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Marginalization of Fezzan Region in Libya

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2023

Approval of the Dissertation Committee

This dissertation has been duly read, reviewed, and critiqued by the Committee listed below, which hereby approves the manuscript of Amad Abukhzaam as fulfilling the scope and quality requirements for meriting the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science..

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Abstract

Marginalization of Fezzan Region in Libya
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Amad Abukhzaam

Claremont Graduate University: 2023

The Fezzan region of Libya experiences instability, conflict, and reduced quality of life. This qualitative case study aimed to understand and compare the positionality and marginalization of Fezzan relative to the other Libyan regions of Cyrenaica and Tripolitania and how this positionality had shaped Fezzan through the Constitutional Monarchy era (1952 to 1969), Gaddafi era (1969 to 2011), and February Revolution era (2011 to 2021). Data came from elite written interviews with former Libyan government members and secondary data from the academic and professional/international literature about Libya and archival information, such as demographics and budgetary data. The conceptual framework contained three theories of federalism: democracy in plural societies, and patterns of democracy, and the market-preserving federalism and economic development. Data were analyzed using qualitative thematic analysis, case study triangulation, and case study comparison between the three political eras of Libya to find six themes: Fezzan was underpopulated with lacking social and political actors, Fezzan's marginalization was impacted by King Idris I from Cyrenaica, foreign sanctions against Gaddafi's neoliberal ideas impacted Libya, reconciliation with the West improved the standard of living in Libya, Fezzan remains a pawn of the power struggle of internal and external actors, and Fezzan plays a role in the prevalence of crime, corruption, and terrorism. Recommendations emphasize the need to cultivate Libyan governmental self-sufficiency, a balanced constitution representing all regions equally, and governmental protection against outside influence. When

accomplished, Fezzan will likely abandon the criminality it has adopted to protect itself and

create economic opportunities.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Libya is a nation that is situated on the northern tier of Africa and surrounded by the neighboring countries of Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, Chad, Niger, and Sudan, with Europe located directly north across the Mediterranean Sea. Tribalism is a very significant part of Libyan culture that continues to impact political and economic conditions to the present day (Al-Shaddedi & Ezzedine, 2019; Benn Lamma, 2017; Cole & Mangan, 2016). The modern history of Libya has been a deeply conflicted and troubled one involving frequent power struggles among its three regions of Tripolitania, Cyrenaica, and Fezzan, and this balance of power has shifted back and forth between Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, while Fezzan has continued to remain mostly marginalized (Bell &Witter, 2011; Ben Lamma, 2017; Grigoriadis & Kassem, 2021; Henneberg, 2021; Oxford Analytica, 2020; Said, 2020). These power struggles have caused instability, conflict, unrest, and chaos that have been reflected during the three historical timeframes in Libya of the Constitutional Monarchy Period from 1952-1969, The Gaddafi Era from 1969-2011, and the most recent February Revolution Era from 2011-2021 that will be examined in depth in this chapter. Gaining insight into the historical factors that have influenced Fezzan's marginalization will provide a foundation for the purpose of the proposed study to better understand and compare the positionality and marginalization of Fezzan relative to the other Libyan regions of Cyrenaica and Tripolitania.

This chapter will include several sections that will provide a deeper understanding of the significance of tribal influences in Libya, the modern history of Libya, and a specific focus on the region of Fezzan as it pertains to the proposed study. In the process, five major sections will be discussed of Libyan Tribalism, Libya's Constitutional Monarchy Period, Libya's Gaddafi Era, Libya's February Revolution Era, and Fezzan. The section Libyan Tribalism will explore how

tribal culture and influence in Libya impacts the overall stability of this country and its government, policing, and security structures. The section Libya's Constitutional Monarchy Period will examine the modern history of Libya from the years of 1952-1969 during the reign of King Idris I and the interaction of the newly formed regions of Tripolitania, Cyrenaica, and Fezzan during this period. The section Libya's Gaddafi Era will examine the interaction of Tripolitania, Cyrenaica, and Fezzan in Libya under the leadership of Muammar Gaddafi from 1969-2011 after his successful military coup against King Idris I. The section Libya's February Revolution Era will examine the events that led up to the assassination of Gaddafi in 2012 and the resulting Libyan political and economic crisis of power from 2011-2021 as both internal actors within the regions of Tripolitania, Cyrenaica, and Fezzan and many external actors attempted to fill this power void. The final section of Fezzan will explore the significance of Fezzan to Libya and international interests despite its historic and ongoing marginalization and reasons for why this marginalization occurred. The chapter will then conclude with a summary of key findings and how they pertain to the purpose and problem to be addressed in the proposed study.

A. Libyan Tribalism

Tribal culture has historically played a key role in forming the loyalties, affiliations, and identities of the Libyan people (Ben Lamma, 2017). Outside powers have impacted the shaping of tribal culture that has often resulted in conflict and power struggles among tribes and within regional affiliations (Cole & Mangan, 2016). Tribes have significant influence over government, policing, and security structures in Libya that continues today (Al-Shaddedi & Ezzedine, 2019; Benn Lamma, 2017; Cole & Mangan, 2016).

Tribal Influence

Several studies in the literature have examined the historic and ongoing importance of tribal influence in Libya. One study that explored tribal structures in Libya determined that this country was built on a tribal and regional system, with tribal culture existing since Ottoman times that has played a key role in forming the loyalties, affiliations, and identities of the Libyan people and still exists today (Ben Lamma, 2017). The original inhabitants of the Fezzan region were further noted to be a group of tribes collectively called Fazzazna who were a nomadic people that have dominated the political arena of the Fezzan. Eight tribes were considered to be very influential of the Awlad Sulaiman, Warfalla, Al-Hassawna, Magariha, Qadhadfa, Tebu, Touareg and Fazzazna tribes. Other researchers who examined the role of Libyan tribes in times of war and peace concurred that tribal influence in Libya was still very significant, and national politicians and international actors could not ignore the resilience of premodern tribalism in this country (Al-Shaddedi & Ezzedine, 2019). Al-Shaddedi and Ezzedine (2019) further determined that Libyan governance structures have historically relied on the top-down distribution of favors to selected tribal allies rather than on inclusive and representative governance, and even the uprising of 2011 which symbolized the appearance of a national Libyan polity was mobilized and organized along tribal lines. Cole and Mangan (2016) focused their research on the influence of the tribe within the dynamics of security, justice, and peace in Libya and determined that the meaning of tribalism for Libyans has evolved over the centuries, initially responding to outside powers and more recently to internal circumstances. These researchers also determined that first efforts to extend central government authority introduced during the Ottoman era that continued through the Gaddafi era fueled significant conflict between tribes, and when the February revolution destroyed what little remained of state institutions, tribes and armed groups stepped in

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to fill the power vacuum that increased after the collapse of central state security in 2014. Cole and Mangan (2016) concluded that when tribal power structures are stable, they dominate policing and security services, and when they are unstable, they lose control and sometimes rely on armed groups.

