member	Member	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Frequency of internet use (3)	2.6	3.3	4.1*** (0.6)	3.2*** (0.8)	3.3*** (0.8)	3.6*** (0.8)
"Do you use the internet in order to: ____". Answers: 0) No; 1) Yes						
Get political news	0.53	0.62	8.3* (3.8)	3.5 (3.8)	3.3 (3.8)	3.1 (3.8)
Express political opinions	0.38	0.52	12.1** (3.8)	8.7* (3.9)	8.6* (3.9)	8.2* (3.9)
Find out about opposing political opinions	0.41	0.51	7.8* (3.8)	5.1 (3.8)	5.0 (3.8)	6.2 (3.8)
"Are you a member of or participant in: ____". Answers: 0) No; 1) Yes						
Interactive or dialogue-based groups on social networking websites	0.13	0.23	15.3** (5.0)	12.8* (5.2)	13.3* (5.2)	12.8* (5.2)
Dialogue forums on the internet	0.13	0.23	16.6*** (5.1)	16.2** (5.2)	15.8** (5.2)	16.7*** (5.2)
A Facebook page.	0.59	0.69	8.9* (3.8)	8.6* (3.9)	9.1* (3.9)	8.1* (4.1)
A Twitter account.	0.09	0.24	25.6*** (5.3)	23.7*** (5.5)	24.0*** (5.5)	23.5*** (5.5)
A private blog.	0.03	0.10	30.5*** (8.6)	23.7** (9.1)	23.4** (9.1)	25.4** (9.1)

Note (1): Entries are unstandardized coefficients and standard errors (in parentheses), both multiplied by 100. Regression models include the following controls: 1=No controls; 2=Individual-level controls; 3=Individual- and specific district-level controls; 4=Individual-level controls and districts as dummy controls.

Note (2): Smallest N=538

Note (3): Scale from: 1) Don't use internet; to 5) Daily or almost daily.

***Significant at the 0.1% level ($p \leq .001$); **1% level; $p \leq .01$; *5% level ($p \leq .05$); ^10% level ($p \leq .10$), two-tailed.

Color code : Contradicting my hypotheses, and where applicable, statistically significant at or above the 10% level ($p \leq .10$; two-tailed).

Furthermore, the data also support the second hypothesis according to which voluntary associations express a civic culture – in this case by showing that the active use of media is highly correlated with membership in voluntary associations, after controlling for alternative explanatory variables. In fact, as the regression analysis results in Table 6.5 show, the active use of media positively correlates with membership in voluntary

associations, and the correlation is large and highly statistically significant across multiple types of media, even when including some or all control variables. In particular, individuals who engage in dialogue forums on the internet are 16.7 percent more likely; those who possess a Twitter account are 23.5 percent more likely; and those who possess a blog are 25.4 percent more likely to be members of voluntary associations, compared to those who do not engage in these social media. These results are all significant at or above the 1 percent level ($p \leq .01$) after including the largest number of controls (i.e. model 4). Slightly smaller but still statistically significant results are found also for possessing a Facebook page, and for participating in interactive or dialogue-based groups or pages on social media (Table 6.5).

This quantitative evidence finds validation in dozens of anecdotes and my direct experience of working with civil society in post-Gadhafi Libya. Since the end of the revolution, members of voluntary associations have conducted dozens of national and local campaigns on social media, spanning from social to political to security problems. During the two years I worked with voluntary associations in Libya between 2011 and 2013, I witnessed the creation and the implementation of many initiatives that were typically conceived by activists in meetings, over the phone and in private conversations on Facebook, and launched on multiple social media and through physical gatherings, protests, petitions and sit-ins in city squares across Libya.

Some of these campaigns quickly spread to hundreds of thousands of Libyans and often had very tangible impacts. A recent campaign ran in the Spring of 2015, whose hashtag could be translated as “#Reduce your rent, happy Ramadan”. It demanded landlords to lower the rents in Benghazi in the month leading to the Ramadan (i.e. the month of fasting in Islam). It found a large resonance in the city, which hosted many internally displaced

Libyans. Famous figures joined the movement and produced a video supporting the initiative.¹²⁰ The social media movement led to the actual lowering of many rental fees for that month.¹²¹

At the political level, the “No Extension of GNC” campaign that resulted from the discontent among Libyan members of voluntary associations about the prospect that the Parliament (GNC) would extend its mandate past its term without giving way to national elections. The movement started in the Fall of 2013 and culminated in large protests and clashes across the country (Freedom House 2015, 9). I visited Tripoli, Benghazi, Zawia, and Zuwara in those months, observing the mounting popular frustration towards the government and the General National Congress (the Libyan Parliament elected in July 2012). However, it was voluntary associations that articulated these frustrations into political demands, revolving around the stepping down of the GNC at the end of the period of 18 months set out in the interim Constitution, and who organized protests and petitions.

Another campaign called “Bag in the Car” was launched in April 2013, with the aims of protecting the environment and improving the condition of Benghazi by inviting the city inhabitants to stop throwing waste in the streets.¹²² The initiative developed through Facebook messages, a hashtag campaign on Twitter, Youtube videos¹²³ and activities around the city, such as distributing bags to drivers at stoplights, and explaining the scope

¹²⁰ Available from <https://www.facebook.com/293558684168004/videos/361846647339207/>

¹²¹ Facebook <https://goo.gl/WmKIGj>; Twitter, #ضفح_كراجيا_كناضمر_كرايم , <https://goo.gl/l7NLfo>, cited in Freedom House (2015, 9).

¹²² The association Facebook page is available from: <https://www.facebook.com/%D9%85%D9%86%D8%B8%D9%85%D8%A9-%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%AC%D9%84%D9%83-%D8%A8%D9%86%D8%BA%D8%A7%D8%B2%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%B1-452568721458757/>

¹²³ One Youtube video is available from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x6_WRZlh9Ag&feature=youtu.be

of the initiative. It was organized by a voluntary association called “For You Benghazi I initiate”, focusing on protecting the environment and improving the urban infrastructure by repairing and maintaining streets, curbs, and public parks, and by planting trees in the city. Owing to their coordinated campaign in the social media and in the streets, these activists had a large reach among the inhabitants of Benghazi, and contributed to changing their attitudes and behaviors towards the environment. Voluntary associations like this who exist in many cities across Libya,¹²⁴ repairing and maintaining urban infrastructure. They complement and support the work of municipal authorities, who suffer from a lack of funding, expertise, and personnel.

Voluntary associations also utilize social media also to address collective security issues, even when fighting rages and individuals withdraw from public spaces. In May 2014, anti-Islamists armed groups launched “Operation Dignity” against Islamist militias, who were suspected of conducting constant targeted killings of security and police figures, journalists and civil society activists. Meanwhile, voluntary associations used social media with the slogan “Benghazi will not kneel”¹²⁵ (hashtag #ترکع_لن_بنغازي) to help mobilize the city inhabitants against Ansar Al Sharia, the most dangerous and powerful Islamist militia in the city, suspected of being behind the attacks on the US diplomatic compound in 2012 and listed as a terrorist organization by the United States. In spite of the violent fighting between armed groups, this public campaign led to a very large demonstration in the center of Benghazi (Gallagher 2014).¹²⁶ As Mustafa al-Ujely wrote on a blog:

¹²⁴ For example, in the city of Misrata, “Emaar For Charities” is a collective of engineers who volunteer their time to fix broken infrastructure across the city.

¹²⁵ See for instance the Facebook group:

https://www.facebook.com/BenghaziTV2/?ref=br_rs&fref=nf

¹²⁶ Pictures of the protests are available from:

<https://www.facebook.com/140691256045116/photos/a.324465071001066.77966.140691256045116/621162504664653/?type=1&theater>

“This party was led by angry citizens who demonstrated on Wednesday, July 30, in a number of the city's neighborhoods to denounce the events taking place and the terror and intimidation suffered by civilians. Demonstrators attacked the gathering sites of the Shura Council and managed to enter the hospital and expel Ansar al-Sharia militants from it.” (al-Ujely, Mustafa. 2014)

These are only a few examples of initiatives carried out by voluntary associations through social media. Nowadays, dozens of Facebook groups and blogs are followed by millions of Libyans, such as “Libyan Women”;¹²⁷ “Eanlibya”;¹²⁸ “Libya Now”;¹²⁹ “Your Face”;¹³⁰ “Wake up Benghazi”;¹³¹ “Fezzan Libya Media Group”;¹³² “Journal of a revolution”;¹³³ and many others.

Hussein, the prominent activist from Zuwara presented earlier, highlighted that before Gadhafi regime was toppled, he was already using social media to connect Libyans across the country. By doing so, he was able to defeat the very challenging limitations to movement imposed by the totalitarian regime and by the poor transportation infrastructure. Nowadays the situation is even more challenging, with militias controlling pieces of territory and fighting each other.

¹²⁷ Facebook page; 1,39 million likes on June 07, 2016; available from: <https://www.facebook.com/libyanwomen/timeline>

¹²⁸ Facebook page; 1,84 million likes on June 07, 2016; available from: <https://www.facebook.com/eanlibya/>

¹²⁹ Facebook page; 284 thousand likes on June 08, 2016; available from: <https://www.facebook.com/libyanow?ref=profile>

¹³⁰ Facebook page; 211 thousand likes on June 08, 2016; available from: <https://www.facebook.com/wagakawesome/>

¹³¹ Blog, available from: <http://wakeupbenghazi.com/>

¹³² Website available from: <https://fezzanlibya.com/?lang=en>; Twitter with hashtag @FezzanLibyaMG; Facebook available from: <https://www.facebook.com/FezzanLibyaMG/>

¹³³ Blog, available from: <http://bravenewlibya.wordpress.com/>

In many ways, the continued, resilient and active engagement of Libyan activists in the media epitomizes the underlying argument of this research: Libyan voluntary associations are created and operated by individuals possessing a specific civic sub-culture, which, in turn, enhances their potential to serve as instruments of pro-democratic change.

The spirit that characterizes many Libyan activists was expressed by Mohammed Nabbous, probably the first and foremost citizen journalist in Libya, during his first streamed phone interview with a correspondent in the West. On February 19th, 2011, just two days after the beginning of the Libyan revolution, Mohammed made a plea to the international community to help Libyans. When the journalist asked him what would happen next and what he was most afraid of, he answered:

"I can't assure that I'm going to be alive in five minutes I'm not afraid to die, I'm afraid to lose the battle ... that's why I want the media to see what's going on."
([Message From Libya]TELL THE WORLD WHAT IS HAPPENING TO US!!!!.flv.
2011. 05'25")

Mohammed was killed by a sniper in Benghazi the day of the international intervention that stopped Gadhafi forces at the outskirts of the city. His wife Samra and his colleagues continued to broadcast exclusive footage of the ongoing conflict on "Libya Alhurra" television (i.e. Free Libya in Arabic), which Mohammed had created with them.¹³⁴

Social media give individuals, who are often isolated and under threat, the belief that they exist and that their struggle will find resonance with other Libyans. Through these platforms, they meet like-minded individuals with whom they join forces, often creating voluntary associations with the hope to achieve the changes they advocate for in the

¹³⁴ I met Samra and the little girl she had from Mohamed after his passing, at a conference on civil society in Benghazi. The TV channel has currently suspended operations due to lack of funding.

social media. As I will show in the next chapter, Libyan voluntary associations have brought about many instances of change in politics and society: big or small, local or national.

As we have seen throughout these two chapters, taken as a whole and not keeping any of their individual and context-level characteristics constant, members of voluntary associations display more civic attitudes and behaviors than non-members. In this sense, Libyan voluntary associations *embody* a civic culture: they represent a political sub-culture that displays a more civic culture than the rest of society.

I also provided compelling evidence that each of the eight individual traits composing a civic culture are positively correlated with membership in voluntary associations, after controlling for individual-level variables (i.e. economic condition; gender; age; level of education; marital status; religiosity) and context-level variation (district level), which are the most likely alternative explanatory variables for membership in voluntary associations. This allows me to posit that voluntary associations in post-Gadhafi Libya *express* civic attitudes and behaviors: the more individuals display civic attitudes and behaviors, the more likely they are to be members of voluntary associations, irrespective of many other important characteristics.

These are very important conclusions because they reveal a remarkable reality in post-Gadhafi Libya, namely the surprising emergence of civic-minded voluntary associational life in spite of an unfavorable history and social, economic and political environment.

Two questions naturally arise from this assertion: how, and so what? How did this *civil* society emerge, and what is its current or potential impact on democratization and development?

Voluntary associations in action

In this chapter I present specific profiles of individual activists and their voluntary associations that enable me to suggest tentative answers to two questions that I cannot answer with quantitative data: why do Libyans who possess a civic culture join voluntary associations; and what impact do they have on inclusive politics, participatory governance, and overall government performance.

Thus, I first illustrate the relationship between the civic attitudes and behaviors of key individuals, and the reasons and mechanisms that led them to join or create voluntary associations. These accounts help draw some insights on potential causal mechanisms linking civic culture and membership in voluntary associations.

Secondly, I utilize these stories to provide tangible evidence of the significant impact that some Libyan voluntary associations have had on fostering more inclusive politics, promoting participatory governance and improving overall government performance.

a. Local governance, security and stability in Zuwara

1. Hussein, the Zuwara Media Center and Kassas radio

Zuwara is a beautiful small town resting on the westernmost portion of the Libyan coast bordering Tunisia. Since the revolution, it has become the crucible of cross-border smuggling and one of the major launching points used by illegal immigrants following the Central Mediterranean Route. Zuwara is the only Amazigh (aka Berber) town on the Libyan shores of the Mediterranean. It has suffered from age-long tensions with the neighboring Arab cities of Jmail and Rigdalin, which led to major clashes during the revolution and one year after its end, in 2012.

With a population of approximately 50'000 inhabitants, the city was grossly neglected during the Gadhafi dictatorship. The regime made a concerted effort to repress Amazigh culture and keep its citizens out of positions of power and influence, save for a few token exceptions. As further testimony to this deliberate marginalization, out of 1500 employees, only a few dozen Zuwari worked in the nearby Mellitah oil plant. Mellitah is one of the most important Libyan facilities for the export of oil and gas, and it is located in the Eastern outskirts of Zuwara.

During my survey of voluntary associations in Zuwara, I met Hussein, a smiling and polite 39-year-old micro-biologist, known as the foremost civil society activist in town.¹³⁵ Although Hussein grew up in Zuwara, upon completion of High School, he spent four years in Khoms, a small town located between Tripoli and Misrata, where he obtained a

¹³⁵ Author interview, Zuwara, November 2013. The name has been changed for reasons of security and confidentiality.

Bachelor's degree in biology. He returned to Zuwara for just a few years before departing again for Sebha, in the southwest of Libya, where he worked on the "great man-made river" project.¹³⁶

Although neither his parents nor numerous siblings were ever involved in volunteer activities, outside of typical charitable contributions, Hussein engaged in them well before the 2011 revolution. However, he operated "below the surface" in order to avoid raising suspicion from the brutally repressive regime. He was a member of the Boy Scouts, one of the very few volunteer associations that was allowed to exist and operate during the Gadhafi era. This childhood experience naturally socialized him to community life and volunteering. When he grew older, Hussein worked at a blood bank and took the initiative of creating an electronic database of blood donors to increase the effectiveness of the organization.

While civil society was a foreign concept in Hussein's living environment, he developed an interest in it. Internet provided him with a boundless source of information to learn about civil society and the various activities it encompasses. In his own words: "internet taught me how to be active through civil society." Internet cafes first opened in Zuwara in 2001. Hussein became a regular client, along with a few other local young men.¹³⁷ Over time, they developed a close-knit group of friends with six other internet-café aficionados, whose ages ranged from sixteen to thirty.

Initially, Hussein and his friends were mostly interested in developing their computer skills. Many of them sought to further their programming abilities or learned computer

¹³⁶ The "great man-made river project" is the world's largest irrigation project and one of the rare Gadhafi initiatives which ties the diverse Libyan regions together by making the North dependent from the water extracted in the South.

¹³⁷ The conservative nature of their society did not grant women the same freedom to hang out in the three internet cafes present in town.

maintenance, while others preferred playing computer games and chatting online. Whatever their interest, they all recognized the internet represented a rare channel of communication with the outside world that they would otherwise have no access to. For instance, when one of them needed advice on the computer programming language C++, he searched online and received advice and guidance from Libya and abroad. The same exchange applied to all topics, from obtaining technical solutions to discussing more abstract questions.