B. Libya's Constitutional Monarchy Period

Libya was created in the aftermath of World War II by the United Nations to consist of three regions that had previously been locally autonomous of Tripolitania, Cyrenaica, and Fezzan (Oyeniyi, 2019). A national assembly devised a constitutional monarchy with a federal system and offered the throne to Sayyid Idris of Cyrenaica who began his reign over the newly formed nation to begin the Constitutional Monarchy Period (Khalidi, 1952). Historic conflict and power struggles among the three Libyan regions of Cyrenaica, Tripolitania, and Fezzan increased during the Constitutional Monarchy Period, with Fezzan playing a minor role and mostly being marginalized (Bell &Witter, 2011; Grigoriadis & Kassem, 2021; Said, 2020).

Independence, Unity, and Conflict

The hopeful promise of independence from foreign rule and greater unity for the newly formed nation of Libya during the Constitutional Monarchy Period was examined in the literature. Although this newly found independence for Libya seemed to most significantly be based on the efforts of external actors through the United Nations, Ben Lamma (2017) further emphasized the significance of tribal influence in Libya by determining that the rule of King Idris I was still reliant on tribal alliances to gain legitimacy. Researchers who explored the roots of rebellion in Libya determined that historical enmity between Cyrenaica and Tripolitania only continued to grow after Libya gained its independence, as both regions continued to struggle for control of national leadership, despite Cyrenaica officially being granted the seat of power under

the rule of King Idris I from 1952-1969 (Bell & Witter, 2011). This power dynamic in Libya of both external and internal actors struggling to maintain legitimacy supports previous findings that Libyan tribal influence was not just shaped by internal conditions but by outside forces as well that have continued to contribute to additional power struggles and conflict among tribes and within regional affiliations (Cole & Mangan, 2016).

The role of Fezzan in the midst of these conflicts and power struggles between Cyrenaica and Tripolitania during the Constitutional Monarchy Period was examined more closely by other researchers. Grigoriadis and Kassem (2021) examined the regional origins of Libyan conflict and the effects of the administrative divisions of Cyrenaica, Tripolitania, and Fezzan and concurred with previous findings that the conflict was mainly between Cyrenaica and Tripolitania during this period, with Cyrenaica advocating for a monarchy, Tripolitania favoring a republic, and Cyrenaica and Fezzan both in favor of a federal system. Grigoriadis and Kassem (2021) also focused their research on specifically examining how economic conditions impacted Libyan conflict by establishing that the first decade of the Constitutional Monarchy Period was characterized by poverty and the second decade benefitted from large oil revenues, with major oil deposits discovered in all three regions of Cyrenaica, Tripolitania, and Fezzan. However, despite significant oil deposits being discovered in Fezzan as well, Said (2020) further concurred that Fezzan continued to remain mostly marginalized during this time period, even to the point where foreign control of the French had still not been completely relinquished to have the same level of independence as Cyrenaica and Tripolitania because the French had remained adamant about maintain their presence in the region for political and military reasons. Said (2020) also determined that it was not until these oil deposits were discovered in Fezzan that the French became more flexible and negotiated their withdrawal in exchange for certain concessions

allowing them to take advantage of the highways and infrastructures within this region. Implications from the findings of Said (2020) strongly suggest that Fezzan was not equally considered by the United Nations in the formation of Libya as a newly independent nation that was now free of foreign rule if the French were still allowed to exert such control in this region during the Constitutional Monarchy Period. Implications may further suggest that Cyrenaica and Tripolitania also did not consider Fezzan to be of equal standing either by making it a priority to ensure that Fezzan was also free of foreign control. This view of Fezzan as being less significant by both external and internal actors, despite large oil deposits also being discovered in the region, reflects a perspective of marginalization towards Fezzan that continued even after there was an opportunity for the now independent nation of Libya to begin anew during the Constitutional Monarchy Period.

C. Libya's Gaddafi Era

Muammar Gaddafi of the Libyan Armed Forces staged a successful military coup against King Idris I in 1969 and overthrew the monarchy to create an authoritarian Arabist state (Lobban & Dalton, 2014). Gaddafi shifted political and economic power away from Cyrenaica to Tripolitania, and from there he built his base of support among the elite and tribes of Tripolitania and Fezzan that had previously been neglected (Bell & Witter, 2011). However, although more attention was given to Fezzan during the Gaddafi Era, this region continued to mostly be marginalized (Bell & Witter, 2011; Ben Lamma, 2017; Henneberg, 2021).

A New Leader with a New Vision

The emergence of Muammar Gaddafi as a new leader with a new vision for the Libyan nation was explored in the literature. In their further study of the roots of rebellion in Libya, Bell and Witter (2011) determined that after Gaddafi assumed leadership of the country as head of the

Revolutionary Command Council, he shifted political and economic power away from Cyrenaica to Tripolitania, and from there he built his base of support among the elite and tribes of Tripolitania and Fezzan that had previously been neglected. However, Gaddafi did not just garner his support from tribal influence, he also chose to rely on a highly personalized network of advisors and associates to help run his regime and ensure the loyalty of those around him that also included extended family members, military officers, and friends from the Free Officers Union (Bell & Witter, 2011). These findings regarding Gaddafi garnering support among tribes to establish his regime further concur with previous findings that Libyan tribes have had significant historical influence over government, policing, and security structures (Al-Shaddedi & Ezzedine, 2019; Benn Lamma, 2017; Cole & Mangan, 2016).

Funded by lucrative oil revenues, Gaddafi shared a new vision of Arab nationalist and Islamic socialist ideology during his regime that focused on central economic planning to remold political structures and reduce the influence of the tribal system by placing the Gaddafi as the head of military and security institutions instead (Ben Lamma, 2017). Ben Lamma (2017) further determined that although Gaddafi did work to reinvigorate the efficiency of tribal alliances to support his regime by promoting some tribes who had previously been insignificant, tribes in Fezzan were still mostly marginalized. Implications from the findings of Ben Lamma (2017) suggest that Gaddafi did utilize tribal influence to support his regime, but to a smaller degree than during the Constitutional Monarchy Period, in order to promote and establish himself as the head leader over all military and security structures. Implications from the findings of Ben Lamma (2017) further suggest that Gaddafi's new vision for the Libyan nation did not really significantly focus on Fezzan any more than the previous Constitutional Monarchy Period had, leaving this region to remain mostly marginalized. Henneberg (2021) further concurred with the

findings of Ben Lamma (2017) that Gaddafi marginalized tribes in Fezzan in order to promote his new vision of Arab nationalist ideology. However, Henneberg (2021) also specifically noted that Gaddafi did still use the influence of the Taureg and Tebu tribes in Fezzan to his advantage to serve foreign policy ambitions and to act as personal bodyguards. Implications from the more specific findings of Henneberg (2021) regarding Fezzan clearly suggest that while Gaddafi did turn his attention to this region more during his regime than in the previous Constitutional Monarchy Period, he nevertheless kept most focus on establishing his new vision of nationalist and socialist ideology for Libya that still only slightly included Fezzan.

D. Libya's February Revolution Era

Revolution was in the air and filled with uprisings, anti-government protests, and armed rebellions that rippled across much of the Arab world in response to corruption and economic stagnation, commonly referred to as the Arab Spring, that began in the early 2010s in Libya's neighboring border countries of Tunisia and Egypt (Aghayev, 2013). Inspired by the Arab Spring, Libyan tensions over ongoing political and economic power struggles erupted in Cyrenaica and then to surrounding areas to ultimately end the Gaddafi regime through his assassination in 2011 (Aghayev, 2013; Bell & Witter, 2011). The end of the Gaddafi regime resulted in Libyan chaos and a power void that multiple external and internal actors have attempted to fill, with a temporary ceasefire of warring parties in 2020, and Fezzan frequently being used as a bargaining chip among these actors (Badi, 2020; Ben Lamma, 2017; Greenberg, 2019; Melangi, 2021; Mezran & Varvelli, 2017; Oxford Analytica, 2020; Wilson & Pack, 2019).

Chaos, Instability, and Security

Multiple studies in the literature have focused research on the February Revolution Era in Libya. Joffe (2013) explored the roots of civil activism in Libya and determined that the political

activism that led to the February Revolution in 2011 was surprising given the repressive regime of Gaddafi, but such activism could ultimately be explained by the four perpetual dynamics in Libya's contemporary history of religion, tribalism, regionalism, and oil. The findings of Joffe (2013) support previous findings of the historical significance of tribal and regional influence over government, policing, and security structures in Libya that continues today (Al-Shaddedi & Ezzedine, 2019; Benn Lamma, 2017; Cole & Mangan, 2016). These findings also underscore and support the significance of religion, particularly Islam, and oil revenues in the shaping and development of the modern Libyan nation (Ben Lamma, 2017; Grigoriadis and Kassem 2021; Henneberg, 2021; Said, 2020).

Amidst the chaos and instability of the February Revolution Era in Libya, concerns over national, regional, and international security were considered in the literature. Ben Lamma (2017) emphasized that events after 2011 confirmed that tribal influence has played an important part not only in building institutional systems but also for ensuring the protection and security of individuals and further concluded that when the structures of governance of the old regime collapsed, tribes reclaimed and reinvented their role of providing security and justice in the public sphere by managing and resolving conflicts. Other researchers examined the impact of foreign actors in Libya's crisis leading up to the revolt against Gaddafi and after 2011 and determined that from its start, this Libyan conflict had been shaped by external actors, so much so that foreign influences were crucial in fostering the revolt against Gaddafi, and there had been a great disconnect in the actions of external powers through international aid and development policies agreed upon with the Libyan government to attempt to resolve the resulting chaos and instability, with external forces supporting different factions over others for personal gain (Mezran & Varvelli, 2017). The findings of Mezran and Varvelli (2017) support previous

findings that Libyan tribal influence was not just shaped by internal conditions but by outside forces as well that have continued to contribute to additional power struggles and conflict among tribes and within regional affiliations (Cole & Mangan, 2016).

Mezran and Varvelli (2017) further determined that ongoing political and institutional uncertainty has prevented the establishment of a security framework in the country which has allowed militias to rule unchallenged, and the absence of a single, functional central government has left borders porous to allow transnational trafficking to thrive in the Mediterranean region. Implications from the findings of Mezran and Varvelli (2017) suggest that despite the efforts of Libyan tribes to provide security and justice after 2011 (Ben Lamma, 2017), they were unable to effectively do so to meet all the security challenges. However, Erdag (2017) utilized regional security complex theory to evaluate the regional security of Libya before and after the Arab Spring and determined that there were limits to external transformation, and the need to reestablish security to resolve the Libyan chaos must focus on internal transformation to be effectively resolved. Melcangi (2021) examined the crisis in Libya after the fall of Gaddafi's regime and determined that contemporary Libya is inevitably connected with current regional and international geopolitical tensions, and after 2011, the country passed through many conflicts with various external and internal actors who tried to resolve these conflicts with disastrous results, although there was a ceasefire in 2020 between warring parties. The findings of Melcangi (2021) concur with the findings of Mezran and Varvelli (2017) that the February Revolution Era in Libya had been shaped by external actors, with these forces supporting different factions over others for personal gain (Mezran & Varvelli, 2017) and the findings of Cole and Mangan (2016) that Libyan tribal influence was not just shaped by internal conditions but by outside forces as

well that have continued to contribute to additional power struggles and conflict among tribes and within regional affiliations.

A few studies in the literature specifically focused on the region of Fezzan during Libya's February Revolution Era. Badi (2020) determined that although the February Revolution Era was intended to be a return to the more democratic institutions of the Constitutional Monarchy Period, it has instead primarily been characterized by a lack of political legitimacy for any institutions at all, especially in Fezzan. Wilson and Pack (2019) further noted that there had been a rise of the Islamic state in Fezzan after 2016 that had prompted polarizing military operations there in 2019. Greenberg (2019) concurred with the findings of Wilson and Pack (2019) that the region of Fezzan remained caught between the competing influences of the Government of National Accord and the Libyan Arab Armed Forces. This dynamic of Fezzan being caught in the middle among competing influences and powers was emphasized further through analysis that determined that local, regional, and world-level geopolitical interests had conspired to stir chaos and conflict in the Fezzan region and to use Fezzan as a bargaining chip during the February Revolution Era (Oxford Analytica, 2020). Although the entire nation of Libya was thrown into chaos and instability after the fall of the Gaddafi regime, implications from all of these specific findings regarding Fezzan appear to indicate that Fezzan experienced this chaos and instability even more profoundly. Considering the historic precedent previously established that Fezzan was caught between the internal power struggles of Cyrenaica and Tripolitania and marginalized from the very beginning of Libya's modern history (Bell &Witter, 2011; Ben Lamma, 2017; Grigoriadis & Kassem, 2021; Henneberg, 2021; Said, 2020), it is unfortunately not surprising that this interrelated dynamic of being marginalized and "caught in the middle"

among competing forces and powers would further extend to world-level geopolitical interests and continue through the February Revolution Era.