In 2003, owing to their newly acquired skills, Hussein and his friends created an online forum called “Montada Zuwarah” (i.e. Zuwara Forum). It was the first online community group in Zuwara and their objective was to connect people across Libya and beyond. Users could choose from one of many thematic chat rooms, the most popular of which were sports, religion, ideology and identity (Arab and Amazigh). However, clear rules were imposed to avoid triggering the invasive regime surveillance: no mentioning of Gadhafi or any public figures, and no criticism of any Arab regime.

Hussein and his close-knit, internet café friends had traveled across Libya and abroad far more than most of their Libyan peers. Growing up Hussein went to nearby Tunisia with his family many times, and in his early thirties, he visited Egypt, Dubai and the United Kingdom. His natural curiosity about the world and how to make a difference in it led him to seek firsthand knowledge from other Zuwari young men who had pursued educational opportunities elsewhere. Three friends who had studied in Tripoli, Dubai and Singapore shared some of the expertise they had acquired in the fields of team management, photography and website design.

Over time, the relationship between these young men coalesced into a loose network of like-minded individuals who shared a thirst for knowledge and a desire to influence the

world around them. Numbering ten to fifteen individuals between the ages of twenty-five and forty-five, they belonged to all economic strata of society. Some were religious, while others were definitely not. Interestingly, although religion was often a subject of discussion, it was never an issue of contention. Many of these men would take part in the volunteer activities that Hussein initiated in the years following the revolution.

Overall, Zuwara enjoys a remarkable abundance of voluntary associations (40 in November 2013) in proportion to its population. This suggests an exceptionally vibrant civic life relative to other Libyan cities. As a comparison, Misrata has about 140 voluntary associations for a population five times larger, and Tripoli has about 500 for a population that is about twenty times larger.¹³⁸

It must be noted that the greater development of voluntary associations in Zuwara is at least in part attributable to the high degree of social homogeneity, since the vast majority of its citizens are Amazigh. Tribalism is less evident than in Eastern Libya and the population of Zuwara is less religiously conservative compared to other areas in Libya. This has also made militias less susceptible to tribal factionalism and religious extremism. Moreover, the Municipal Council is able to supplement its budget with border taxes it levies at the border crossing with Tunisia.

Volunteer activities

Hussein had been in Sebha for nine years when the 2011 revolution spread across Libya. He immediately quit his job and returned to his hometown. Having been away for so long, he was no longer well integrated in the social fabric of Zuwara, with the exception of the

¹³⁸ Data from the November 2013 Libyan Civil Society research I conducted in the city.

few good friends he had made growing up. However, this did not prevent him from investing his time and effort in several volunteer-based initiatives to serve the local community. In doing so, he quickly discovered that despite his long absence, the online discussion forum he had co-founded and animated for eight years had fostered a new network of connections between people of Zuwara and elsewhere.

In retrospect, Hussein recognizes that his previous engagement in public online discussions over the years had earned him the respect and appreciation of the people of Zuwara. This established credibility buoyed subsequent efforts to successfully address community needs and challenges, and likely paved the way to his future role in local politics.

Soon after the beginning of the revolution, Hussein and his friends seized the opportunity offered by the unprecedented opening of the public space to launch several key voluntary associations. Three of the friends from the internet café and another five key individuals they had identified from their online discussions “who knew how to write well and think *right*”¹³⁹ founded the Zuwara Media Center.¹⁴⁰ It quickly became the main hub for providing and receiving information in Zuwara.

However, the Center only had a presence on Facebook. Thus, shortly thereafter, the same group created the Kassas community radio in order to better disseminate information. To achieve this end, the radio reached out to the municipal authorities and the security forces to create a channel of communication with the citizens. For the first time, the people of Zuwara could call the radio and voice their complaints “live” on the program,

¹³⁹ Hussein, author interview, skype, July 2016. Emphasis in the original statement.

¹⁴⁰ The Center continues to be active. Its main channel of communication is its Facebook page, available from <https://www.facebook.com/zuwara.mc/>. Its Youtube channel is available from https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCkOKb3aVwzTtdBmJOLcN_tQ

and obtain immediate answers from their city officials. In turn, the Municipal Council could explain its challenges and lay out the initiatives they had carried out, which were often unknown to the citizenry.

Kassass further expanded the channels of information and communication between Zuwara citizens and security forces, by regularly inviting the latter to share their activities and challenges live, and to answer to callers in real time.

At the time of writing the Zuwara Media Center and Kassas radio continue to be non-profit, independent and reliable sources of local information that is broadly followed and supported by the people of Zuwara.

The role of voluntary associations in local government performance

When the first Municipal Council was elected, in September 2011 (one of the first local elections in Libya), they recognized the vital role played by the radio and the Media Center. In fact, this led to an unsuccessful attempt by the Council to take control of these outlets for use as their own communication tools. Despite their severe lack of funding, both Kassas radio and the Zuwara Media Center have remained community driven initiatives. The successive Municipal Councils have agreed to a mutually beneficial arrangement: They provide them with a minimal budget in exchange for the continuation of their programs covering the Council's activities and providing live air time to engage with the citizens.

Voluntary associations also helped extend the Council's capacity to provide goods and services. As an example, in 2013, the elected City Council decided to rehabilitate the popular town seafront (Zuwara has some of the most beautiful beaches in Libya). Despite

investing a large portion of its modest budget, the resources were not sufficient for the designated task. However, by partnering with several voluntary associations, the council was able to circumvent this obstacle. They cleaned the sand, built umbrellas and installed kilometers of barriers to fence off the beach and prevent cars from driving on it. Their successful efforts boosted the Council's popular approval over the summer, and fostered a widespread feeling of community pride.

In September 2014, Hussein was elected as one of the seven members of the Municipal Council. Shortly after his election, fighting broke out with the powerful militias from Zintan over the control of the nearby lucrative Tunisian border. Fighting also erupted in several localities across Libya, opposing the so-called "Islamist" and the "anti-Islamist" coalitions. Funds for volunteer associations further evaporated while hardship increased exponentially. As a consequence, most volunteer associations disappeared.

At the time of writing, Hussein laments that the work of the Municipal Council has become much harder since associational life has decreased.

"[Voluntary] associations are important to communicate with the people. During these difficult times, a lot of rumors circulate on how we use money for ourselves and how the Council is responsible for problems around the city. My own friends come talk to me angrily about rumors on the Council's wrongdoing they heard around town. It takes me a lot of time and patience to explain that they are simply false. And these are my friends. Things were easier when there were a lot of associations working in town."¹⁴¹

¹⁴¹ Author interview, skype, July 2016.

Corruption and local governance in Zuwara and Benghazi

Voluntary associations have also proven to be active agents against corruption. In the Fall of 2012, three small children undergoing treatment at Zuwara hospital died in rapid succession due to the lack of qualified medical personnel at the hospital. There were simply no doctors on duty when the emergencies occurred. These episodes created an uproar among the citizenry. As a response, Kassas radio dedicated an entire program to the deteriorating quality of healthcare services in town. Individual citizens and hospital workers started calling the radio with revelations on the widespread corruption, which had led to the rapid deterioration of the health services. Allegations unequivocally pointed to the hospital director and to the head of the Ministry of Health in Zuwara.

In response, Hussein and some of his colleagues at Kassas and at the Zuwara Media Center created the Zuwara Corruption Fighting Union.¹⁴² They funneled the information to the Municipal authorities, who were able to remove the individuals against whom abundant evidence of corruption had been gathered through the public activity of the radio and other voluntary associations. Once again, voluntary associations became a channel of communication between authorities and citizens, thus contributing to the improvement of local government performance, and the participation of citizens in the decision-making.

Similar initiatives in which voluntary associations help promote participatory governance and government performance are being conducted in many other Municipalities among the 150 that currently exist in Libya. For instance, Benghazi, which is the second largest city in Libya, has enjoyed several of these local-local partnerships, aimed at co-producing

¹⁴² Author interview, Zuwara, November 2013.

services for citizens, building the capacity of the Municipal Council and developing transparency and accountability in the decision-making process.

In 2014, following the escalation of conflict in the city which displaced many residents, more than 20 voluntary associations partnered with the city Council in a campaign called “We Are the Families of Benghazi”.¹⁴³ The initiative sought to provide assistance and support to thousands of Internally Displaced (IDP) families. Voluntary associations extended the capacity of the Municipality, which was overwhelmed by the demands of the emergency situation. They served as an intermediary between volunteers, the Municipality and the IDPs while other voluntary associations, such as “For you Benghazi I take the initiative” conducted similar work individually.¹⁴⁴

Another volunteer activity that strengthened the local administration was initiated by Mohamed, a 26 years-old petroleum engineer from Benghazi. In early 2016, Mohamed contacted the quality control office at the International Medical University in Benghazi. The office had extensive experience in this area and was renowned for its effectiveness. On the other hand, the Municipal Council, suffered from a low administrative capacity inherited from the Gadhafi regime and its very limited budget. At virtually no cost, Mohamed organized a quality control training for five Municipal Council officials from the quality control office, by using local capacity present at the University of Benghazi. He

¹⁴³ The campaign had a Facebook page available from <https://www.facebook.com/%D8%AD%D9%85%D9%84%D8%A9-%D8%A8%D9%86%D8%BA%D8%A7%D8%B2%D9%8A-%D9%86%D8%AD%D9%86-%D9%87%D9%84%D9%87%D8%A7-1511909369042698/>

¹⁴⁴ The association’s work can be seen on their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/%D9%85%D9%86%D8%B8%D9%85%D8%A9-%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%AC%D9%84%D9%83-%D8%A8%D9%86%D8%BA%D8%A7%D8%B2%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%B1-452568721458757/>

organized another similar initiative with a Benghazi Information Technology (IT) company, which provided much needed IT training to members of the Municipality.

In the spring of 2016, the Rugby 2018 association, launched a “Call for ideas” program in partnership with the Benghazi Municipal Council. The initiative collected project ideas from the young rugby players about projects that would have a positive impact on their community. Among all options, the Council selected a cleaning campaign for a very crowded neighborhood in Benghazi. This is another example of co-production of services, which increase the level of trust between local actors.

Local security and stability

In Zuwara, the revolution initially produced a single town militia that was joined by all the fighters from the city. However, it was a dysfunctional fighting group commanded by several semi-independent figures, many of whom were former criminals that Gadhafi’s forces had deliberately freed shortly after the beginning of the uprisings.

In the few months after the end of the fighting (which, for Zuwara, came in August 2011) these commanders started forming their own groups and began to assert their control over strategic locations (the commercial port, the fishing port, the neighboring Mellitah oil & gas plant, the border with Tunisia). On paper, by early 2012, there were about 24 militias in Zuwara.¹⁴⁵

One of the main sources of revenue and contention was the border with Tunisia, and the lucrative smuggling opportunities it provided. Large amounts of money started circulating as the illegal cross-border trade of drugs, fuel, weapons and human trafficking

¹⁴⁵ Author interview of a Zuwara revolutionary fighter, Zuwara, November 2013.

flourished. In the absence of any state control, militias started fighting over money, territory, and control over the Tunisian prostitutes that were brought to Libya. These confrontations were exacerbated by the widespread use of alcohol and drugs (notably psychotropic drugs and hashish). By February 2012 the security situation had become very insecure, with clashes frequently erupting in the middle of the city, posing risks to the safety of civilians.

In less than a year, nefarious groups, including some militias, had formed criminal networks. The newly elected Municipal Council, perceived as legitimate by most of the citizenry, tried to regulate trans-border traffic and limit the spread of crime in town. However, those who were prospering from the lawlessness and crime were able to manipulate public sentiment against government authorities. Groups of people organized armed, violent protests against the Municipal Council while others directly threatened Council members, demanding money for the war-wounded. Key administration officials were exposed to extreme intimidation and accused of being Gadhafi supporters. Shop owners increasingly became targets of racketeering.¹⁴⁶

In August 2012, following growing public demands for security, a group of young local men came together to form a voluntary armed group dedicated to policing the city and restore order. Many of them had fought in the revolution and some of were still members of militias. They called themselves the Zuwara Crime Fighting Unit (CFU). However, they are better known under the name “Mukhannain” (i.e. “masked men” in Arabic), in reference to the face hoods they wear in public in order to protect their identity.¹⁴⁷ By

¹⁴⁶ Multiple author interviews of local citizens, civil society activists, security officials and Municipal Council members, Zuwara, November 2013.

¹⁴⁷ The group’s operations can be followed on their Facebook page, which had almost 19’000 likes in July 2016. It is available from <https://www.facebook.com/%D9%81%D8%B1%D9%82%D8%A9->

October 2012, the group had gained the approval of the Municipal Council and was officially recognized and affiliated with the Ministry of Interior.

The Mukhannain have been operating ever since, in coordination with both the Council and with the city elders (sheikhs). However, despite their official recognition and status, one of its founders and most active members admitted that the popular support they enjoyed was largely due to their ability to connect with the people of Zuwara through voluntary associations, such as the Zuwara Media Center, Kassas radio and other voluntary associations.¹⁴⁸ His statement was further supported by Hussein, the founder of Kassas and the Zuwara Media Center, who was intimately familiar with the Mukhannain:

“A large part of the 99% support the Mukhannain have among the people of Zuwara comes from the active support of Kassas radio and the Zuwara Media Center.”

However, despite the initially positive public perception of the Mukhannain, criticism and resentment of the group began to grow in parallel to the number of individuals that got arrested and detained. Serious allegations including torture, political partisanship and even accusations of having pro-Gadhafi sympathies began emerging. Kassas radio played an important role in diffusing these tensions by running regular live programs where they invited Mukhannain’s representatives. This provided them with the opportunity to speak directly to the people about their objectives and problems they were trying to solve in the city. At the same time, it allowed regular citizens to speak to these security actors

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TtiU1r2ZigE#t=14>

¹⁴⁸ As an example, this is a video posted by the Zuwara Media Center about an operation of the CFU against the smuggling of migrants: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TtiU1r2ZigE#t=14>

directly and publicly. Most callers would thank them and express their support. However, one caller who claimed to be the brother of a criminal arrested by the group, accused the Mukhannain of torturing him and demanded accountability.

The event had a large resonance in the city. Voluntary associations called for the Mukhannain to meet publicly with some of their representatives in addition to judicial authorities to address the allegations. The group acquiesced, and met with a group of lawyers. As a result, took action to improve its own standards of upholding the rule of law and internal procedures.

In this instance, voluntary associations provided an outlet for public discontent to surface and peacefully affect corrective change within the security sector. In other cities, such as Benghazi, unaddressed public frustration has instead led to the formation of rival groups, each protecting part of the community, and inevitably clashing with each other, while preventing the development of a strong Municipal administration.

Other projects to improve security are conducted by voluntary associations in other parts of the country as well. For instance, the far eastern city of Benghazi, “Think Creative”, a youth organization,¹⁴⁹ put together an unprecedented project, called “Security is the Beginning of the State”. It involved the state security institutions, which enjoy a low level of capacity and popular legitimacy. Between August 16th and 20th, 2015, fifteen officers from different departments of the Ministry of Interior (e.g. Police, Criminal Investigation Unit, Prison Guards) and five civil society activists engaged in a joint training and workshop on civic education, stress management and communication skills. The project

¹⁴⁹ The Facebook page of the association can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/THINKCreativeOrg/photos/pcb.1022229477835747/1022198687838826/?type=3&theater>

built trust and connections between civil society activists and young officers from the Ministry of Interior, which asked for more such workshops.¹⁵⁰

2. How do these voluntary associations express and promote a civic culture?

The highly impactful voluntary associations that Hussein created with his like-minded friends in 2011 are vehicles through which they are able to promote the civic values they possess, and shape society according to them. This is easily visible through the specific objective that these voluntary associations pursued and achieved. In particular, Kassas radio and the Zuwara Media Center fostered public participation in politics by organizing live shows. Furthermore, along with the Zuwara Corruption Fighting Union, these voluntary associations increased transparency and accountability in local governance, including for the activities of local non-state armed groups with regard to security and the rule of law.

The Zuwara Media Center and Kassas radio also became the most popular and respected information outlets in town. As an indication, at the time of writing, the Zuwara Media Center Facebook page had more than 60'000 likes and its Youtube channel had 661 subscribers and 687,350 views, which is remarkable considering that the population of Zuwara is estimated at only 50'000 people. These media outlets were remarkable in that they provided widespread access to real time information. Hussein maintains that,

¹⁵⁰ Pictures and comments from the workshop can be found at : <https://www.facebook.com/THINKCreativeOrg/photos/pcb.1022229477835747/1022198607838834/?type=3&theater>

over time, public information sharing between citizens, and, the Municipal Council and security members greatly increased the level of trust in these groups.

As shown by the health sector scandal, the work of voluntary associations boosted the level of participation and engagement of the citizens of Zuwara in local politics. This led to the creation of a voluntary association to fight corruption and it led to more transparent and accountable local governance.

Reflecting on some traits that distinguished him and his activist colleagues from other young people in Zuwara, Hussein pointed out that most of them had traveled across Libya and abroad far more extensively than the average Zuwari youth. This exposed them to alternative ways of thinking and living in society. Hussein argues that, compared to other young men, his group displays a greater curiosity and eagerness to delve deeper in seeking answers to questions. He argues this motivated them to read more books and spend more time on the internet than their peers, in order to seek a larger and more diverse body of information than what was available around them. This account mirrors the strong empirical findings of the previous chapters that show a strong correlation between information consumption, active use of media, and membership in voluntary associations.

In turn, this greater knowledge about people and ideas seem to fuel a desire to discuss them with a broader network of people than the narrow kinship and local community circles. This also became possible with the advent of the internet. As mentioned earlier, Hussein and his friends became avid users of internet cafes.

The fact that they established the online Zuwara Forum shows that besides developing some civic behaviors (i.e. information consumption and active use of media), they formed voluntary groups to promote them more broadly among Libyans. Before the 2011

revolution, these young men had already joined forces to create this internet platform for fellow Libyans to explore and wrestle with new ideas and perspectives, across Libya and abroad.

Furthermore, it is telling that, besides obvious popular topics among youth, such as soccer, games and technology, two of the most popular chat rooms on the Zuwara Forum, were on religion and identity. Several young Libyans I interviewed across Libya asserted that online discussions were responsible for changing their vision on their Libyan identity, society, religion and politics.

In particular, engaging in online discussions with Libyans from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds, appears to have contributed to the development of a sense of Libyan identity that went beyond ethnic and communal lines. Besides providing diverse information, Internet provided a unique medium to discuss identity issues in a safer space with a much wider and more diverse body of interlocutors than what was available at the local cafes and squares.

The same is true for religion. It is very controversial to publicly question religion in Libya, and it is downright dangerous to even play with the concept of atheism. Yet, I met many Libyans who in private, expressed doubts over the dogmas of their religion. Some even questioned the existence of god altogether, declaring themselves as atheists. None of them had shared these sentiments with their parents. However, online they had discussed it with other Libyans, watched debates on science versus religion on Youtube, and downloaded books and articles on the topic. I actually developed my own knowledge on the question of religion thanks to the literature and the videos that Libyan friends from various cities shared with me during the course of my stay. As the empirical findings show, members of voluntary associations display more religious openness than non-members.

Their volunteer activities seem to promote this openness through the sharing of information and dialogue among Libyans.

Overall, it appears that the online Zuwara Forum; Kassas Radio and the Zuwara Media Center helped foster some key civic attitudes and behaviors among their participants, such as religious openness; a stronger sense of Libyan identity; political engagement, information consumption; and active use of media.

Finally, Hussein's election to the Zuwara Municipal Council in 2014 (one of seven members), has further expanded his capacity to bring about change to his society by using this role to promote participatory, inclusive, and effective governance practices.

b. Women, culture and society

Despite the key role that Libyan women played in the 2011 revolution, and their high level of civic and political engagement in its aftermaths, the condition of women in Libya has not made substantive improvements in terms of legislation, access to politics and equality in employment.

For instance, since the fall of the Gadhafi regime, very little work has been done to improve legislation pertaining to gender equality, such as the right to claim citizenship for children of Libyan women married to foreigners, family laws. Discrimination against women in the workplace continues, aggravated by old laws from the Gadhafi era that disenfranchised women, which have not been amended. As a result, some women continue to be forced to marry their rapist and divorcees only receive 350 Libyan Dinars (about \$250) in alimony fees. In some instances, laws have even been amended for the

worse. For instance, in February 2013, the Supreme Court overturned the provision of the Gadhafi-era marriage statute, which required the agreement of the first wife before a man could acquire a second one.

Moreover, since the end of the 2011 revolution, women have faced an increasing level of harassment in the street and online. In the words of a young woman activist: “It’s as if we were being pushed out of the public spaces bit by bit.” While the state is absent, individuals take up the initiative on their own to impose a conservative and discriminating view of the role of women in society (Salah 2014). They are aided by the ultra-conservative Grand Mufti Sadiq Al-Ghariani, who issued a series of controversial fatwas in the years following the revolution affecting women’s rights (Dettmer 2013; Greenfield 2013).

According to a Libyan woman activist, the very public, vocal and often western-driven work carried out between 2011 and 2013 to promote women’s rights and empowerment has done more harm than good. Now most people associate women’s rights with specific figures and with international agendas. Moreover, they associate it with non-Islamic and non-Libyan models of society, with women dancing in the streets and libertinism.¹⁵¹

1. Project Silphium and its founders

In the Spring of 2014, conflict rapidly escalated in Benghazi and Tripoli, dragging the country into a low-intensity civil war and scaring all international organizations away. Libyans had to choose one of two camps, and the popular mood turned towards survival,

¹⁵¹ Author interview, skype, May 2016.

thereby further decreasing public support for voluntary activities not directly tied to humanitarian assistance. Hundreds of voluntary associations disappeared due to the lack of funding, low morale and increased security threat.

However, a new form of voluntary association emerged during these difficult times, which I refer to as “Libyan civil society 2.0”. It is a more pragmatic and cautious type of association that formed in response to the challenging and dangerous security environment. It conducts targeted, grass-roots activities while avoiding broad publicity. Their members often use pseudonyms and rely largely on local sources of funding, often offering pay-for services such as IT and language training, media consultancy and marketing advice.

Project Silphium is one of these associations. It is an innovative and dynamic women’s voluntary association founded by two young women in Benghazi and Tripoli. Despite having been created at the end of 2014 with no international or national financial support, Project Silphium has quickly become a reference for thousands of Libyan women who want to share their struggles, learn from other women, imagine the Libya they would like to live in and come up with ideas to contribute to this change.¹⁵² The story behind the creation of Project Silphium is particularly enlightening about the new ways in which civil society develops and operates thanks to the new possibilities offered by internet and mobile communication. The best way to learn about it is through the voice of its founders.

¹⁵² Project Silphium’s website is available from <https://projectsilphium.wordpress.com/>; <http://ps.org.ly/> and <http://ps.org.ly/category/english/>. Its Facebook page is available from <https://www.facebook.com/projectsilphium>. In June 2016, it had over 13’000 likes. The Twitter account is available from <https://twitter.com/PSilphium>

Khadeja is a 26 years-old bright young woman from Tripoli. Despite her young age, she is an educated, articulate, driven and confident full-time professional. Besides her full-time work in a large company, Khadeja is the co-founder of Project Silphium.

She spent her early childhood abroad, where her family had moved so that her father could further his studies. When she returned to Libya, even at the young age of 11, she felt a culture shock. The biggest problem she struggled with was the lack of freedom. She was no longer able to play in the streets and to ride her bicycle. Another element that shocked and bothered her was people's apathy:

"People lacked motivation. They didn't have long or short-term goals. There was no bigger purpose, they were just going through the motions of life. It is pretty much the same now, maybe even worse. The only time when things were different was between 2011 and 2014 [in the immediate aftermaths of the revolution]."¹⁵³

Khadeja left again in 2008 to study Engineering in a prestigious European university. When she left, there was no volunteering sector to speak of in Libya. It was during her studies that the revolution broke out in Libya. Khadeja witnessed it from abroad. On July 7, 2012, she was proud to vote from abroad in the first Libyan national election since 1952, and the second in the country's history. However, at the time of our conversation in 2016, she felt ashamed about that vote, because she felt responsible for the poor performance of that legislative body.

Immediately after completing her studies in the summer of 2012, Khadeja came back to Tripoli. For two years she dedicated herself to her work for a large company. However, in July 2014 war broke out in her city. All foreign firms left or suspended their activities. For

¹⁵³ Author skype interview, June 2016.

six months, she went from twelve-hour work days and frequent travel to home confinement. This was driving her crazy. So when a friend who had founded Volunteer Libya, an active and young voluntary association in Tripoli, contacted her in November 2014 to join an initiative to advocate for national unity, she accepted. It was her first experience in civil society, at a time when a majority of associations were disappearing due to the lack of funding and the increased level of threat against activists.

Despite the unfavorable odds, Khadeja felt an urgent need to continue her work in voluntary associations. Having, experienced first-hand the widespread gender discrimination in Libya, she particularly wanted to contribute to improving the condition of women. This is when she reached out to Hajer, an active 22-year-old woman who lives in Benghazi, the second largest city in Libya, situated in the eastern side of the country. She had to abandon her home in a central neighborhood in the city affected by the fighting, and could no longer continue her studies at the University of Benghazi, which was partly destroyed. Yet Hajer felt lucky compared to many other Libyans who had died or who were struggling through more difficult circumstances. Moreover, she had hopes for the future and she wanted to help other Libyans cultivate this hope.

Khadeja and Hajer had never met in person, but they had become friends over the social media. Their first interaction was on Twitter in 2013. Hajer regularly posted book reviews and comments that Khadeja found insightful and stimulating. She would immediately purchase the book and read it to share her own comments. Over the course of a few months, they built a relationship of trust that extended well beyond an epistolary friendship. One day a Libyan man wrote on Twitter that he did not understand women calling for gender equality, given that, according to him, women already had equal rights to men in Libya. Khadeja and Hajer could not believe the preposterous tweet. They

started exchanging their thoughts on the post, which continued into a protracted conversation about the condition of women in Libya. As a result, they decided to do something about it.

In response to the rampant gender discrimination and the increased marginalization of women in Libyan public spheres, they considered creating a platform to share Libyan women's stories. On December 1st, 2014, Project Silphium was born. The organization takes its name after that of a medicinal plant that was used in the ancient Greek city of Cyrene in Eastern Libya, whose beautiful vestige lays at a three-hour drive from Benghazi. It is a voluntary association tasked with promoting gender equality and women empowerment. As explained on its website:

"Silphium was a plant that was used in Cyrene (Shahat) as a medicine. Project Silphium on the other hand heals through lots of rants, views and opinions of Libyan women with real life stories and struggles, aiming to reach out and empower women all over Libya.

*We are group of six (4 girls and two guys) activists. born and raised in Libya! we know struggle and we want our voices to be heard. We started this project to empower women, educate the people about equality between genders and to shed light on Libyan women problems, struggles and inspiring stories through lots of rants, reviews and articles of real women and men from all Libya."*¹⁵⁴

In just one week, their Facebook page already had one thousand "likes" and their following has been growing ever since. At the time of writing, Project Silphium has a core team of eight young Libyans in two different cities and over thirty ambassadors across

¹⁵⁴ From Project Silphium's website. Accessed July 9, 2016. Available from <https://projectsilphium.wordpress.com/>

Libya who conduct multiple and often simultaneous innovative projects. Most importantly, it is a network of Libyans across the country and abroad who share a vision of Libya based on pluralism, tolerance and gender equality. Judging from its rapid, self-supported success, this voluntary association responds to a widespread social need.

Creating communication platforms for women and helping them fulfil their potential

Long-standing discrimination against women has created a “distorted political and economic incentive[s]” (Al-Ghwell 2013) that discourage and hamper women who want to engage and succeed in the realms of politics and business. The same prevailing suspicious and often hostile attitude towards the discourse on women’s rights and gender equality hampers the ability of women’s associations to engage with the broader Libyan public. Project Silphium and other voluntary associations have learned how to circumvent this challenge by focusing on individual stories that touch Libyans “close to home”, thereby letting facts appeal to human empathy and sense of justice, without ever mentioning gender and women empowerment. As Khadeja explains:

“If you say that you are advocating for women’s rights, nobody will listen to you. So we don’t say it. And if you explain what is missing, and what should be done, they will listen to you. If you tell the stories of individuals, people will empathize with it. And if you explain that laws can fix the problem, people will agree.”¹⁵⁵

This indirect approach to social change permeates throughout the activities of Libyan women’s voluntary associations, especially of those who were created after the further

¹⁵⁵ Author skype interview, June 2016.

escalation of violence and withdrawal of the international community from Libya in the Spring of 2014.

These organizations no longer conduct vocal public campaigns advocating for women's rights or hold public trainings to build the capacity of women. They do not seek to overtly attack prejudice and discrimination, since such a "negative" strategy (i.e. one that highlights what is wrong in society) would put all the participants at risk and alienate part of the population. Instead, these associations adopt a "positive" strategy by highlighting stories of women who are helping Libya through their work, and by tapping on the existing talent among Libyan women to empower, advise and educate others.

Associations such as Project Silphium, Jusoor and many others, enable and support women who seek to achieve their goals by helping them start their own project, attain a prestigious scholarship or land the job of their dreams. They created a series of online platforms, such as "Women in Libyan Leadership", created by Jusoor to connect women in all fields and from all parts of Libya to promote mutual support and cooperation.¹⁵⁶

With the same philosophy, Project Silphium created the "Women in the Workforce" Facebook group, which connects women entrepreneurs who want to launch their own company, building a network of female professionals within and across various fields. It also provides a platform to discuss unemployment and other problems encountered in the workplace and beyond.¹⁵⁷ In a similar fashion, they created a specific mentoring project that pairs women that won a scholarship in the past with female students who are currently applying to guide them through the process.

¹⁵⁶ Available from <https://www.facebook.com/groups/207689316107413/>

¹⁵⁷ Available from <https://www.facebook.com/groups/408859609313203/>

Many other activists I have interviewed over the years, especially among women's associations, complain about a prevalent sense of competition and jealousy among associations. This is particularly true in Tripoli, the capital city. It is a problem that limits fruitful cooperation, effectiveness and collective growth, negatively impacting these voluntary association, and the performance of the entire volunteer sector. Many of the new voluntary associations try and remedy this trend by conducting joint capacity building projects with other Libyan women's volunteer groups.

For instance, on the occasion of the 2016 International Labor Day (May 1st), Jusoor and Atwar Organizations for Social Research and Development organized an unprecedented panel discussion in Tripoli focusing on Libyan women in the work force. The event brought together twelve Libyan women from various sectors, including banking, public institutions, and private business.¹⁵⁸ Project Silphium joined the initiative and provided it with a broad media coverage across civil society platforms of communication.

However, amid Libya's increasingly dangerous security environment, women's associations must be very cautious in the way they conduct publicly accessible events. The risk posed by highly conservative militias, means they must avoid drawing attention to public activities that are easily identifiable as pursuing gender equality and women's empowerment. Hence, Libyan women's associations also partner with associations that do not focus on gender issues in order to conduct capacity-building activities. For instance, Project Silphium partnered with the association of engineering students in order to provide programming training to dozens of students in Tripoli and Benghazi, while making sure that fifty percent of the participants were women. Besides building capacity,

¹⁵⁸ An article about this initiative can be found at <https://medium.com/@jusoorLY/jusoors-discussion-libyan-women-are-demanding-real-change-in-the-field-of-work-acc94e88b97#.bx8texlui>

the objective was to encourage women to go into Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics disciplines (STEM) and demonstrate that women can excel in these fields too.

Other training activities are conducted online. These include

- Personal branding: How to present yourself online
- Online security and combating online harassment
- How to use Wordpress (a popular free online website creation tool, which is the most popular tool to create a website or a blog)
- Jobs toolkit: How to write a CV, a cover letter and other professional documents

But the empowerment process does not end simply with capacity building. It requires creating a vision for women and helping them believe in it. The lack of knowledge available on outstanding Libyan women, living and working in the country, who could serve as role-models for millions of others, has been a source of frustration for Khadeja and Hajer. Every time they would ask Libyans or internationals to name a few outstanding Libyan females, the same two or three names were repeatedly mentioned and often they were Libyan women who do not even live in Libya and or even grow up in the country. This does not send an encouraging message to other Libyan women across the country who need to identify with role models that they believe they could become themselves in the future.