E. Fezzan

The meaning of Fezzan in the Berber language is "hard or rough rocks" that refers to the physical characteristic of this Libyan region having many unusual concentrations of rough rocks for a desert environment (Ababukar, 2021; see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Map of Fezzan
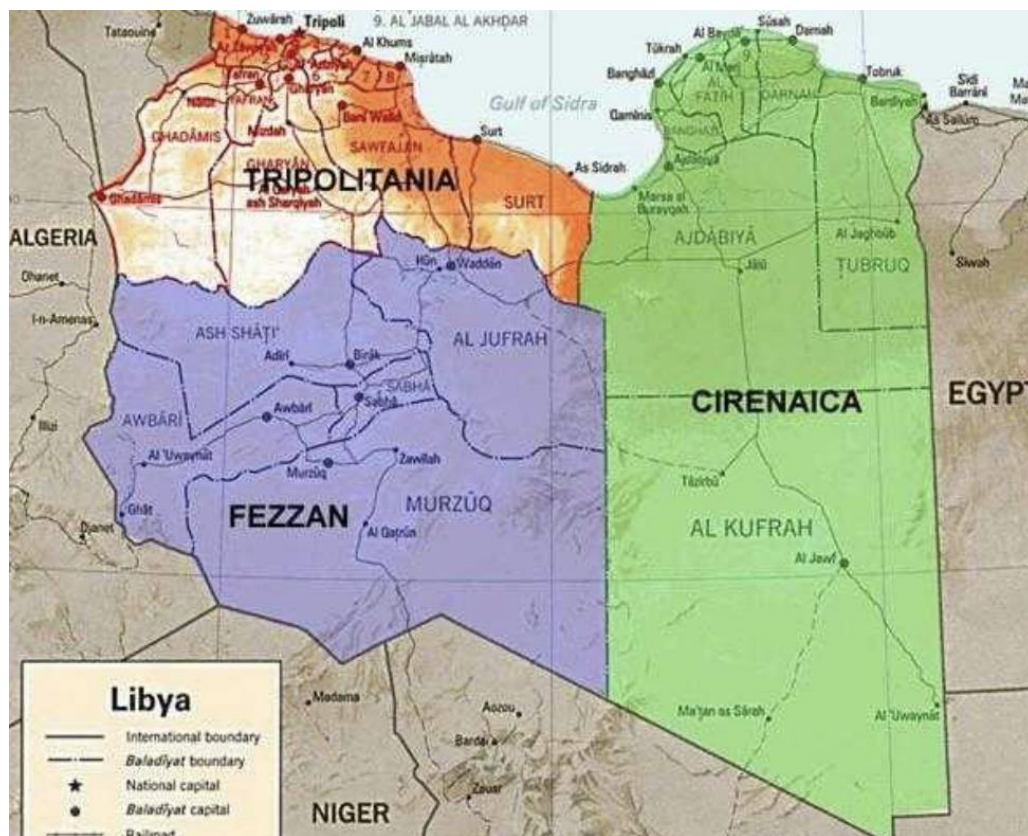
Located in the southern region of Libya, Fezzan has a much lower population density than Cyrenaica and Tripolitania (Hüsken, 2019), which may help to explain its historic and continued marginalization, along with its decentralized nature, cultural minorities, and geopolitical centrality, both within Libya and the more immense Sahara–Sahel region (Bensaâd,

2019). However, despite its continued marginalization, Fezzan is still very significant to Libya and to international interests because it is a strategic region that holds much of the country's wealth, including the largest confirmed oil reserves of any African nation (Oxford Analytica, 2020; Said, 2020; U.S. Energy Information Administration, 2015).

Marginalization and Significance

Several possible explanations for Fezzan's historic and current marginalization relative to Cyrenaica and Tripolitania were explored in the literature. Hüsken (2019) emphasized the much lower population density of Fezzan that was further evidenced by Zaptia (2021) regarding Libyan education, with findings indicating that although education at all levels is free to Libyans, the number of currently enrolled university students at Fezzan University is ranked last and significantly lower of only 1,003 students compared to 60,549 students at Tripoli University that is ranked first. Implications clearly suggest from these findings that Fezzan has and continues to be marginalized because it is vastly underpopulated relative to Cyrenaica and Tripolitania and without the necessary representation and political clout to really be able to compete with these other two regions on an equal footing. This lack of population density directly relates to the geography of Fezzan as being a desert region that is less desirable to live in than the coastal regions of Cyrenaica and Tripolitania (Ababukar, 2021), and both a lower population and a rougher terrain contribute to this region being much more challenging to economically develop. The region of Fezzan is also home to many of Libya's remaining non-Arabized Berber people and cultural minorities that could create an additional conflict with assimilating into the larger Libyan culture (Bensaâd, 2019; Hüsken 2019). Bensaâd (2019) further emphasized that Fezzan's politically decentralized nature has contributed to its marginalization, although as previously established, this decentralized nature was not really by historic choice in Libya's modern history

due to Fezzan mostly being ignored and marginalized amidst the great power struggles of Cyrenaica and Tripolitania.

Although Bensaâd (2019) points to the geopolitical centrality of the region of Fezzan, both within Libya and the more immense Sahara–Sahel region as a reason for marginalization, this is also a key reason for its historic and current significance of geographically and literally being in the middle of the country of Libya, therefore making it a strategic region that has a main pathway of travel and trade from South to North (Said, 2020). The other key reason for Fezzan's regional significance is that it holds much of Libya's natural wealth, which includes the largest confirmed oil reserves of any African nation (Oxford Analytica, 2020). Libya's economy is heavily dependent on hydrocarbon production, and oil and natural gas accounted for nearly 96% of total government revenue and 98% of export revenue in 2012, with approximately 79% of Libya's export revenue from crude oil exports, and most of Libya's crude oil sold to the European countries of Italy, Germany, and France (U.S. Energy Information Administration, 2015). However, the GDP of Libya per capita significantly dropped after 2012 at $13, 025 USD to $3,699 USD in 2020 (World Bank, 2020), with most recent available data of Libya GDP estimated growth rate at 64% and estimated crude oil production at 1.039 million bbl/day and export at 337,800 bbl/day (CIA, 2021). These statistical findings clearly indicate how important oil revenues are to the Libyan economy and how severely this nation's economy has been negatively impacted during the February Revolution Era. Implications further suggest that Libya can no longer continue to marginalize and ignore Fezzan's current and potentially even greater future significance if this nation desires to have the best possible chance of being able to fully recover from the chaos of the February Revolution Era and move forward.

Summary

Chapter 1 has revealed that tribes have historically played a key role in government, policing, and security structures in Libya that continues today (Al-Shaddedi & Ezzedine, 2019; Benn Lamma, 2017; Cole & Mangan, 2016). Historical conflict and power struggles among the three Libyan regions of Cyrenaica, Tripolitania, and Fezzan increased during the Constitutional Monarchy period, with Fezzan playing a minor role and mostly being marginalized during this period (Bell &Witter, 2011; Grigoriadis & Kassem, 2021; Said, 2020). After a successful military coup, the Gaddafi era shifted power away from Cyrenaica to Tripolitania, with more attention given to Fezzan, although Fezzan still continued to mostly be marginalized (Bell & Witter, 2011; Ben Lamma, 2017; Henneberg, 2021). Libyan tensions over ongoing political and economic power struggles erupted in Cyrenaica and then to surrounding areas to ultimately end the Gaddafi regime through his assassination in 2011(Aghayev, 2013; Bell & Witter, 2011). The end of the Gaddafi regime resulted in Libyan crisis and a power void that multiple external and internal actors have attempted to fill, with a temporary ceasefire of warring parties in 2020, and Fezzan frequently being used as a bargaining chip among these actors (Badi, 2020; Ben Lamma, 2017; Greenberg, 2019; Melangi, 2021; Mezran & Varvelli, 2017; Oxford Analytica, 2020; Wilson & Pack, 2019). Fezzan is located in a rough desert region of Libya and has a much lower population density than Cyrenaica and Tripolitania (Ababukar, 2021; Hüsken, 2019), which may help to explain its historic and continued marginalization in Libya, along with its cultural minorities, and decentralized nature (Bensaâd, 2019). However, despite its continued marginalization, Fezzan is still very significant to Libya and to international interests because it is a strategic region that holds much of the country's wealth, including the largest confirmed oil

reserves of any African nation (Oxford Analytica, 2020; Said, 2020; U.S. Energy Information Administration, 2015).