Therefore, Project Silphium launched the project called “10 Libyan women in Libya you need to know.” The campaign brings popular attention on Libyan women who have accomplished great things through their work in Libya and for Libya. The objective is to highlight 100 women. As Khadeja puts it, the issue really is not about recognition, but

rather women's self-esteem and the development of a collective vision for the role they may play as individuals and also as part of a community. As an essay by a Project Silphium member notes: *"you cannot be what you cannot see"*.¹⁵⁹

This campaign went viral on social media. It was something new that clearly resonated with widespread sentiments. Libyans did not want the same old faces they had always seen. Project Silphium just delivered ten new ones and the enthusiastic reaction on social media spoke for itself.¹⁶⁰

This voluntary association is already working on a series of new pioneering projects, which utilize new technologies to run activities that are more broadly accessible, captivating to audiences, and interactive. One of them is to organize a webinar, which aims at showcasing the experience of successful Libyan women. A webinar is a web-based seminar, lecture or workshop that is transmitted over the internet through the use of a video conferencing software. A key feature of a webinar is the ability to share text messages, voice and videos simultaneously across geographically dispersed locations. It has some of the real-time, interactive advantages of a seminar, workshop or lecture without the limitations of having to be physically present in a location. Therefore, webinars can involve a large audience at very low financial cost for the organizers and with virtually no logistical inconvenience or cost to the participants. These are the objectives of the webinar project:

"This aims at showcasing the amazing work women activists are doing inside Libya that goes completely unrecognized by Libyans, international organizations

¹⁵⁹ Available from:

<https://jahamedia.com/10-libyan-women-you-need-to-know-a0090d5cb23#.no18ckf88>

¹⁶⁰ You can read the "10 Libyan women you need to know!" article at

<https://medium.com/@PSilphium/10-libyan-women-you-need-to-know-a0090d5cb23#.i2ti05tvk>

and potential donors. The project will be conducted in English, Arabic and Amazigh. We will talk about issues most important to women like online harassment, the gender gap in Libyan politics, women's rights in Libya, new Libyan activists and the work they do."

Similarly, Project Silphium has also launched a country-wide podcast project. A podcast is a digital audio file that is shared through the internet and can be downloaded and listened to through a computer or a mobile phone. On this initiative, the association has partnered with Fezzan Libya Media Group, another voluntary association based in the South of Libya focused on providing information about that part of the country. Together, they will amplify the voices of a diverse array of young Libyans from various locations across the country. The project's objective is to share weekly the perspective of a Libyan on issues that affect her or him, with a particular focus on youth and women.

Yet another powerful initiative making use of new technologies is the "#WomeninLibya" Snapchat campaign. Snapchat is a digital application for phones that allows individuals to share content such as a photo or short video ephemerally, meaning that it will disappear entirely after 24 hours. It is used like a mobile-based TV channel. Each week a new Libyan woman will assume control of the #WomeninLibya account and take the channel followers on a tour of her life (social, study, family, work, business, struggles, etc.). For Project Silphium, it is the perfect way to portray the life and thoughts of different Libyan women and to raise awareness of their challenges and struggles. What makes this tool so special is that it takes people on a live journey through someone's real time experiences without having to be physically with her or him and without leaving a trace of it, except in the memories of those who joined.

The success of this initiative was evident in the positive Twitter comments from Libyan activist, such as Eman's: "[#womeninlibya](#) snapchat is one of the best ideas ever enjoying every snap"¹⁶¹ and Naziha's: "youth in [#libya](#) not just dreamin of alternativ 2war, but actually makin it happen [#YoungEntrepreneurs #womeninlibya](#)".¹⁶²

2. How do these voluntary associations express and promote a civic culture?

The story of Project Silphium's creation clearly shows that it was founded to promote gender equality and a more just society in general. It quickly provided a series of communication platforms through which Khadeja, Hajer, and thousands of Libyan women and men could tell their stories, discuss the condition of women in Libya and express their support for gender equality and a more inclusive society.

As shown, Project Silphium, Jusoor and many other voluntary associations do not only serve expressive needs. They also actively promote women empowerment and gender equality by providing advice and specific training to women who want to start their own enterprise, seek educational opportunities or attain professional goals.

There are two attitudes that Khadeja identifies when she tries to pinpoint the traits that differentiate members of voluntary associations from non-members. These are the desire for social change, and the will to be an active driver of it. However, as described earlier,

¹⁶¹ Comment made on May 26, 2016. Available from: <https://twitter.com/emmaelghoul/status/735781822584500224>

¹⁶² Comment made on July 9, 2016. Available from: <https://twitter.com/Naziha10/status/751889736487297024>

Libya offers very few avenues to entrepreneurial, empowered and non-violent individuals who seek to influence the world around them. Politics is largely inaccessible and inhospitable to women and youth. Furthermore, it is governed by intolerance, secretive practices, and exclusion. Libyan decision-makers draw their power from militias and kinship ties rather than from popular legitimacy.

The economic sector is also largely unavailable for individuals eager to make a difference in society. The 2011 revolution did release the regime constraints on liberalization. However, the private sector is still minuscule and Libya continues to suffer from entrenched corruption.

Therefore, in comparison, the non-profit sector provides a more accessible avenue for individuals who want to bring about change. This may explain why many Libyan voluntary associations like Project Silphium have become the place where individuals peacefully express their vision of a more just, tolerant and inclusive society, and the tools through which they pursue it.

The desire for change and the will to drive it also characterize the attitude of the other members of Project Silphium, as it transpires from their short personal statements on the association's website (under their respective pseudonym):

J.E: "On the internet I'm this adventurous feminist blogger trying to raise awareness about women's rights and equality. But in reality I'm just a bookworm that really likes coffee."

Ismcdit: "Stubborn Libyan that won't accept the status quo. Exposed to the real struggles of working in a male dominated environment. I try and change what I can in my spare time."

S.B.: *“A 17-year-old introvert with a shopaholic and workaholic nature. I dream of fixing this nasty world we live in.”*

M.B.: *“A 21 existentialist lad who believes that women are as much competitive and determined as men. Likes reading, music and jogging. And have an ambiguous nostalgia for archaeological sites.”*

I.M.: *“Tamazight, feminist, activist and an eager soul for social justice. I love learning and experiencing. Learning about new languages, ideas and cultures. And experiencing adventures, complexities of thoughts and friendships. I take my strengths through activism and women’s stories of Libya which inspires my life. While not working or sleeping, I cook, browsing Internet or enjoy music.”¹⁶³*

As expressed in the above statements, the other members of Project Silphium also share a desire to promote gender equality and a more just society in general. The description that they give of their association on their Facebook page leaves no doubt that Project Silphium is an instrument to carry out this change: “We are a group of change makers, born and raised in Libya! We know struggle and we want our voices to be heard”.¹⁶⁴

The fact that voluntary associations have, and continue to appear in Libya despite increasingly unfavorable circumstances, is also a sign that they fulfil a higher set of needs than just materialistic goals. Khadeja argues that voluntary associations respond to the desire for belonging: The need to have a network of people with whom individuals can identify, share their complaints about the current state of things, and discuss their vision for a better future. Multiple interviews with members of voluntary associations also

¹⁶³ Available from: <https://projectsilphium.wordpress.com/the-team/>

¹⁶⁴ Accessed July 8, 2016. Available from: https://www.facebook.com/projectsilphium/info/?entry_point=page_nav_about_item&tab=page_info

highlighted the sense of belonging that voluntary associations provided them. Because of the prevailing conservative culture, there are no social clubs or public places where people can congregate and socialize to attain this sense of belonging. Thus, voluntary associations fill this void. Within these groups, individuals feel empowered, rewarded and recognized.

Members of voluntary associations also emphasize that their activities satisfy the need to give a purpose to their life. By volunteering they have the feeling of serving a greater cause, of pursuing an objective that is bigger than themselves. As one of the co-founders of Project Silphium puts it:

“due to the current circumstances Benghazi and Libya are going through, I had to leave my house, my university graduation has been postponed and even though I knew it was due to events out of my control I couldn’t help but start to get depressed, I felt useless, and being useless was equated with having a meaningless life, an existential vacuum. After a few months of this sufferings, I started with my best friend Project Silphium, a simple blog to raise awareness about women’s rights and feminism where we live, it was overwhelming the amount of purpose this simple blog added to my life.”¹⁶⁵

Despite the fact that economic and security conditions in Libya are very far from the circumstances that, according to Inglehart, foster post-materialist values, the needs highlighted by Libyan activists correspond to them: Belonging; self-expression; and quality of life (1990, 67).

¹⁶⁵ Blogpost on Project Silphium’s website: “Man’s Search For Meaning: Book review and a dedication to Sabreen”. April 20, 2015. Accessed July 9, 2016. Available from: <http://ps.org.ly/mans-search-for-meaning-book-review-and-a-dedication-to-sabreen/>

Overall, dozens of women's associations all across Libya are working to make a difference in the life of women around them, which is already an important achievement per se. Moreover, by communicating and cooperating with each other through the help of social media and mobile communication, they establish strong local and national networks of individuals who share collective aspirations to empower Libyan women to express their potential and further gender equality.

c. Libyan women and politics

Another dimension of the important role played by Libyan voluntary associations in advancing gender equality is politics. Before the revolution, women did play a limited role in politics, however it was largely a façade covering Gadhafi's abusive and perverse attitude towards women (Raghei 2012; Cojean 2012). The reality in Gadhafi Libya was far from promoting women empowerment and gender equality. The opportunity for change that accompanied the 2011 revolution was immediately seized by thousands of Libyan women. Some of their initiatives had a profound impact on Libyan politics and society, which further highlights the impact of post-Gadhafi Libyan voluntary associations.

1. The Libyan Women's Platform for Peace

In the spring of 2011, Libyan activists in Egypt supported by the German NGO *Friedrich Naumann Foundation*, founded *Friends of Free Libya*. This initiative aimed at raising

awareness and support for the Libyan revolution and building connections with Egyptian actors and the international community at large.¹⁶⁶

On June 11, 2011, twenty-six Libyan women, working under the umbrella of *Friends of Free Libya* hosted a large public event in Al Azhar Park in Cairo, to showcase the activities and role played by Libyan Civil Society Organizations in the Libyan revolution. The organizers were Libyan women volunteers residing in Egypt, who had mobilized in support of the revolution. They did not yet have an organized network of civil society activists.

The event was multi-faceted, consisting of Libyan art exhibitions, traditional music, Libyan food, etc. Over two thousand people participated in the event, including foreign diplomats and representatives from the seven main political parties in Egypt. Although female volunteer organizers had to rely on very scant resources, the turnout and the diverse program and activities made the event a great success. It specifically showcased the organizational abilities of female Libyan civil society activists.¹⁶⁷ The widespread attention that this initiative drew from politicians and diplomats also showed how Libyan women could be a significant political organizing force. Zahra Langhi, one of the key organizers of the event, recalls how stunned men were about the scope and size of the event, which they had previously dismissed as a little social bazaar.

In the wake of this successful event, Libyan women volunteers in Cairo organized two capacity-building workshops for Libyan civil society activists. They took place in July and August of 2011 under the *Friends of Free Libya* initiative. The first workshop aimed at

¹⁶⁶ More details about the initiative can be found at: <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/9485/Egypt/Politics-/Friends-of-Free-Libya-in-Egypt-call-for-solidarity.aspx>

¹⁶⁷ Some pictures of the event can be found at https://www.facebook.com/عامة-معلومات-117562008280164/photos/?tab=album&album_id=134580303245001

equipping Libyans with tools in journalism and the second was geared towards documenting human rights violations. Zahra and her colleagues were greatly concerned about what would happen after the fall of the Gaddafi regime. They were intimately convinced that civil society would have to play an important role and to this end, activists needed training.

In October 2011, at the end of the third Cairo-based capacity-building workshop, more than thirty-five Libyan women formed the Libyan Women's Platform for Peace (LWPP).¹⁶⁸ Its core objective was to create a loose network of Libyan female activists and leaders to coordinate their efforts and play a meaningful role in the new Libya. LWPP's activities focus on women's rights, youth leadership, security, women's political and economic participation, constitutional reform, and education (Langhi 2015, 359). LWPP quickly became a large network of Libyan women activists from all walks of life, working towards ensuring the participation of Libyan women in politics and other public spheres.

The focus on women became urgent when the interim government (i.e. the National Transitional Council), which took power after the fall of the Gadhafi regime, excluded women from political participation and made some statements that attacked their family rights. In response, dozens of Libyan women's voluntary associations, such as LWPP, Attawasul, The Voice of Libyan Women, the Committee of Women Participation in Decision Making and the Libyan Women Union joined forces to publicly pressure the government to create the space for women to enter the public life. In particular, LWPP and other women's associations conducted a targeted campaign calling for a revision of the initial draft electoral law of December 2011, which would have replicated the tribal and patriarchal distribution of power in society. Instead they called for the adoption of a

¹⁶⁸ Its website is available from <http://lwpp.org/>

quota system that would ensure a minimum number of women representatives in the upcoming Parliament. Public protests culminated in a country-wide “Day of anger” on February 2, 2012, demanding the amendment of the electoral law accordingly.

Although no agreement was reached on a specific quota, the government responded to the public outcry by adopting the so-called “zipper” system in the Election Law. The system forced political parties to alternate men and women candidates both horizontally (i.e. as the candidate figuring at the top of the party list) and vertically (i.e. alternating men and women candidates in the entire party lists). Although this system only applied to the seats assigned to political parties - 80 out of 200 seats, it still ensured that about 20 percent of seats in the Parliament would be assigned to women.

As a result, parties included 540 female candidates compared to 662 male candidates, about 45 percent of the total party candidates. A total of 33 women were elected as Members of Parliament, making up 16.5 percent of the Parliament’s membership.

While women’s images on campaign posters across Libya were being defaced all across Libya, and many female candidates received threats and public harassment, Libyan women’s organizations organized a national campaign under the title “My voice for her”, closing ranks in support of female candidates. The campaign, which took place on June 25, 2012, just two weeks before election day, was attended by approximately half of all the women standing for election.¹⁶⁹

There is no doubt that had Libyan women’s voluntary associations, such as LWPP, Attawasul, The Voice of Libyan Women, the Committee to Support Women’s Participation in Decision Making and the Libyan Women Union not exercised constant pressure on

¹⁶⁹ European Union Election Assessment Team in Libya (2012, 26: note 71).

authorities, not conducted public campaigns and not drafted alternative electoral laws that were more favorable towards including women in politics, Libyan women would not have achieved a level of representation in politics and in the Parliament that is close to that of long-standing democracies. Unfortunately, these gains did not translate in substantive power, through the chairing of Committees and the appointing to important ministerial positions. In fact, the female representatives were quickly sidelined within the chamber, especially as armed groups began to influence the Libyan political sphere. Nonetheless, their election represented an important step, affecting the public idea about the role that women should have in politics.

2. How do these voluntary associations express and promote a civic culture?

The first event that Libyan activists in Cairo, who came together under the banner of the *Friends of Free Libya* initiative, was designed to showcase Libyan culture, with traditional food and performing arts. However, the second and third events were already geared towards equipping Libyan activists with the skills to report information and document human rights violations. One of its initiators, Zahra Langhi, made no mystery about the intention to help voluntary associations play an important role in society and politics.

As the story of the founding of the Libyan Women's Platform for Peace shows, Zahra's objective was shared by thirty-five Libyan women from all regions of Libya and ideological convictions. The association's ability to carry out important national campaigns in cooperation with several other Libyan women's associations, promotes the values of tolerance and equality. Furthermore, the success of such a broad national coalition of

women and associations promotes a sense of common Libyan identity. These initiatives represent a powerful signal that, irrespective of their ethnic, geographical, and religious background, Libyan women share a common struggle and will face a common fate.

Like Project Silphium and Jusoor, the Libyan Women's Platform for Peace advocates for women empowerment and gender equality. However, unlike the former, its approach is principally top-down. It focuses on changing laws and government policies, and promoting the inclusion of women in politics.

Chapter 8

Conclusions

On February 17th, 2011, Libyans rose up against Muammar Gadhafi, a brutal and capricious dictator who had ruled over them for 42 years. Seven months later, they had managed to topple Gadhafi's sultanistic regime, surpassing their own wildest dreams. However, they had inherited hollow and ineffective state institutions. The power vacuum was quickly filled by competing militias, which has resulted in a constant escalation in violence and lawlessness. Formal democratic steps, such as free and fair elections, and the creation of an executive and a legislative body, did not translate into democratic practices. National politics mirrored the prevailing clientelistic, intolerant, and communitarian political culture. However, despite these unfavorable circumstances, thousands of voluntary associations have emerged in post-Gadhafi Libya.

This investigation has tried to shed light on this remarkable phenomenon, and to understand whether, in fact, what has emerged in Libya is a *civil* society. In other words, I have sought to ascertain whether or not post-Gadhafi voluntary associations embody and express a *civic* political culture in comparison to the civic attitudes and political behaviors that prevail among Libyans.

I have explained that the strength of a voluntary associational sector, defined in terms of its contribution to democratic governance and development, is measured through its structural capacity and its cultural attributes, that is the extent to which, as a whole, it possesses a civic culture and purpose. Moreover, I have highlighted that the cultural

strength of voluntary associations – largely identified here with the concept of civil society is particularly important in determining its potential contribution to the development of democracy.

The key attitudes and behaviors that determine the cultural strength of civil society, which are the same that characterize a civic political culture, are: individual-level social identity; radius and level of trust; tolerance; religious openness; support for gender equality; political engagement; information consumption; and active use of media. In the course of my research, I have used these eight traits to gauge the cultural strength of voluntary associations.

To complete the theoretical framework for this inquiry, I have provided an overview of contending theories that seek to explain what makes a civil society strong. I grouped them into socioeconomic factors; socio-cultural factors; political institutions – both from history and current ones; and international influence. Against this backdrop, I have analyzed the historical background and the current situation in Libya. I have shown that, except for some degree of international influence, Libya offers a very unfavorable *milieu* according to most of the criteria that are argued to help foster the emergence of a strong voluntary associational sector.

However, I have highlighted that, in spite of strong economic and existential pressures, a sub-national group of individuals has developed a civic political culture that is at odds with the predominant one in the country. Furthermore, I have shown that voluntary associations appear to be an arena in which these individuals express their civic culture, and a set of tools through which they seek to promote social change.

The virtual absence of state institutions, the non-existent history of democracy, and the lack of prior experience with free associational life in the previous four decades are

unique characteristics of post-Gadhafi Libya. They constitute particularly useful circumstance to study the relationship that I argue can exist between individual political culture and civic engagement in fragile contexts.

More specifically, my first hypothesis posits that the body of voluntary associations in Libya as a whole displays a more civic culture than the rest of society, without controlling for individual and environing factors. To verify the veracity of this proposition, I complement data from the World Values Survey and the Arab Barometer with those deriving from the Leadership in Civil Society survey that I conducted between 2013 and 2014. The descriptive statistics relative to the dozens of indicators of the civic culture traits for regular members, active members, and leaders of voluntary associations provide equally conclusive evidence that members of voluntary associations possess a more civic culture than non-members.

My second hypothesis suggests that there is a direct correlation between possessing each of the key traits that characterize a civic culture, and belonging to a voluntary association, while keeping the most likely alternative explanatory variables for associationalism constant (e.g. age, education, religiosity, environing level of security, etc.). Thus, according to this hypothesis, voluntary associations are, at least in part, a manifestation of civic attitudes and behaviors.

In order to test this hypothesis, I have drawn from two separate surveys administered by some of the most authoritative and established nation-level research endeavors across the world on politically-relevant attitudes and behaviors of people. These are the World Values Survey and the Arab Barometer, which, for the first time in history, surveyed a large representative sample of the Libyan population in 2013 and 2014, respectively.

I conduct a series of OLS regression analyses whose results, summarized in the table A5.1 in Appendix 5, show overwhelmingly that Libyans who possess a higher degree of any of the eight civic culture traits, are more likely to belong to voluntary associations than those who do not, even after controlling for individual and environing alternative explanatory variables.

Lastly, I lay out illustrative narratives of key Libyan activists and voluntary associations that shed some light on meanings and processes that link political culture and civic engagement. They provide some insights on why Libyans join voluntary associations, and they show tangible evidence of the impact that voluntary associations have on inclusive politics, participatory governance, and overall government performance.

Significance

My research builds on the work of scholars of political culture, following Almond, Verba and Pye's conceptual framework to study associational life in relation to individual attitudes and behaviors, and their quantitative methodological approach based on large surveys. It adopts Inglehart, Dalton and Welzel's *assertive* model of civic culture based on critical political participation, trust, tolerance and other key liberal and democratic values.

However, I adopt a different methodological approach, focusing on a single country study, which allows me to circumvent the problems of ecological fallacy, whereby some measures of individual political culture lose their meaning when aggregated at the national level; and non-exchangeability of indicators across countries. This approach enables me to question some aspects of Inglehart, Dalton and Welzel's theoretical construct that seeks to explain the evolution people's political culture. In particular,

although my research supports the human empowerment process, whereby human civilizations are transforming into people-powered societies, it questions the congruence and the collective sequence propositions.

Contrary to the first proposition, I show that in Libya, the political culture of a large and active sub-national group – members of voluntary associations, is not congruent with the country's prevailing economic conditions, its political institutions, and the level of security.

Furthermore, the existence of a political sub-culture in Libya, which is closely correlated with the rise of a key institution such as civil society, questions the collective sequence proposition. In other words, it shows that the political attitudes and behaviors of national sub-groups can evolve separately from a country's predominant political culture.

Thus, I argue that the prevailing theoretical understanding of political culture, championed by Inglehart, Dalton and Welzel, only captures national evolutions, which are the result of slow, path-dependent changes. It misses important sub-national social and cultural changes, which in the age of globalization, can be decoupled from local political and economic conditions. Indeed, these micro-social changes may be at the base of important political and social phenomena, such as violent jihadism and civil society movements and uprisings.

I assert that the political culture of a people is not homogeneous, and it is not necessarily congruent with the political and economic environmental conditions. Moreover, contrary to the argument of Putnam et al., I posit that the political culture of a national sub-group may evolve towards a civic culture much faster than through the Century-long, path-dependent process that he purports it takes (Putnam et al. 1993). In other words, I argue that nowadays, the cognitive shift from survival to self-expression attitudes of individuals,

which undergirds the evolution towards a civic political culture, can occur in spite of their material – particularly security and economic – conditions, and their enviroing political culture. This process echoes what Deleuze and Guattari call *deterritorialization*, which is the weakening of the ties connecting identity, culture, territory, and community (1987), which happens in conjunction with the unprecedented access to knowledge and information that Levitt refers to as *globalization* (1993), and Khanna in terms of *Connectography* (2016).

The individual-level processes of cultural change decoupled from surrounding cultural and existential circumstances are more likely to be prevalent in countries and sub-national contexts in which state institutions are weak or absent, keeping the level of access to foreign information and knowledge constant (e.g. satellite TV, Internet and mobile phone penetration rates). State institutions and bureaucracy are powerful collective constructs that perpetrate a national culture and socialize citizens. Where they are weak or absent, transnational influences face less resistance from national sources of culture to shape the attitudes and behaviors of individuals. This proposition could be tested by comparing the degree of variation of key traits of civic culture among citizens of countries with weak states, such as Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Yemen, Libya, Chad, and Afghanistan, to those of citizens of states with comparatively stronger institutions such as Ghana, North Korea, Belarus, Algeria, Egypt, and Morocco. These data should complement series of in-depth interviews with individuals who are “cultural outliers” in their country, to investigate the factors that helped them develop their non-conformist attitudes and behaviors.

I believe that these insights apply to civil society activists as much as to global jihadists. Both deviate from the mainstream political culture, and actively engage in actions that seek to change the socio-political environment in which they live.

To the extent that empirical research may provide enough support for my assertions that sub-national and transnational groups may develop a political culture that is at odds with the one that surrounds them, and with the conditions in which they live, an adjustment in the study of political culture theory will be required. Just as democratic citizens changed from an allegiant to assertive political culture in the second half of the twentieth century, the current evolution of the human condition across societies may call for a paradigm shift in the study of the link between micro-level political attitudes of sub-national and transnational groups and macro-social phenomena. To begin, it calls for a change in focus and methodology. Firstly, it highlights the importance of studying the transnational diffusion of meanings, attitudes and behaviors, which calls primarily for the use of qualitative methods (i.e. in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, discourse analysis). Secondly, it highlights the importance of focusing on individuals and small groups as the key level of analysis.

Tentative causal mechanisms

How can individuals and sub-national groups develop a political culture that is at odds with the one that is predominant in their country, and that is not congruent with the economic conditions, political institutions, and level of security in which they live?

On the basis of my analysis of the singular case of Libya's voluntary associations, I suggest two avenues that could provide valuable insights for understanding the development of a civic culture and a strong civil society in unfavorable settings.

The first, which I refer to as *exposure to foreign cultures and practices* is linked to the process of globalization through which individuals are exposed to diverse modes of thinking, information, and knowledge through satellite television, the internet, the presence of diaspora, traveling, reading, and other forms of information consumption (TV; internet; radio; newspapers; magazines). The second derives from technological advances that allowed the emergence of what I call a *quasi-public space* through to the diffusion of social media platforms and the widespread access to the internet through mobile phones. I will briefly elaborate on both of these mechanisms.

Exposure to foreign cultures and practices

Based on the personal accounts of civil society activists, and on the quantitative evidence provided in this research, it appears that exposure to different ways of thinking and behaving and to multiple and diverse sources of information is closely correlated to possessing a civic culture. In turn, while the direction of causality may not be singular, information consumption and the active use of media are closely related to the exposure to different cultures. The exercise of the mind and heart that can be triggered by the exposure to different cultures can help question the assumptions about society and politics that naturally, yet unconsciously, make their way from the environmental conditions in which people live, to the internal values and attitudes by which they judge and act.

Traveling, reading and interacting with local peers certainly contribute to this intellectual and emotional stimulation. However, the unprecedented access to information that Internet, satellite television and mobile phones grants the new Libyan generations, starting with those who were teenagers in the early 2000s¹⁷⁰, has an important effect on the ability to develop a different sub-culture. This access to diverse sources of information and knowledge greatly expands the possibility to question the mainstream political culture and imagine a different reality for their own community.

These processes emerge through the words of Libyan members of voluntary associations. In speaking about his experience as an activist, Hussein highlighted how traveling abroad, discussing with other Libyans who had studied in other countries, and learning through media taught him about the multiple avenues through which activism can have an impact on society and politics.¹⁷¹

When I questioned Hussein about what had led him to become so active in civil society, he argued that he owed it in large part to the “right” group of friends he had grown up with. He pointed out that, no matter their socio-economic status, they were all highly educated and active in voluntary associations.

The development of this network of “right” individuals and the fact that Hussein was a member of it were not merely the result of coincidence or fate. In fact, throughout our conversation, he explained that over the years, he had actively reached out to individuals who he knew had traveled, were active with voluntary associations or simply displayed a passion for learning about the world.

¹⁷⁰ As mentioned earlier, internet arrived around 1997 in Libya, but it started to become publicly accessible only in the early 2000s,

¹⁷¹ Author interview, Zuwara, November 2013.

The exposure to diverse knowledge and a spirit of curiosity also emerged as a key element in the story of Khadeja and Hajer. The founders of Project Sylphium became friends precisely because of their common passion for reading and exchanging opinions on books. Their bookshelves count hundreds of them, spanning from Haruki Murakami; Franz Kafka, Fyodor Dostoyevsky; Albert Camus; to Gabriel Garcia Marquez. As for many of their peers around the world, you can read their book reviews on Goodreads.¹⁷² Only a love for literature can motivate a 22 year-old to pride herself for reading Tolstoy's War and Peace from cover to cover.

This curiosity towards all cultures and the world in general, which often translates into a strong enthusiasm for reading, is shared by many other Libyan activists. It is one expression of a specific attitude that sees life as an ocean to explore. The opening quote that Hajer selected for her post explaining why she reads highlights why access to information and exposure to the world in general are important in explaining civic engagement (J. E. 2015):

"Fiction can show you a different world. It can take you somewhere you've never been. Once you've visited other worlds, like those who ate fairy fruit, you can never be entirely content with the world that you grew up in. Discontent is a good thing: discontented people can modify and improve their worlds, leave them better, leave them different. We have an obligation to make things beautiful. Not to leave the world uglier than we found it, not to empty the oceans, not to leave our problems for the next generation." – Neil Gaiman

¹⁷² The world's largest site for readers and book recommendations, where book lovers share their book reviews.

It appears that the window of opportunity that was opened by the 2011 revolution affected some people more than others. In particular, it impacted those who wanted to achieve something in their life. Some entrepreneurs started their own business. Many who recognized that the power vacuum allowed the pursuit of personal and group interests through the use of force joined militias. Others who wanted to change society through peaceful means started voluntary associations. One difference between these people seems to be the degree of exposure to the world, either through travel; family or friendship ties with Libyans from the diaspora; books; internet; and television.

As Table 4.6 shows, members of voluntary associations are much more likely than non-members to have traveled or lived abroad. The Arab Barometer data shows that, in 2013, 26 percent of members of voluntary associations had spent time in a Western country in the previous five years, compared to just 11 percent of non-members. Furthermore, although no direct comparison is possible with the data from the Leadership in Civil Society survey, which asks a different question only to leaders of voluntary associations, it is nonetheless remarkable that 39 percent of them had lived outside of Libya for more than three months (Table 8.1).

Table 8.1: Prevalence of Libyans who traveled or lived abroad.

	Non- member (AB 2014)	Member (AB 2014)	Leaders (LCS 2013-4)	N	Std Dev
Spent time in a Western country (Europe, Canada, USA) in the past five years (1)	11%	26%	--	1232	35%
Lived outside of Libya for more than 3 months (2)	--	--	39%	1007	49%

Note (1): "During the past five years, did you spend time in a Western country (Europe, Canada, the United States)?" 0) No; 1) Yes.

Note (2): "Did you ever live outside Libya for more than 3 months?" 0) No; 1) Yes.

Exposure to the world appears to socialize individuals to the series of attitudes and behaviors that make up the assertive civic culture. Besides the socialization to values, Internet and television also provide models of behavior, including volunteering. This affects the younger generation more than others, because it spends more time on these media and it is more receptive towards new ideas. As Khadeja points out:

“the younger generation now sees that volunteering is something popular and they want to follow the trend. There are many gulf TV shows on MBC now that show the benefit of civil society and volunteering in the community and doing good for others. A lot of copy cats of the ideas on these shows have happened in Libya.”

Quasi-public space

The advent of the World Wide Web has provided the technological infrastructure necessary for the development of virtual platforms of information sharing and communication, such as blogs and social media. Meanwhile, the diffusion of computers and internet-capable mobile phones has democratized access to this newly created space.

Internet-based tools for information-sharing and communication such as blogs, websites, social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter), instant messaging (e.g. Snapchat Whatsapp, Telegram, and Viber), web conferencing (e.g. Webinars), and internet-based voice call services (e.g. Skype) provide the space and the means for like-minded individuals to come together and act, thereby making a difference for themselves and around them. Even if the impact of their actions is limited – and this is not always the case – this quasi-public space allows this community of individuals possessing what I referred to as a civic sub-

culture, to quickly form network through a process of self-selection, and remain engaged and motivated. They allow individuals who possess a civic culture that is different from the prevailing one to cultivate and sustain their own beliefs and behaviors, and socialize other Libyans into them.

Even though the estimated internet penetration rate in Libya is very low in Libya, as discussed in Chapter 6, Libyans typically connect to the World Wide Web through their mobile phones, whose penetration in Libya is the highest in North Africa, with 1.6 sim cards per person. However, this widespread connectivity, especially among youth, is often overlooked by outside observers, since internet-capable mobile phones are not counted for the estimation of the internet penetration in the country (International Telecommunications Union, 2011).

As the formation of Project Silphium, which I described in the previous chapter exemplifies, new opportunities for communication created by the internet and social media set the stage for the creation and success of some voluntary associations in Libya. As I highlighted, the co-founders, Kadeja and Hajer, created this association without having ever met in person while living on opposite sides of the country and having no mutual tribal, friendship or family ties. The only objective traits that they had in common were being young, female professionals, and being active on social media.

Moreover, unlike the physical arena, this quasi-public space allows the cover of anonymous participation and can be restricted to a selected and small number of individuals. Therefore, it allows individuals to continue to remain engaged and connected to each other even when the cost of engaging in the public space has become very high. Such conditions exist under repressive regimes, such as in Egypt, or in places where the absence of the state has been filled by violent non-state actors, such as in Libya.

While repressive states can develop surveillance tools to systematically mute and persecute individuals who engage in this quasi-public space,¹⁷³ non-state actors usually lack the same capacity.¹⁷⁴ Therefore, in present-day Libya, which is almost entirely under the divided control of armed militias, social media offers crucial local, national, and international platforms for Libyans who want to engage in the social and political life of their country. Moreover, as Malcolm Gladwell notes - in spite of his critique of the celebrated power of social media - these platforms confer resilience and adaptability upon social movements (Gladwell 2010). These are precious characteristics in the highly unpredictable and violent Libyan environment.