These key findings provide a historic foundation for the purpose and problem to be addressed in the proposed study of the Fezzan region continuing to be marginalized relative to the surrounding regions of Cyrenaica and Tripolitania within a nation that remains fragmented (Carboni & Moody, 2018). However, Fezzan may be critical to the endeavor to find reasons behind the long-running conflict and instability in Libya (Joffé, 2020) essential in terms of developing a lasting, stable political system in Libya (van Lier, 2020), and help pave the way for an understanding of how Libya can move forward (Mikaïl, 2020). Although there have been historical struggles to combine these three diverse regions into a single, unified nation-state (Mundy, 2021), the victorious federal system in the United States gives many Libyans hope that their current situation could find a resolution that reverses the historical marginalization of Fezzan (Saleem, 2019). The need to understand and address these problems is urgent, given the international consequences of the ongoing chaos in Libya (Makhmutova, 2021).

Chapter 2: Synopsis, Problem, Question, Significance

A. Study Synopsis

Fezzan is one of the three provinces that comprise the modern nation of Libya. Libya, created in the aftermath of World War II, consists of three regions that have historically been locally autonomous, the regions of Tripolitania, Cyrenaica, and Fezzan (Oyeniyi, 2019). Fezzan is a hinterland region with a much lower population density and the home of many of the country's remaining non-Arabized Berber people, such as the Tuareg and Toubou people (Hüsken, 2019). At the same time, Fezzan plays host to much of the country's natural wealth, which includes the largest confirmed oil reserves of any African nation (Oxford Analytica, 2020).

Due to its decentralized nature and cultural minorities, Fezzan has historically been marginalized relative to the other provinces (Bensaâd, 2019). However, it is less apparent how the political institutions of the three major eras of Libyan history since the country's foundation have affected the status of Fezzan. Initially, Libya was a Constitutional Monarchy with a federal system under the king (Khalidi, 1952). However, in 1969, the charismatic officer Muammar Gaddafi overthrew the monarchy and established an authoritarian, Arabist state (Lobban & Dalton, 2014). Although Gaddafi repeatedly aspired to create a direct democracy, the political institutions of his era remained strongly authoritarian and repressive. When Gaddafi was overthrown in the February Revolution of 2011 as part of the Arab Spring, however, the ensuing period was heavy civil strife and conflict. Though intended as a return to the democratic institutions of the monarchy, the February Revolution-era has instead primarily been characterized by a lack of political legitimacy for any institutions at all, especially in Fezzan

(Badi, 2020). Understanding the relative effects of these eras on Fezzan can help to offer a roadmap for the province moving forward.

In alignment with this, the purpose of the proposed qualitative case study is to understand and compare the positionality and marginalization of Fezzan relative to the other Libyan regions of Cyrenaica and Tripolitania and how this positionality has shaped Fezzan through the Constitutional Monarchy era (1952-1969), Gaddafi era (1969-2011), and February Revolution era (2011-2021). As discussed above, Libya has a tumultuous history. Moreover, the region of Fezzan, one third of Libya, is the least densely populated and plays host to many minority populations. The combination of these features with the Arab-focused positionality of the Gaddafi era in particular means that Fezzan has always been marginalized. However, the degree of that marginalization has differed over time, and understanding those differences is one of the keys to a better understanding of how Libya's political institutions, and especially federalist composition and balance of power, have shifted over time.

The study will draw data from elite interviews with former Libyan government members as well as secondary data from the academic and professional/international literature on Libya and archival information such as demographics and budgetary data. Study participants will be a few key informants rather than a larger sample because of the difficulty in recruiting a large sample size and because the research topic is one that is best assessed through the perspectives of those in positions of power. The data will be analyzed using qualitative thematic analysis, case study triangulation, and case study comparison between the three eras. The methodological components of the study are more fully explicated in Chapter 4.

The results of the study may help understand how Fezzan came to its current ruinous circumstances and how the geopolitical and socioeconomic dimensions of the region can be

better considered and accommodated by current and future Libyan governments to create better

outcomes for Fezzan individually and Libya as a whole. Only by understanding what has come

before can the mistakes of the past be avoided. Perhaps moreover, it is important to understand

the nature of the connection between different types of governance and the degree and type of

marginalization of Fezzan. By understanding what has worked and what has failed to work, a

more equitable firm of federalism can be forged that prevents Fezzan from being marginalized as

extensively as it has been in the past,

B. Problem

The problem to be addressed is that the Fezzan region of Libya remains marginalized

relative to the surrounding regions of Cyrenaica and Tripolitania and the nation as a whole

remains fragmented (Carboni & Moody, 2018). At the current precarious moment in Libya's

history, the region of Fezzan remains caught between the competing influences of the

Government of National Accord and the Libyan Arab Armed Forces (Greenberg, 2019). Neither

group has much legitimacy in the region of Fezzan, which has caused the region to be especially

hard-hit by the COVID-19 pandemic and, at the same time, suffer from a lack of effective

governmental response on the part of either party (Badi, 2020). The problem of Fezzan's

marginalization is closely related to its geopolitical centrality, both within Libya and within the

more immense Sahara–Sahel region (Bensaâd, 2019). Hence, local, regional, and world-level

geopolitical interests conspire to stir chaos and conflict in the Fezzan region (Oxford Analytica,

2020). In addition to being significant in the Libyan civil war, Fezzan has seen renewed Islamic

State activity that prompted polarizing military operations in the region in 2019 (Wilson & Pack,

2019). Hence, the region faces threats and instability on a multitude of fronts.

Research suggests that in part because of its centrality and also because of the vital role of its marginalized minority communities, Fezzan may be essential in terms of developing a lasting, stable political system in Libya (van Lier, 2020). Much of the problem stems from historical struggles to combine three diverse regions into a single, unified nation-state (Mundy, 2021). However, the victorious federal system in the United States gives many Libyans hope that their current situation could find a resolution that reverses the historical marginalization of Fezzan (Saleem, 2019). We need to find reasons behind the long-running conflict and instability in Libya (Joffé, 2020), and Fezzan may be critical to that endeavor. The need to understand and address these problems is urgent, given the international consequences of the ongoing chaos in Libya (Makhmutova, 2021). Understanding the historical marginalization of Fezzan and its history may help pave the way for an understanding of how Libya can move forward (Mikaïl, 2020).