Gerbaudo elegantly captured part of the importance of the quasi-public space through the metaphor of a *choreography of assembly*, which he defines as: “[...] a process of symbolic construction of public space which facilitates and guides the physical *assembling* of a highly dispersed and individualized constituency” (2012, 5). Social media can rightly be seen as a new means available to citizens to engage in the public space (Shirky, 2011), to explore and adopt new sources of meaning and identification, and to form interest groups based on elective preferences and beliefs. In turn, these identities and interest groups can give way to forms of action, whose organization and coordination are also facilitated by social media.

In other words, the newly available quasi-public space allows for the creation of a community of like-minded individuals, who can express, discuss and develop ideas, values

¹⁷³ This was the case under the Gadhafi regime, which had acquired internet surveillance equipment before the 2011 revolution. One of these internet-surveillance tools was Amesys, bought from a French company. For more information, see Coker and Sonne 2011.

¹⁷⁴ It is important to note that even in nowadays Libya, personal email, Facebook and Twitter accounts of civil society activists and journalists are regularly hacked and individuals are threatened and can be targeted locally. However, no armed militia possess a national infrastructure that would allow to survey and physically persecute activists across the country.

and attitudes that are markedly different from those prevailing around them. In yesterday's world, these isolated individuals would have drowned into resignation, apathy, and conformism or would have remained inconsequential outcasts; nowadays, they can aggregate into cultural groups without even meeting in person. As I showed in the previous Chapter, while their interaction is often virtual, their impact on society and politics is real.

In sum, I suggest that exposure to foreign cultures and practices, and the existence of a quasi-public space enable the emergence and survival of sub-cultures, even in highly unfavorable settings. The former affects the set of values and attitudes that motivate individual behaviors, whereas the latter allows the establishment of communities of cultural minority and physically dispersed individuals.

Limitations: a question of temporal perspective

First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they attack you and want to burn you.

And then they build monuments to you.

Union leader Nicholas Klein, Baltimore, May 15, 1918 (ACWA 1918, 53)

Going back to the Libyan context, the fact that members of voluntary associations possess a more civic culture than non-members makes them potential agents of democratic change. This is a very encouraging and promising development. However, we are not witnessing a democratic transition in Libya. Not only has the country been sliding towards civil war, some of the best and brightest civil society activists, and the champions of democratic change, tolerance, pluralism and inclusion, are being kidnapped, tortured and

often killed. Violent and reactionary individuals have not hesitated to murder men, women, and boys, such as the outstanding human rights and political activists Abdelsalam al-Mismari,¹⁷⁵ Salwa Bugaighis¹⁷⁶ and Fariha Berkawi,¹⁷⁷ the teen-age activists Sami Elkwafi and Tawfik Bensaud,¹⁷⁸ and many others.

This will deepen the skepticism of those who believe that a political sub-culture does not really matter, or even more broadly, that political culture is of secondary importance compared to political institutions. Allow me to tell you the story of Sami and Tawfik, which, besides having affected me the most, has provided me with an important insight.

Tawfik and Sami were barely fifteen when a revolution broke out in their country. A popular uprising aided by an international coalition put an end to forty-two years of imposed status quo. Together with scores of Libyans, Tawfik and Sami joined several voluntary organizations such as the Libyan Scouts; Human Revolution Team; Bokra youth organization; Libyan Blogs; Committee of Supporting Women in Decision Making; Benghazi Good; Libyan Debate Club; Arshideny Awareness Foundation; Aber Organization for Human Development and Mercy Human Rights foundation. They supported a variety of civic causes ranging from women's rights; removal of weapons; countering extremism; to minority rights. These two teenagers continued to voice their passionate support for civic causes despite the increasing violence, kidnapping and killings of journalists, judges, security officials and fellow activists.

¹⁷⁵ For more, read <http://www.correspondents.org/node/3182>

¹⁷⁶ For more, read <http://www.economist.com/blogs/pomegranate/2014/06/murder-libya>

¹⁷⁷ For more, read https://www.buzzfeed.com/miriamberger/leading-libyan-female-politician-gunned-down-as-rebels-battl?utm_term=.pn61zbwM1#.gd0DRldOD

¹⁷⁸ For more, read <http://blogs.channel4.com/lindsey-hilsum-on-international-affairs/murdered-struggle-build-democratic-libya/4451>

In the years following the regime change, while the airport, the university, scores of business and public offices closed, Tawfik and Sami redoubled their civic engagement. They continued to organize public campaigns and helped with the organization of training workshops focusing on debate, citizen journalism, media, as well as civic participation in democratic processes, including elections and the drafting of a new constitution. On September 19, 2014, Tawfik and Sami were stopped while driving through the middle of Benghazi and shot in the head. They were only 17 and 18, but they were killed because of the threat of social change that was perceived from their activities and that of the multiple voluntary associations they worked with. They were assassinated by those who prefer a single, absolute and closed vision of social interactions to the plural, open and tolerant vision promoted by Sami and Tawfik, and who believe that violence is acceptable and warranted to resolve these differences.

Why did Tawfik, Sami and thousands of Libyans risk their lives by engaging in voluntary associations in such a context? Moreover, with no prior history of democratic governance and no institutions to promote or protect it, why did they advocate for civic behaviors?

I argue that, in order to find some answers to these questions, we must shift our perspective from short-term and individual, to long-term and collective. In the short term, and at the individual level, the calculation of activists such as Sami, Tawfik and their fellow Libyan activists appears to be irrational. The Libyan context is becoming even more lawless and violent than it was in the immediate aftermaths of the 2011 revolution, and activists are the first to pay the consequences by the hands of violent groups that, albeit a minority, dominate over the public space.

However, their behavior becomes understandable if one can abstract from the moment and the individual, to contemplate the possibility that these individuals are pursuing

collective goals, and that the time frame within which they believe that they will reap the fruits of their work is the long term. This is what Tawfik told his friends, explaining his love for working with civil society:

Civil Society is where you can provide a lot to your community for the long term through awareness campaigns and turn people into active citizens. I don't see myself as a different or a special human I only see myself as a person who believes in the right of each human in the world, who believes in peace who believes in change.¹⁷⁹

As his friend Toha Swadik – another young activist from Benghazi - reported, what Tawfik liked the most about his work with voluntary associations was the opportunity it provided to be a change maker. As she recalled: “Working on changing the mentalities of people in our society: that was how he saw himself in the next 10 to 20 years, that was his goal in life.”

Of course, all Libyan civil society activists and those who support them have been traumatized by the escalating and brutal violence that targets them. Many have been forced to flee abroad, others have put on hold their civic engagement. However, the level of resilience and the determination of Libyan non-violent, non-profit, non-state actors should not be underestimated. Many voluntary associations have disappeared since 2014, but many others continue their work, and more Libyans who mourned the loss of Tawfik and Sami on that fateful day, in September 2014, continue to join or create voluntary associations. The strength of their spirit of civic engagement and their determination to bring about the peaceful change that these two young men promoted

¹⁷⁹ Author skype interview, Toha Swadek, September 2015.

so passionately permeates through the “I am Tawfik” initiative, its Facebook page and the short videos that activists produced to perpetuate the memory and the spirit of Sami and Tawfik.¹⁸⁰

Thus, what I refer to as Libyan civic sub-culture may survive and even expand in Libya despite highly adverse circumstances. It appears that a cognitive shift has happened among some Libyans, who will not renounce to the objective of living in a more plural, inclusive, tolerant, non-violent and democratic society. Marouane Bakkitt, a Libyan journalist and activist, well expresses these sentiments:

Given the very real threats facing youth activists, I often feel insecure and worry that I – and youth activists in general – may be targeted anytime and anywhere. However, like many youth, I have confidence in my ideas and believe that nonviolent action is the right path. Nothing will stop us. We will never give up our efforts as community leaders and peace makers. If we do not strive to oppose violence, then who will? I dream of living in a peaceful homeland, and in order to achieve this dream, I must fight for it. I believe that young people can be the peace builders of today. The blood of the innocent is our incentive to continue the march for peace. [...]. The youth of Libya are still working to combat violence and support peace projects. We shall continue until the very end, and we shall prevail. (Bakkitt 2014)

Lastly, the civic sub-culture and the voluntary associations that embody and express it may be largely invisible to the external observer, and relatively small compared to the

¹⁸⁰ The Facebook page is available from <https://www.facebook.com/iamTawfikOfficial/?fref=nf>. In October 2016, the page had over 21'000 “likes”. The videos are available from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dxDeM6iTPnk>, and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JKrHWMtXH2U>

whole of Libya's society. However, let me explain why these two characteristics do not detract from their ability to bring about social change.

As I highlighted in Chapter 7, the increased level of violence since 2014, and the resulting withdrawal of international donors from Libya, has re-shaped the nature and strategies of voluntary associations. Post-2014 organizations, which constitute what I termed "Libyan civil society 2.0", are more pragmatic, self-reliant, and cautious. They try and rely exclusively on local sources of funding; they no longer publicly advertise their work and their objectives – such as the dismantling of militias, and gender equality; they are much more "low-key" when they organize meetings and workshops; and they have learned how to make a greater use of Internet to run activities. Therefore, the fact that Libyan voluntary associations are even less visible than before does not mean that they are disappearing or becoming inconsequential.

In conclusion, the fact that Libyans who possess a civic sub-culture may be a minority does not preclude that they may bring about change in the long run. As I mentioned in Chapter 2, Moscovici (1976, 1980) highlighted how a minority can influence the majority by convincing it that their views are correct – a process that he calls conversion. This research has shown that a civic sub-culture exists in Libya among a particularly active and resilient minority, and has developed in spite of highly unfavorable conditions. Thus, while Libyans are forced into public compliance or withdrawal by an environment dominated by militias, a largely invisible process of conversion to different values may be taking place.

Appendix 1

Research design and Conduct

Leadership in Civil Society Survey

Before the beginning of the research, the overall research project and the survey questionnaire were presented to the representative from the Libyan Ministry of Culture and Civil Society Civil Society Resource Centers – whose name was changed in 2014 to “Commission on Civil Society”. They were approved through an official letter signed by the Director of the Libyan Civil Society Resource Centers - Libyan Ministry of Culture and Civil Society.

To conduct the survey, I formed a specific research team of 10-15 members in each of the cities surveyed, usually in partnership with a local CSO. The research team members were local civil society activists and/or students, both men and women. I trained each team face-to-face in their city over the course of three days and delegated operational management to one of the members. I then followed operations either physically or remotely from Tripoli.

The questionnaire was reviewed with all team members by reading each question aloud and discussing questions and concerns. It was made very clear that the research interviews would not start until all members of the team understood each question and were comfortable asking them. Finally, each team member conducted a full-length actual interview of another team member. All the questionnaires were reviewed and mistakes in marking down answers were discussed. This was another opportunity for the team

members to ask further details about the reason or meaning of any particular question.

The training covered the following points;

- Objectives of the CSO research project
- Deliverables that will be produced (report and roster)
- Team roles and functioning
- Working hours and activities
- Research methodology, voluntary character of interview, privacy and confidentiality
- Questionnaire sections

To guarantee the complete security of interviewees, and that of their CSO, all personal information and that of the organization were separated from the rest of the interview.

These data were entered in a separate spreadsheet document and kept securely. The UN reports written for four of the cities surveyed only present the statistics and data relative to the totality of CSOs interviewed, with no reference to any single one of them specifically. Conversely, the CSO rosters for each city (also published among Libyans and international actors) only list the CSO overall description and contact information (name, contact number, field of activity, area of coverage) without more detailed and personal information provided in the survey.

As could be expected, the questions that animated most of the conversations were those on religion, security and trust towards institutions. Nevertheless, all understood the need and interest in asking those questions, and agreed to do so. The Tripoli team showed a great interest in the research.

Overall, the team was most curious and eager to read about the results for the following topics:

- The two most important challenges CSO leaders believe that Libya is facing today
- How CSO leaders define their identity
- Religious attitudes
- Level of trust in others
- The level of security perceived by CSO leaders
- The level of trust towards the different armed groups
- Most important traits of democracy
- How CSO leaders define their identity
- Voting preference criteria
- The operational and structural challenges CSOs were facing

The questionnaire consisted of 104 questions, almost all close-ended (multiple choice). All interviews were conducted in Arabic by a Libyan enumerator. Each interview was conducted individually in a public location (typically a large hotel or the premises of a CSO). Before starting the discussion, the enumerator explained the nature and objectives of the research, covering issues such as confidentiality, security of data, lack of costs and benefits to the interviewee, broader usefulness of the research and the contact information of the research staff and of the research manager. The interviewee was then given up to 15 minutes to decide whether she/he was willing to participate in the research. The interview started only if the consent is given, and lasted about 45 minutes to one hour.

The problem of fake survey interviews (typically around 10% of all surveys, according to a major worldwide polling agency) was mitigated by conducting interviews in a centralized location under the supervision of both peer enumerators, the Operational

Manager and the Coordinator. Only for the last few interviews some team members were allowed to go to the location of a few CSOs, which would have been excluded from the research otherwise.

The initial reference list used to reach out to CSOs was given by the Ministry of Culture in May 2013 and counted about 2'700 registered Civil Society Organizations for the entire country. That was a solid starting point although many CSOs listed didn't provide any contact information. This probably owes to the fact that the list was put together in 2012 and was not systematically updated. It may also be the result of some residual mistrust towards State authorities that developed over the course of four decades under a repressive regime. This roster was integrated and complemented with lists of CSOs that were kindly provided by international NGOs working with CSOs in Libya.

Given the objective of this research project was to survey all operating CSOs in the target cities, a major challenge was reaching out to them. Relatively minor challenges were convincing them about the usefulness of the research and having them agree to be interviewed at the research location. To reach as many CSOs as possible, the research team and the Project Manager organized a targeted information campaign using all available media and communication outlets.

Typically, the Operational Manager had interviews with major radio and/or TV outlets, while the Coordinator conducted a broad facebook campaign. Moreover, the research team members distributed and posted flyers in key city locations (universities, community centers, public spaces). Finally, the team contacted all major CSO Unions in order to obtain their own list of CSOs. Each member of the research team also contributed to advertising the research through facebook posts and direct contact.

Challenges in the conduct of the research

Unwilling CSOs

Several civil society activists were unfamiliar and surprised about the very idea of doing research on CSOs. Many also were distrustful of international organizations, including UN agencies, and/or of their own Ministry of Culture and Civil Society. A minority of them failed to see the utility of this research and declined to participate. It is hard to estimate the number of these organizations and distinguish them from those who just dissolved or are entirely inactive. In fact, many organizations that declined to participate in the survey didn't provide an explanation. Other CSO leaders contacted said that they were unavailable at that moment and then never answered any further call.

Suspicion

Many CSO representatives displayed suspicion towards the research. Nevertheless, the overwhelming majority of them became comfortable enough to participate owing to the transparency and openness of the team, from the interviewer to the designer and supervisor of the project. In fact, of the CSOs who came to be interviewed, less than 1% decided not to consent to the interview or interrupted it and left.

Sensitive topics

Given the breadth of the concept of civil society and depth of inquiry pursued, the survey covered a variety of topics. Some of them proved to be sensitive for the CSO representatives interviewed. Similarly to the enumerators, they proved most sensitive to the few questions on religion, security and trust towards institutions. Many understood the explanations provided by the enumerators about the relevance of these topics to the

nature and activities of CSOs, whereas others simply declined to answer them. At any rate, a large share of interviewees was sensitive to these questions.

Given the breadth of the concept of civil society and depth of inquiry pursued, the survey covered a variety of topics. Some of them proved to be sensitive for the CSO representatives interviewed. Similarly to the enumerators, they proved most sensitive to the few questions on religion, income and any question that related indirectly to Tawerghans. However, most skepticism dissipated when it was made clear that the questions were not about specific individuals but rather they were looking at overall trends and that any question citing Tawerghans was not focusing on them exclusively.

Militias

The research and the presence of a mixed team of young men and women activists working long hours raised the suspicion of a non-state armed group. All research operations were stopped following some aggressive questioning and the scrutiny of a militia field commander. Interviews only resumed a few days later after clarifications reassured the militias on the nature and conduct of the research. The militia didn't impede the research operations any further.

Overall security

By early December the team had completed training and prepared to start the research. However, hostilities broke out in Benghazi, marking the beginning of continuous clashes among warring factions in and around Benghazi which would continue for several months. The increased level of violence, the direct threats to the security of CSOs and towards international actors by Ansar al Sharia led the research team to temporarily suspend the research until it was safe to proceed. At the same time, the Team Leader

who was also a prominent human rights activist in Benghazi, received death threats. Considering the surge in the number of killings and kidnappings, we took this threat very seriously. She finally decided to seek asylum abroad with her husband, also under threat. The research was resumed four months later, after the team carefully assessed the level of the security threat.

Data entry

During the data analysis and drafting of the Tripoli report, I found some discrepancies in the data. Further investigations found that they were fairly widespread and systematic. This led to the decision to re-enter the entire database by referencing the original interview questionnaires.

Management

Two teams lost their operational manager half way through the research when they were awarded an academic scholarship with the imperative to start on short notice.

The research team was fortunate to have a very capable young Team Leader that coordinated the research team recruitment and training and launched the research. Unfortunately, only a few days after the beginning of the interviews, he was told by the Ministry of Education that he had won a scholarship to study abroad, which meant that he would have to leave a few weeks later. As a result, a new Team Leader was recruited and had the difficult task of taking over the research management half way through its execution. Fortunately, both the first and the second team leader proved to be skilled and flexible, which ensured a seamless transition. Overall, the team carried out the project very successfully.

Biases

The associations surveyed made up the entire target population, thus there was no sampling bias. However, some biases still affected the survey. These are mainly the result of two different kinds of issues: non-response/self-selection and convenience.

The type of bias introduced is different for these two issues. For the first type of bias, some associations did not accept to be surveyed.

Although all voluntary associations were invited to be interviewed, not all of them may have accepted the invitation. It is difficult to establish the nature of this self-selection bias. However, a focused group discussion was conducted with Libyan researchers to try and identify this bias, which were identified as follows:

- More males than females
- Less conservative (those more conservative don't want to share information about their activities)
- No anti-West (given that the research was sponsored by UNICEF, UNDP, ACTED)
- Younger people rather than older
- Tribes and traditional dialogue and mediation mechanisms (Hokama washura) and NSAG do not categorize themselves as civil society.

For the second type of bias, it is reasonable to guess that not all associations may have received the information about the research taking place. In this sense, the bias is due to the convenience of the survey advertising campaign that could count on a limited amount of time and funding. Thus, it is likely that some associations that do not use any type of

mainstream media and that are not connected to other associations may have not learned about the ongoing survey.

Another bias was introduced by the data collection method itself. Although this was an observational study, the data were collected through face-to-face interviews that may have interfered with the data themselves. In fact, it is well-known that survey respondents tend to favor answers that they think may be preferred by the interviewer.

Research closing and feedback

During the research closing meeting, all members of the team provided their feedback on the research, both in terms of its content and on the management and conduct of operations. They expressed their satisfaction with the training received, stressing in particular learning how to analyze civil society, differentiate needs, challenges and activities and how to craft and ask questions. Some teams showed a particular interest in receiving training on democracy, politics and the role of civil society. The interviewers were also very happy for the opportunity they had to meet many civil society activists and learn about their work and needs. They were confident that the new network of contacts and the greater understanding they acquired about civil society would push them towards new enterprises in cooperation with fellow activists. On their side, the Operational Manager and the Coordinator were very appreciative of the management experience, despite the high workload and pressure.

The interviewers also emphasized the importance of having had the opportunity to meet many civil society activists and learn about their work and needs. They asserted that the

new network of contacts and the greater understanding they acquired about civil society will motivate them to establish cooperation with fellow activists.

Appendix 2

Membership in Associations

Distribution of membership in associations according to their category. Naturally, the percentages are not cumulative to one hundred, given that individuals can be members of multiple types of associations.

Table A2.1: Membership in a voluntary association by category in proportion to total membership in associations in selected MENA countries (WVS 2013)

	Libya	Morocco	Algeria	Tunisia	Egypt	Yemen	Iraq
Church or religious organization	26%	17%	36%	16%	34%	26%	41%
Sport or recreational organization	48%	44%	49%	55%	6%	17%	26%
Art, music or educational organization	30%	24%	28%	39%	6%	12%	14%
Labor Union	32%	13%	17%	19%	6%	13%	10%
Political Party	19%	16%	13%	18%	42%	63%	13%
Environmental Association	25%	7%	10%	8%	6%	11%	6%
Professional Guild	30%	19%	12%	18%	12%	23%	16%
Humanitarian or Charity Organization	52%	12%	24%	11%	24%	28%	36%
Consumer Advocacy Organization	25%	5%	8%	5%	4%	14%	5%
Self-Help group, Cooperative group	33%	11%	11%	4%	6%	21%	18%
Another organization	20%	24%	11%	1%	6%	0%	1%
Percentage of members of associations in overall population	36%	19%	23%	10%	3%	32%	24%
N	2,131	1,200	1,200	1,205	1,523	1,000	1,200

Table A2.2: Membership in a voluntary association by category in proportion to total membership in associations in selected MENA countries (AB 2014)

	Libya	Morocco	Algeria	Tunisia	Egypt	Yemen	Iraq
Charitable society	8%	7%	8%	3%	5%	24%	9%
Professional association/trade union	9%	7%	4%	3%	6%	13%	5%
Youth / cultural / sports organization	6%	13%	13%	2%	3%	17%	7%
Family/tribal association.	13%	3%	1%	1%	3%	17%	16%
Local development association	2%	11%	1%	1%	3%	9%	2%
Cooperative association	3%	N/A	N/A	N/A	2%	13%	5%
Another organization not mentioned	3%	3%	1%	1%	0%	6%	2%
Percentage of members of associations in overall population	22%	28%	23%	8%	14%	44%	22%
N	1,247	1,116	1,220	1,199	1,196	1,200	1,215

Appendix 3

Variables and Indicators

Table A3.1: Civic culture variables and indicators for members of voluntary associations*

Variable	Indicator
Identity	
Nationalism	Level of pride for being Libyan
Communal identity	Level of identification with the local community
Libyan identity	Level of identification with the Libyan nation
Identity differential	Level of identification with Libyan nation - level of identification with local community
Trust	
Personal	Trust in family
	Trust in neighbors
	Trust in people you know personally
General - Unspecified	"Is it possible to trust most people or you should be very careful when dealing with people?"
	"Do you think most people would try to take advantage of you if they got a chance, or would they try to be fair?"
	"Generally speaking, do you think most people are trustworthy or not?"
General - Specified	People you meet for the first time
	People of another religion
	People of another nationality
Tolerance	
Tolerance	Tolerance towards each of the following nine groups as neighbors: Drug Addicts; people of a different race; people infected with HIV; immigrants/foreign workers; homosexuals; people of a different religion; alcoholics; unmarried couples living together; people who speak a different language
	Tolerance towards each of the following 7 actions: Homosexuality; prostitution; abortion; divorce; pre-marital sex; suicide; euthanasia
	Tolerance towards religious minorities: "Religious minorities such as Christians and Shi'a have the right to practice their religion freely"
Religiosity	
Religious piety	Perception of own piety
	Pray
	Attend religious rituals
	Importance of religious faith
	Importance of Allah in life

* Data are relative to active members for the World Values Survey, and to members in general for the Arab Barometer.

Table A3.2: Civic culture variables and indicators for members of voluntary associations* (continued)

Variable	Indicator
Religiosity (continued)	
Religious openness	Religion as observance or altruism
	Only acceptable religion is my religion
	Opinion on followers of other religions
Secularism	Opinion on public religious practices
	Opinion on public role of religious associations
	Opinion on political role of mosques
Support for gender equality and women empowerment	
Equality in employment	"When jobs are scarce, men should have more right to get a job than women"
Equality in income	"If the wife earns more money than her husband most likely this will create problems"
Job as independence	"Getting a job is the best way for a woman to be an independent person"
Working mothers	"When a mother earns a job, the children suffer"
Women political leaders	"Generally speaking, men make better political leaders than women do"
Equality in education	"University education is more important for a boy than for a girl"
Women business executives	"In general, men make better business executives than women do"
Housewife versus employed	"Housewife chores are just as fulfilling as a paid job"
Political engagement	
Interest and participation in politics	Importance given to politics in life
	Level of interest in politics
	Attended a meeting during last parliamentary elections
	Extent to which national political news are followed
Elite-challenging actions	Attended a political meeting during the past three years
	Participated in a protest, march or sit-in during the past three years
	Participated in any demonstrations and rallies in 2011 and 2012
	Likelihood of signing a petition
	Likelihood of joining boycotts
	Likelihood of participating in peaceful demonstrations
	Likelihood of joining strikes
Likelihood of joining any other actions of protest	

* Data are relative to active members for the World Values Survey, and to members in general for the Arab Barometer.

Table A3.3: Civic culture variables and indicators for members of voluntary associations* (continued)

Variable	Indicator
Political engagement (continued)	
Vote	Voted in the 2012 parliamentary elections
	Voted in the February 2014 Constitutional Assembly elections
	Likelihood of voting at the local level
	Likelihood of voting at the national level
Information consumption	
	Frequency of reading daily newspapers
	Frequency of reading weekly press (AB) / Printed magazines (WVS)
	Frequency of watching television news
	Frequency of listening to radio news
	Frequency of mobile phone use
	Frequency of email use
	Frequency of internet use
	Frequency of speaking with friends and colleagues
Active use of media	
Internet usage frequency	Frequency of internet use
Internet usage scope	Get political news
	Express political opinions
	Find out about opposing political opinions
Participation in media	Membership or participation in an interactive or dialogue-based groups on social networking websites
	Membership or participation in a dialogue forums on the internet
	Membership or participation in a Facebook page.
	Membership or participation in a Twitter account.
	Membership or participation in a private blog.

* Data are relative to active members for the World Values Survey, and to members in general for the Arab Barometer.

Table A3.4: Control variables' description and scale

	World Values Survey (2013)	Arab Barometer (2014)
Individual-level		
Economic condition	During the past year did your family: (1) Save money; (2) Hardly managed; (3) Spent some savings; (4) Spent some savings and borrowed some money?	Which of these statements comes closest to describing your household income: (1) It does not cover our expenses and we face significant difficulties in meeting our needs (2) It does not cover our expenses and we face some difficulties in meeting our needs (3) It covers our expenses without notable difficulties (4) It covers our expenses well and we are able to save.
Gender	(0) Female, (1) Male.	(0) Female, (1) Male.
Age	Years of age, ranging from 18 to 78 years.	Years of age, ranging from 18 to 85 years.
Level of education	What is your highest educational level: Scale ranking from (1) I did not have any formal education, to (9) University education with a degree.	Level of education ranking from (1) Illiterate, to (7) MA and above.
Marital status	Marital status: (0) Married, living with another person as a married, divorced, separated or widowed, (1) Single.	Marital status: (0) Married, divorced or widowed, (1) Bachelor or engaged.
Religiosity	Regardless of whether you attend, or not attend, religious rituals, do you think that you are a religious person? Scale from (1) A religious person, (2) Not a religious person, (3) Atheist.	Generally speaking, would you describe yourself as (1) Religious; (2) Somewhat religious; (3) Not religious?
District-level (mean value at the level of each of the 22 districts)		
Religiosity*	Same as individual-level	Same as individual-level
Education	Same as individual-level	Same as individual-level
Crime / security level	Have you been a victim of a crime during the past year? (0) No; (1) Yes.	Do you currently feel that your own personal as well as your family's safety and security are ensured or not? Scale from (1) Fully ensured; to (4) Absolutely not ensured.
Economic condition	Same as individual-level.	Same as individual-level.
Empowerment	Please use the following scale where the number 1 means "absolutely no choice" and the number 10 means "a great deal of choice" to describe the degree of free will and control you feel you have over what happens in your life.	Not available in the AB survey.
General trust	Generally speaking, would you say it is possible to trust most people or you should be very careful when dealing with people? (0) One should be very careful; (1) It is possible to trust most people.	Generally speaking, do you think most people are trustworthy or not? (0) Most people are not trustworthy; (1) Most people are trustworthy.
Trust in the police	I will name a number of organizations. For each organization, can you tell me the degree of trust you have in it?: (1) No trust at all, (2) Not very much, (3) Very much, or (4) A great deal of trust.	I will name a number of institutions, and I would like you to tell me to what extent you trust each of them: The Police. Scale from (1) I absolutely do not trust it; to (4) I trust it to a great extent.

* Since religiosity is also one of the variables included in the concept of civic culture, the control variable for religiosity is omitted in the regressions that measure the impact of religiosity indicators on membership in associations.

Table A3.5: Means of individual-level control variables by membership in voluntary associations

	World Values Survey 2013				Arab Barometer 2014		
	Sample means			Standardized difference (1)	Sample means		Standardized difference (1)
	Non-member	Non-active member	Active member		Non-member	Member	
Economic condition	2.29	2.36	2.39	14%	2.57	2.81	24%
Gender (male=1)	0.48	0.61	0.61	27%	0.45	0.66	42%
Age	34.3	35.8	32.2	-18%	38.03	38.35	2%
Level of education	5.93	5.99	6.46	20%	4.29	4.95	42%
Marital status	0.39	0.39	0.46	15%	0.36	0.35	-1%
Religiosity	1.25	1.25	1.32	16%	1.85	1.89	7%

Note (1): Percentage difference in means between active members and non-members relatively to the sample's standard deviation.

Table A3.6: Summary statistics of district-level control variables (1)

	World Values Survey 2013				Arab Barometer 2014			
	Sample mean	Standard deviation	Min value	Max value	Sample mean	Standard deviation	Min value	Max value
Religiosity	1.27	0.10	1.00	1.42	1.85	0.14	1.62	2.30
Education	6.06	0.59	4.97	7.74	4.43	0.29	4.00	5.40
Crime level (WVS) / Feeling of security (AB)	0.06	0.04	0.00	0.14	2.63	0.31	2.09	3.20
Economic condition	2.32	0.17	1.67	2.68	2.63	0.19	2.06	2.87
General trust	0.11	0.04	0.00	0.28	0.29	0.08	0.00	0.43
Trust in the police	2.79	0.21	1.43	3.14	2.42	0.28	2.10	2.96
Empowerment	7.30	0.71	3.45	8.81	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Note (1): Number of districts=22

Table A3.7: Degree of correlation between control variables (WVS)

	Economic condition	Gender	Age	Education	Marital status	Religiosity	District religiosity	District education	District crime	District economic	District empowmt	District general trust
Economic condition	1.00											
Gender	-0.12	1.00										
Age	-0.03	-0.01	1.00									
Education	0.13	0.02	-0.33	1.00								
Marital status	-0.03	0.12	-0.49	0.19	1.00							
Religiosity	-0.06	0.09	-0.18	-0.06	0.11	1.00						
District religiosity	-0.08	0.00	-0.03	-0.10	-0.04	0.23	1.00					
District education	-0.01	0.02	0.03	0.24	0.09	-0.08	-0.36	1.00				
District crime	-0.02	0.03	0.02	0.13	0.10	-0.03	-0.12	0.56	1.00			
District economic	0.22	-0.01	0.00	-0.01	-0.03	-0.08	-0.35	-0.03	-0.05	1.00		
District empowerment	0.02	-0.01	0.01	0.10	0.05	-0.01	-0.04	0.38	0.37	0.07	1.00	
District general trust	0.01	0.02	0.00	0.08	0.04	-0.04	-0.16	0.35	0.08	0.08	-0.35	1.00
District trust in police	0.08	-0.02	-0.01	-0.10	-0.09	0.04	0.22	-0.37	-0.27	0.36	-0.32	0.28

Table A3.8: Degree of correlation between control variables (AB)

	Economic condition	Gender	Age	Education	Marital status	Religiosity	District religiosity	District education	District crime	District economic	District general trust
Economic condition	1.00										
Gender	0.04	1.00									
Age	-0.18	-0.14	1.00								
Education	0.18	0.11	-0.44	1.00							
Marital status	0.19	0.25	-0.63	0.21	1.00						
Religiosity	0.05	0.12	-0.26	0.19	0.23	1.00					
District religiosity	0.03	0.01	-0.13	0.06	0.13	0.23	1.00				
District education	0.06	0.01	-0.10	0.19	0.08	0.08	0.32	1.00			
District crime	0.02	0.02	0.00	0.06	0.07	0.08	0.35	0.32	1.00		
District economic	0.19	0.01	-0.09	0.04	0.09	0.03	0.16	0.27	0.11	1.00	
District general trust	0.00	-0.01	0.02	-0.03	0.01	0.01	0.05	-0.14	0.13	-0.01	1.00
District trust in police	-0.06	-0.01	0.14	-0.11	-0.13	-0.12	-0.48	-0.60	-0.49	-0.23	0.24

Appendix 4

Survey Questions

Survey questions are listed below for each variable, with the original question number and survey to which they refer (i.e. World Values Survey (WVS); Arab Barometer (AB); and Leadership in Civil Society (LCS)).