C. Research Questions

The research questions that will guide the proposed study are deeply rooted within the existing literature. The three qualitative research questions frame the three key comparative periods over which the study will address the status of Fezzan and its positionality within the larger Libyan state. The research questions are each presented with accompanying discussion.

RQ1. What was the status of the Fezzan region of Libya relative to Cyrenaica and Tripolitania during the Constitutional Monarchy period (1952-1969)?

The Constitutional Monarchy period of Libya reflects the nation-state's original formation. Per Mundy (2021), the emergence of the modern state of Libya can be traced to the late Ottoman Empire. However, on the empire's decline, Italian colonialism derailed this effort and so it was only with the demise of colonialism post-WWII that the region gained its

autonomy. This early period was crucial in the forging of a larger Libyan state, but also challenging. Mundy (2021) addressed how the Sanusi monarchy, based in Cyrenaica, struggled to transform the diverse and sparsely populated region into a cohesive state. The monarchy's basis in Cyrenaica points to a potential beginning for the marginalization of Fezzan within Libya. At the same time, other researchers (e.g. Mikaïl, 2020) point out that this diversity did not ultimately prevent the forging of a mostly coherent nation-state under the constitutional monarchy period. Hence, understanding the role of Fezzan in this early period of Libyan history provides the necessary foundation for understanding its development and relative positionality in later periods. Coupled with this, the political institutions of the constitutional monarchy area are reflective of broadly democratic traditions.

RQ2. What was the status of the Fezzan region of Libya relative to Cyrenaica and Tripolitania during the Gaddafi era (1969-2011)?

The centralization of power during the monarchy era would ultimately set the stage for a military coup by Mu'ammar Al-Gaddafi, who took power and held it for four decades (Mundy, 2021). The Gaddafi era was characterized by a focus on oil sales, central economic planning, and so-called revolutionary security policies. The Fezzan region is rich in natural resources and therefore holds particular importance in the economic aspects of Libyan history (Oxford Analytica, 2020). Hence, the Gaddafi era's focus on oil sales as a major economic driver put Fezzan at the center of events politically as well as geographically. At the same time, repressive "revolutionary" policies were enacted that sought to suppress any dissent (St John, 2008). These policies may have disproportionately affected Fezzan because of its significant minority populations (Saleem, 2019). All around, the Gaddafi era represents the effect of authoritarian political institutions on Fezzan and Libyan unity as a whole.

RQ3. What was the status of the Fezzan region of Libya relative to Cyrenaica and Tripolitania during the February Revolution era (2011-2021)?

The Gaddafi era ended when Mu'ammar Al-Gaddafi was overthrown during the Arab Spring in 2011. This shift in governance inspired immediate optimism on the part of most Libyans, but this optimism was quickly overcome by doubt as the promise of the Arab Spring ignited civil war (Makhmutova, 2021). Various groups, including an elected government, would then vie for power, including the Cyrenaica-based Libyan Arab Armed Forces and Tripolitania-based Government of National Accord (Badi, 2020). Researchers such as Mikaïl (2020) have characterized this period as being reflective of the desire for a political revolution that was only partially realized. Contributing to the chaos of these competing governments was the rise of jihadist groups such as the Islamic State, which has had a significant presence within Fezzan in particular (Wilson & Pack, 2019). This period may be the one most strongly characterized by regional rivalries. It is also pointedly characterized by a lack of strong political institutions of any kind, even with the establishment of a unity government as of 2021, the results of which remain to be seen.

D. Significance

The proposed study has significance in terms of academics, theory, and real-world practice. Firstly, the academic significance of the study stems from addressing a research gap that has been established by multiple calls for further research within the existing literature. These calls are as follows. First, Joffé (2020) emphasized the need to better understand the reasons behind the long-running conflicts and instability plaguing Libya. The proposed study seeks to address that research gap through its examination of how and why the different political institutions throughout the country's history have interacted with Fezzan, historically the least

stable province of Libya. Hence, the results of the present study will help understand the chaos and instability that has long afflicted the country.

Second, Makhmutova (2021) noted that the need to understand and address Libya's problems is urgent because of the ongoing violence in the country. As of Makhmutova's writing, the civil wars of the February Revolution era were still ongoing, but the attempt at a unity government has not lessened the need; if anything, the need has become more urgent to help that government succeed. The present study will address Makhmutova's call for research through its general investigation of the role of political institutions over time in the marginalization of Fezzan. This entails investigating a key component of the country's problems and potentially proposing a degree of a solution.

Third, Mikaïl (2020) addressed the fact that understanding the historical marginalization of Fezzan may be key in addressing both that marginalization and the wider disputes in Libya. The present study addresses that call for research by examining the history of that marginalization. Moreover, through comparative history, the present study not only explores the degree of marginalization faced by Fezzan over time, but also the reasons for it through exploration of the role of three different sets of political institutions and associated governing paradigms.

Theoretically speaking, the present study will draw upon a conceptual framework that combines several theories of federalism. These theories include Lijphart's theories of Democracy in Plural Societies (1977) and Patterns of Democracy (1999) along with Weingast and Montinola's (1995) *The Economic Role of Political Institutions: Market-Preserving Federalism and Economic Development.* The present study has significance with respect to the theories in two regards. Firstly, the proposed study will expand upon all the theories through synthesizing

them together to create a larger framework within which to understand Libyan federalism, both as it is and as it could be. This combinatorial aspect of the theories' usage represents an expansion of all the constituent theories. Secondly, and more relevantly, the proposed study constitutes a novel context in which to apply these theories of federalism. Libya's federal system is deeply flawed and unequal because of Fezzan's marginalization. Hence, the present study will test if the theories within the conceptual framework suffice to both explain the workings of Libya's flawed federalism and point to how it could be fixed.

Finally, the practical significance of the study derives from the need to improve conditions in Libya, as emphasized by Makhmutova (2021). Although the ongoing civil war of the February Revolution era has ended with the formation of a unity government, there is no guarantee that government will succeed. Moreover, if the government does succeed, the results of the present study could have deep applicability to that government itself. In order to create a working federalism system, Libya must find a way to remedy Fezzan's marginalization. The results of this study, comprising insight gleaned from the experience of officials serving across multiple governments, may offer valuable insights for the new government to draw upon when crafting Fezzan-related policy and its overall federal system.

E. Summary

In summary, the problem to be addressed is that the Fezzan region of Libya remains marginalized relative to the surrounding regions of Cyrenaica and Tripolitania and the nation as a whole remains fragmented (Carboni & Moody, 2018). To address this problem, the purpose of the proposed qualitative case study is to understand and compare the positionality and marginalization of Fezzan relative to the other Libyan regions of Cyrenaica and Tripolitania and how this positionality has shaped Fezzan through the Constitutional Monarchy era (1952-1969),

Gaddafi era (1969-2011), and February Revolution era (2011-2021). The study will be qualitative in nature and guided by three overarching qualitative research questions, namely: (a) What was the status of the Fezzan region of Libya relative to Cyrenaica and Tripolitania during the Constitutional Monarchy period (1952-1969)? (b) What was the status of the Fezzan region of Libya relative to Cyrenaica and Tripolitania during the Gaddafi era (1969-2011)? and (c) What was the status of the Fezzan region of Libya relative to Cyrenaica and Tripolitania during the February Revolution era (2011-2021)?

Chapter 3: Review of Relevant Literature

Libya stands at another crossroads in its very troubled modern history to transform again after the February Revolution Era, with further opportunity to resolve past conflicts and power struggles more effectively among Cyrenaica, Tripolitania, and Fezzan that could bring lasting peace, stability, and security. The reshaping of federalist governance is a possible option to more effectively resolve these power struggles that has been reexamined in the Middle East in the wake of the Arab Spring and as specific to Libya (Versteeg, 2018). Although very recent efforts have been made to reestablish stability and security in Libya through creating a national unity government in Tripoli during 2021, more work is needed to establish this new government and agree upon the legal framework (International Crisis Group, 2021). However, the same historic dynamic of regional conflict continues to currently exist among Tripolitania, Cyrenaica, and Fezzan, with power struggles mainly between Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, while Fezzan is still mostly marginalized (Harchaoui, 2021; International Crisis Group, 2020, 2021; Mackinnon, 2020; Melcangi, 2021; Mezran & Melcangi, 2020). Gaining insight into possible future scenarios of what could happen in Libya after the February Revolution Era through the lens of federalist theory and other similar theories and examining Libya and Fezzan in the current literature will provide further foundation for the purpose of the proposed study to better understand and compare the positionality and marginalization of Fezzan relative to the other Libyan regions of Cyrenaica and Tripolitania.

This chapter will include several sections that will offer a deeper understanding of federalism and related theories, most recent events in Libya, and most recent events in Fezzan. In the process, three major sections will be discussed of Federalism and Related Theories, Libya, and Fezzan. The section Federalism and Related Theories will examine federalism and related

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theories as they pertain to the conceptual framework and purpose of the proposed study to better understand Libyan federalism and to posit future scenarios of what may occur in Libya as this nation attempts to continue to address Fezzan's marginalization. The section Libya will explore the most recent events of this country towards the end of the February Revolution Era in the current literature, and the section Fezzan will also explore most recent events towards the end of the February Revolution Era in the current literature specific to this region, with an additional focus on the significance of the city of Sebha to Fezzan. The chapter will then conclude with a summary of key findings and how they pertain to the purpose and problem to be addressed in the proposed study.

A. Federalism and Related Theories

The proposed study draws upon a conceptual framework that combines several theories of federalism and will expand and synthesize these theories together to understand Libyan federalism, both as it is and as it could be, with the recognition that Libya's federal system is deeply flawed and unequal because of Fezzan's marginalization. The reshaping of federalist governance is also being reexamined in the Middle East in the wake of the Arab Spring and as specific to Libya (Versteeg, 2018). Various related theories to federalism provide further opportunity to develop future scenarios of what may occur in Libya as this country attempts to address Fezzan's marginalization (Beramendi et al., 2017; Bolton & Roland, 1997; Wibbels, 2005).

Libyan Federalism and Future Scenarios

The possibility of reestablishing Libyan federalism and developing future scenarios through related theories of how Fezzan's marginalization could be effectively addressed will be explored in the literature. Versteeg (2018) examined federalism in the Middle East and

determined that events of the last decade have suggested a growing momentum for federalist governance around the world, and in the wake of the Arab Spring, federalism seems more politically feasible since 2010, with federalism being proposed in one way or another in Lebanon, Yemen, and Libya. A case study of federalism in Latin America determined that Latin America's largest federations have significantly reduced their levels of income inequality in recent years that may be reflecting a structural change toward egalitarianism (Bermanendi et al., 2017). However, these researchers cautioned that the political environment of Latin America strongly shaped preferences against centralized redistribution likely to promote equity in the long term, and while federalism does not necessarily lead to lower redistribution in theory, the geographic spread of income and malapportioned political institutions limited egalitarianism in these nations. When applied to Libya, implications from this case study may suggest a similar outcome of how far federalist governance will really be able to go to adequately resolve the historic inequity of Fezzan's marginalization even when the issue of income inequality is better addressed. Therefore, a future scenario from this case study could be presented that Fezzan will continue to remain mostly marginalized under Libyan federal governance unless there is also centralized redistribution that facilitates greater long-term egalitarianism and income equality.

From this basis of federalist governance that emphasizes a central system with regional systems that divides power among these systems, a more specific model could be considered that may help to better understand how to address Fezzan's marginalization. Bolton and Roland (1997) developed a conceptual model exploring the breakup or unification of nations based on political conflicts over redistribution policies that posits that when income distributions vary across regions and the efficiency gains from unification are small, separation occurs in equilibrium; and, when all factors of production are perfectly mobile, all incentives for

separation disappear. According to this model, Fezzan continues to have no real incentive to further unify if it continues to be marginalized by a centralized Libyan government and treated unequally relative to Cyrenaica and Tripolitania. This model supports the findings of Bermanendi et al. (2017) regarding the need for centralized redistribution to promote long-term equity. Therefore, a future scenario could be presented from this model that Fezzan will continue to remain marginalized if income distribution continues to significantly vary and be unequal relative to Cyrenaica and Tripolitania because there will also be no real incentive for greater unification, and the only way to address Fezzan's marginalization more effectively would be to redistribute income sources more equally.

Another model examined the interaction between decentralized governance, constitution formation, and redistribution, positing that balance achieved at the time of constitution writing is based on the key factors of the number of conflicting geographically salient endowments, the distribution of inter-regional inequality, and the degree of intra-state inequality within rural and urban regions (Wibbels, 2005) and further posited that the greater the level of conflict, the more elites who engage in constitutional negotiations are likely to constrain the central government by providing for substantial regional veto authority. Wibbels (2005) further determined that higher levels of inter-regional inequality also heighten demands for inter-regional redistribution, and whether its net effect is in favor of urban or rural regions will depend on the coalitional implications of inequality within regions. This model lends further support to the findings of Bermanendi et al. (2017) regarding the need for centralized redistribution to promote long-term equity. Implications from this theoretical model when applied to the historic and ongoing power struggles among Cyrenaica, Tripolitania, and Fezzan also concur with Bolton and Roland (1997) in the key area of emphasizing the negative impact of unequal distribution among regions when

seeking to achieve national unity and balance. Wibbels (2005) further focuses more specifically on the dynamic of regional power struggles that come from such inequality by suggesting that elites and coalitions will act to reduce central authority and favor redistribution to their own regions. Libya's historic power struggles among Cyrenaica, Tripolitania, and Fezzan support Wibbel's theoretical model, at least as it pertains to Cyrenaica and Tripolitania. However, it appears that elites and coalitions in Fezzan have not historically chosen to act and more assertively engage Cyrenaica and Tripolitania to favor their own region and instead have exemplified the model of Bolton and Roland (1997) by not really having much of an incentive to unify or engage at all. Therefore, a future scenario could be presented based on Wibbel's model that power struggles will continue to be focused mostly between elites and coalitions in Cyrenaica and Tripolitania with Fezzan remaining marginalized unless Fezzan is willing and able to assertively engage these other two regions for more equality while also making it a priority to develop their own regional resources more fully.