Question numbers followed by the suffix “R” indicate that the answer scale was changed from the original one for the sake of consistency, so that for all questions used in this research, smaller values correspond to a less civic culture and higher values correspond to a more civic culture.

Identity

Q211R (WVS). To what extent you are proud of being a Libyan? (*Read out and mark one answer number*):

1. Not at all proud
2. Not very proud
3. A great deal proud
4. Very proud

People have different views about themselves and their relationship with the world. By using this card, can you tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with all the following statements that relates to your view of yourself.

Q213R (WVS). I consider myself part of my local community.

Q214R (WVS). I consider myself part of the Libyan nation.

1 Strongly agree	2	3	4 Strongly disagree
---------------------	---	---	------------------------

Trust

Q24R (WVS). Generally speaking, would you say it is possible to trust most people or you should be very careful when dealing with people? (*Mark one answer number*):

1. It is possible to trust most people
2. One should be very careful

I would like to ask you to what extent you do trust people from various groups. For each group, can you tell me whether you trust it completely, somewhat, not very much, or not at all. *(Read out and mark one answer for each group):*

Q102 (WVS). Your family

Q103 (WVS). Your Neighbors

Q104 (WVS). People you know personally

Q105 (WVS). People you meet for first time

Q106 (WVS). People from different religion

Q107 (WVS). People from different nationality

1 Trust completely	2	3	4 Do not trust at all
-----------------------	---	---	--------------------------

q103R (AB). Generally speaking, do you think most people are trustworthy or not?

0 Most people are not trustworthy	1 Most people are trustworthy
--------------------------------------	----------------------------------

Tolerance

The following is a list of different groups of people. Please select groups you would not wish to have as neighbors. *(Mark one answer for each group):*

Q36R (WVS). Drug Addicts

Q37R (WVS). Would not like to have as neighbors: People of a different race

Q38R (WVS). People infected with HIV

Q39R (WVS). Immigrants/foreign workers

Q40R (WVS). Homosexuals

Q41R (WVS). People of a different religion

Q42R (WVS). Alcoholics

Q43R (WVS). Unmarried couples living together

Q44R (WVS). People who speak a different language

1 Selected	2 Not selected
---------------	-------------------

For each of the following actions, please tell me which is always justifiable, or not at all justifiable, or falls in between.

Q203R (WVS). Homosexuality

Q203AR (WVS). Prostitution

Q204R (WVS). Abortion

Q205R (WVS). Divorce

Q206R (WVS). Pre-marital sex

Q207R (WVS). Suicide

Q207AR (WVS). Euthanasia

1 Not at all justifiable	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 Always justifiable
-----------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	--------------------------

To what extent do you agree with each of these statements? (Read) Ask about all of the items in the order listed.

q608-7R (AB). Religious minorities such as Christians and Shi'a have the right to practice their religion freely.

1 Strongly agree	2	3	4 Strongly disagree
---------------------	---	---	------------------------

Religiosity

Religious piety

Q145 (WVS). Besides wedding ceremonies and funerals, how often do you attend religious rituals these days?

1 More than once a week	2	3	4	5	5	7 Never, practically never
----------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	-------------------------------

Q146 (WVS). Besides on wedding ceremonies and funerals, how many times do you pray?

1 Several times a day	2	3	4	5	5	7 Never, practically never
--------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	-------------------------------

Q147 (WVS). Regardless of whether you attend, or not attend, religious rituals, do you think that you are:

- 1) A religious person
- 2) Not a religious person
- 3) Atheist

This is a list of habits children may be encouraged to learn at home. If you do not think they are all not important, what do you consider particularly important? Please choose up to five habits!

Q19R (WVS). Religious faith

1 Mentioned	2 Not mentioned
----------------	--------------------

q609 (AB). Generally speaking, would you describe yourself as...(Read):

- 1) Religious
- 2) Somewhat religious
- 3) Not religious

q6101 (AB). Do you pray daily?

1 Always	2	3	4	5 Never
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q6105 (AB). Attend Friday prayer?

1 Always	2	3	4	5 Never
-------------	---	---	---	------------

q6106 (AB). Listen or read the Quran?

1 Always	2	3	4	5 Never
-------------	---	---	---	------------

Religious openness

Q150 (WVS). Which of the following statements do you agree with most? The basic meaning of religion is:

- 1) Observance of religious ceremonies and rituals
- 2) Doing good to others

Q154 (WVS). The only acceptable religion is my religion

1 Strongly agree	2	3	4 Strongly disagree
---------------------	---	---	------------------------

q616 (AB). I will read two sentences. I want you to tell me which one is closer to what you think even if neither one of them captures your opinion exactly?

- 1) Shari'a is the word of god
- 2) Shari'a is the human interpretation of the word of God

q608.2R (AB). Difference and variation between Islamic scholars with regard to their interpretation of religious matters is a good thing.

1 Absolutely disagree	2	3	4 Strongly agree
--------------------------	---	---	---------------------

Secularism

q606.4R (AB). Religious practices are private and should be separated from social and political life.

1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4 Strongly agree
------------------------	---	---	---------------------

q606.5R (AB). Religious associations and institutions (excluding political parties) should not influence voters' decisions in elections.

1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4 Strongly agree
------------------------	---	---	---------------------

q606.6R (AB). Mosques and churches should not be used for election campaigning.

1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4 Strongly agree
------------------------	---	---	---------------------

Gender equality

Q45 (WVS). Do you agree, or disagree, or neither agree or disagree with the following statement: "When jobs are scarce, men should have more right to get a job than women."

1 Agree	2 Neither agree or disagree	3 Disagree
------------	--------------------------------	---------------

Q47 (WVS). Do you agree, or disagree, or neither agree or disagree with the following statement: "If the wife earns more money than her husband most likely this will create problems."

1 Agree	2 Neither agree or disagree	3 Disagree
------------	--------------------------------	---------------

Q48R (WVS). Do you agree, or disagree, or neither agree or disagree with the following statement: "Getting a job is the best way for a woman to be an independent person."

1 Disagree	2 Neither agree or disagree	3 Agree
---------------	--------------------------------	------------

Q50 (WVS). Do you strongly agree, or agree, or disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statement: "When a mother earns a job, the children suffer."

1 Strongly agree	2	3	4 Strongly disagree
---------------------	---	---	------------------------

Q52 (WVS). Do you strongly agree, or agree, or disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statement: "University education is more important for a boy than for a girl."

1 Strongly agree	2	3	4 Strongly disagree
---------------------	---	---	------------------------

Q53 (WVS). Do you strongly agree, or agree, or disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statement: "In general, men make better business executives than women do."

1 Strongly agree	2	3	4 Strongly disagree
---------------------	---	---	------------------------

Q54 (WVS). Do you strongly agree, or agree, or disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statement: "Housewife chores are just as fulfilling as a paid job."

1 Strongly agree	2	3	4 Strongly disagree
---------------------	---	---	------------------------

q601.2 (AB). I will read a set of statements that relate to the status of women in our society in order to gauge the extent of your agreement or disagreement with each statement: "A married woman can work outside the home."

1 Strongly agree	2	3	4 Strongly disagree
---------------------	---	---	------------------------

q601.3 (AB). I will read a set of statements that relate to the status of women in our society in order to gauge the extent of your agreement or disagreement with each statement: "In general, men are better at political leadership than women."

1 Strongly agree	2	3	4 Strongly disagree
---------------------	---	---	------------------------

q601.4 (AB). I will read a set of statements that relate to the status of women in our society in order to gauge the extent of your agreement or disagreement with each statement: "university education is more important for a boy than for a girl."

1 Strongly agree	2	3	4 Strongly disagree
---------------------	---	---	------------------------

Political engagement

Q7R (WVS). Describe how important each of the following in your life: "Politics."

1 Not at all important	2	3	4 Very important
---------------------------	---	---	---------------------

Q84R (WVS). To what extent you think you are interested in politics?

1 Not at all interested	2	3	4 Very interested
----------------------------	---	---	----------------------

I would like you take a look at this card. I will read out some forms of political action that people may take. For each one, I would like you to tell me whether you have done it, might do it or you would never under any circumstances do it:

Q85R (WVS). Signing a petition

Q86R (WVS). Joining boycotts

Q87R (WVS). Participating in peaceful demonstrations

Q88R (WVS). Joining strikes

Q89R (WVS). Any other actions of protest

1 I will never do it	2 I might do it	3 I have done it
-------------------------	--------------------	---------------------

When there are elections, do you always vote, or usually vote, or never vote? Please tell me about the following two levels, separately:

Q226R (WVS). The local level

Q227R (WVS). The national level

1 Never	2 Occasionally	3 Always
------------	-------------------	-------------

q301R (AB). Did you vote in the last parliamentary elections that were held on (date of the last elections)

- 0) No
- 1) Yes

q302R (AB). During the last parliamentary elections held on (date of the last elections), did you attend any meetings or activities related to any electoral campaign?

- 0) No
- 1) Yes

q304R (AB). In general, how would you evaluate the elections for the Constitutional Assembly that were held on February 20, 2014?

- 0) No
- 1) Yes

q404R (AB). In general, to what extent are you interested in politics?

1 Not interested	2	3	4 Very interested
---------------------	---	---	----------------------

q405R (AB). To what extent do you follow political news in your country?

1 I don't follow political news at all	2	3	4 To a great extent
--	---	---	------------------------

q501.bR (AB). Are you a member of a political party?

- 0) No
- 1) Yes

q502.1R (AB). Here is a set of activities that citizens usually take part in. During the past three years, did you attend a meeting to discuss a subject or sign a petition.

1 I never participated	2 More than once	3 Once
---------------------------	---------------------	-----------

q502.2R (AB). Here is a set of activities that citizens usually take part in. During the past three years, did you attend a meeting to discuss a subject or sign a petition.

1 I never participated	2 More than once	3 Once
---------------------------	---------------------	-----------

q800aR (AB). The Arab Spring led some demonstrations and rallies in (country name). Did you participate in any of these events? (in 2011 and 2012)

- 0) No
- 1) Yes

Information consumption

People get knowledge of what happens in this country and the world from different sources. For each of the following sources, please specify whether you are using it to get information on a daily basis, weekly, monthly, less than monthly, or you never use it.

Q217R (WVS). Daily newspapers

Q218R (WVS). Printed magazines

Q219R (WVS). Television news

Q220R (WVS). Radio news

Q221R (WVS). Mobile phone

Q222R (WVS). Email

Q223R (WVS). Internet

Q224R (WVS). Speaking with friends and colleagues

1 Never	2 Less than monthly	3 Monthly	4 Weekly	5 Daily
------------	---------------------------	--------------	-------------	------------

In general, do you follow political news through:

q4061R (AB). Television

q4062R (AB). Daily press

q4063R (AB). Weekly press

q4064R (AB). Radio

q4065R (AB). Internet

1 I do not follow political news at all	2 Rarely	3 A few times a month	4 A few times a week	5 Daily
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Active use of media

q409R (AB). Do you use the internet:

1 I don't use the internet	2 A few times a year	3 At least once a month	4 At least once a week	5 Daily or almost daily
-------------------------------	-------------------------	----------------------------	---------------------------	----------------------------

Do you use the internet in order to:

q4101R (AB). Find out about political activities taking place in your country.

- 0) No
- 1) Yes

q4102R (AB). Express your opinion about political issues.

- 0) No
- 1) Yes

q4103R (AB). Find out about opposing political opinions in your country.

- 0) No
- 1) Yes

Are you a member of or participant in:

q4111R (AB). Interactive or dialogue-based groups or pages on social networking websites.

- 0) No
- 1) Yes

q4112R (AB). Dialogue forums on the internet.

- 0) No
- 1) Yes

q4113R (AB). Facebook page.

- 0) No
- 1) Yes

q4114R (AB). Twitter account.

- 0) No

1) Yes

q4115R (AB). A private blog.

0) No

1) Yes

Appendix 5

Summary of findings

Table A5.1: Findings on correlation between civic culture variables and membership in voluntary associations*

Variable	Indicator	Finding
Identity		
Nationalism	Level of pride for being Libyan	
Communal identity	Level of identification with the local community	
Libyan identity	Level of identification with the Libyan nation	
Identity differential	Level of identification with Libyan nation - level of identification with local community	
Trust		
Personal	Trust in family	
	Trust in neighbors	
	Trust in people you know personally	
General - Unspecified	"Is it possible to trust most people or you should be very careful when dealing with people?"	
	"Do you think most people would try to take advantage of you if they got a chance, or would they try to be fair?"	
	"Generally speaking, do you think most people are trustworthy or not?"	
General - Specified	People you meet for the first time	
	People of another religion	
	People of another nationality	
Tolerance		
Tolerance	<p>Tolerance towards each of the following nine groups as neighbors: Drug Addicts; people of a different race; people infected with HIV; immigrants/foreign workers; homosexuals; people of a different religion; alcoholics; unmarried couples living together; people who speak a different language</p> <p>Tolerance towards each of the following 7 actions: Homosexuality; prostitution; abortion; divorce; pre-marital sex; suicide; euthanasia</p> <p>Tolerance towards religious minorities: "Religious minorities such as Christians and Shi'a have the right to practice their religion freely"</p>	
Religiosity		
Religious piety	Perception of own piety	
	Pray	
	Attend religious rituals	
	Importance of religious faith	
	Importance of Allah in life	

* Data are relative to active members for the World Values Survey, and to members in general for the Arab Barometer.

Table A5.1: Findings on correlation between civic culture variables and membership in voluntary associations* (cont.)

Variable	Indicator	Finding
Religiosity (continued)		
Religious openness	Religion as observance or altruism	■
	Only acceptable religion is my religion	
	Opinion on followers of other religions	
Secularism	Opinion on public religious practices	■
	Opinion on public role of religious associations	
	Opinion on political role of mosques	
Support for gender equality and women empowerment		
Equality in employment	"When jobs are scarce, men should have more right to get a job than women"	■
Equality in income	"If the wife earns more money than her husband most likely this will create problems"	
Job as independence	"Getting a job is the best way for a woman to be an independent person"	
Working mothers	"When a mother earns a job, the children suffer"	
Women political leaders	"Generally speaking, men make better political leaders than women do"	
Equality in education	"University education is more important for a boy than for a girl"	
Women business executives	"In general, men make better business executives than women do"	
Housewife versus employed	"Housewife chores are just as fulfilling as a paid job"	
Political engagement		
Interest and participation in politics	Importance given to politics in life	■
	Level of interest in politics	
	Attended a meeting during last parliamentary elections	
	Extent to which national political news are followed	
Elite-challenging actions	Attended a political meeting during the past three years	
	Participated in a protest, march or sit-in during the past three years	
	Participated in any demonstrations and rallies in 2011 and 2012	
	Likelihood of signing a petition	
	Likelihood of joining boycotts	
	Likelihood of participating in peaceful demonstrations	
	Likelihood of joining strikes	
Likelihood of joining any other actions of protest		

* Data are relative to active members for the World Values Survey, and to members in general for the Arab Barometer.

Table A5.1: Findings on correlation between civic culture variables and membership in voluntary associations* (cont.)

Variable	Indicator	Finding
Political engagement (continued)		
Vote	Voted in the 2012 parliamentary elections	
	Voted in the February 2014 Constitutional Assembly elections	
	Likelihood of voting at the local level	
	Likelihood of voting at the national level	
Information consumption		
	Frequency of reading daily newspapers	
	Frequency of reading weekly press (AB) / Printed magazines (WVS)	
	Frequency of watching television news	
	Frequency of listening to radio news	
	Frequency of mobile phone use	
	Frequency of email use	
	Frequency of internet use	
Active use of media		
Internet usage frequency	Frequency of internet use	
Internet usage scope	Get political news	
	Express political opinions	
	Find out about opposing political opinions	
Participation in media	Membership or participation in an interactive or dialogue-based groups on social networking websites	
	Membership or participation in a dialogue forums on the internet	
	Membership or participation in a Facebook page.	
	Membership or participation in a Twitter account.	
	Membership or participation in a private blog.	

* Data are relative to active members for the World Values Survey, and to members in general for the Arab Barometer.

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