B. Libya

After years in which parallel governments fought intermittent wars in Libya, a new consolidated executive was chosen on March 10, 2021, when parliament endorsed a national unity government headed by Prime Minister Abdulhamid Dabaiba, who took office in Tripoli (International Crisis Group, 2021). The two pre-existing governments in Cyrenaica and Tripolitania handed over power peacefully in the establishment of a unified government which had the backing of Libya's competing political groupings, their affiliated military coalitions, and their foreign backers, setting the stage for reunification of political and military institutions (International Crisis Group, 2021). External actors played the most significant role for Libya establishing a national unity government in Tripoli in 2021, but more efforts are still needed to

secure this new government and agree on the legal framework (Harchaoui, 2021; International Crisis Group, 2020, 2021; Mackinnon, 2020; Melcangi, 2021). The same historic Libyan regional conflict dynamic continues to exist among Tripolitania, Cyrenaica, and Fezzan, with power struggles mainly between Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, while Fezzan continues to be marginalized (Harchaoui, 2021; International Crisis Group, 2020, 2021; Mackinnon, 2020; Melcangi, 2021; Mezran & Melcangi, 2020).

Libya in the Current Literature

Several studies in the current literature examined the most recent events in Libya that led to the establishment of a national unity government in 2021. International Crisis Group (2020) noted that Turkey became involved in the Libyan crisis in January 2020 by helping forces aligned with the UN-backed Tripoli government of Prime Minister Faiez Serraj in Tripolitania stand their ground against an offensive by a coalition headed by Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar of Bengazi in Cyrenaica that had begun in November 2019. International Crisis Group (2020) further determined that Turkey supported the Tripoli government in order to confront forces attempting to contain Turkey's strategic and economic influence in the Mediterranean and broader Middle East, while Haftar's foreign backers also saw Libya as a key geopolitical battleground. These findings indicate that the same historic power struggle was occurring again between Cyrenaica and Tripolitania towards the end of the February Revolution Era in Libya. These findings also indicate that foreign actors viewed Libya as a key geopolitical battleground and had become involved in this historic power struggle once again.

The specific topic of the role of foreign actors in events towards the end of the February Revolution Era was explored more in depth by other researchers. Harchaoui (2021) examined the impact of foreign actors in the Libyan conflict and concurred with International Crisis Group

(2020) that Turkey had backed the Tripoli government and more specifically noted that it was Russia and the United Arab Emirates who had backed Hafter's Bengazi government. Mackinnon (2020) also examined the impact of these foreign actors and determined that Turkey and Russia had been the most consequential players in the Libyan conflict. However, Melcangi (2021) examined the influence of Egypt in the Libyan conflict and determined that Egypt had also backed Hafter, but after his military campaign was disrupted by Turkey in 2020, Egypt was forced to recalibrate its strategy by reducing support for Hafter and being more open to other solutions. Melcangi (2021) further determined that Egypt appeared to be the most compromise-seeking backer of the external actors because Egypt was very aware that its national security and internal stability were inevitably intertwined with Libya's. All these findings further illustrate how much foreign actors had played a key role in ultimately ending the February Revolution Era in Libya through the establishment of a national unity government.

One other relevant study in the current literature focused research on internal conflict in Libya during the February Revolution Era regarding its very significant oil industry. Mezran and Melcangi (2020) determined that production revenues and the dividends from oil sales were one of the main causes of internal Libyan conflict during this era, with Haftar and the Eastern government of Benghazi in Cyrenaica always controlling oil production but not oil revenues that were controlled by the Western government of Tripoli in Tripolitania. Mezran and Melcangi (2020) further noted that Hafter had accused the Tripoli government of mismanaging hydrocarbon revenues and state funds and had blockaded oil production in response, causing the dramatic plummet of oil production to less than 100,000 barrels per day (bpd) from the previous 1.2 million. These researchers further determined that this internal conflict over Libya's oil industry increased malcontent among the Libyan people in both Tripoli and Benghazi due to the

resulting deterioration of living conditions and lack of economic reforms that also sparked protests and demonstrations in both cities. These findings reveal the internal conflict that was occurring in Libya towards the end of the February Revolution Era and the great significance of this country's oil industry to fueling the ongoing power struggle between Cyrenaica and Tripolitania. Implications from these findings further suggest that a crucial issue that Libya's new national unity government must effectively resolve to ensure its future stability and prosperity will pertain to the satisfactory management of its oil industry that will continue to facilitate significant internal actors in these two key regions being willing to work together.

C. Fezzan

Sebha is the most important city in Fezzan because it has the largest population of approximately 210,000 inhabitants and holds many institutions of this region, including the Central Bank (Aita, 2018). Sebha is also significant geographically to Libya because of its central location that acts as a main bridge from South to North that facilitates trade (Aita, 2018). Fezzan overwhelming supported Hafter in the most recent Libyan crisis, placing it in conflict with the outcome of a national unity government that was established in Tripoli instead (Badi, 2019; Bocchi, 2019). Fezzan gave support to Hafter mainly because of the need for much greater security in this region due to it becoming a hub for terrorists, smuggling, trafficking, and organized crime that also significantly impacts the security of the entire Libyan country, surrounding neighbors, and Europe, making securing Fezzan vital to reestablishing regional, national, and international security (Badi, 2019; Bocchi, 2019; Fitzgerald & Wilson, 2021; International Crisis Group, 2017; McGregor, 2017; Zucconi, 2019).

Fezzan in the Current Literature

The significance of Sebha was further examined in the current literature pertaining to its role in the most recent Libyan crisis. One study noted that Hafter's military campaign began in the Fezzan region in Sebha when Hafter reached an agreement with local tribes and power brokers to hand over the city to the Libyan National Army, and after taking control over key military locations and appearing to provide basic security, Hafter then focused on increasing his social legitimacy with truckloads of food and medicine to gain further support of ambivalent local people by addressing their concerns (Badi, 2019). Badi (2019) further determined that Fezzan had become a hub for illicit terrorist activities, smuggling, and trafficking of all kinds including people, oil, gold, weapons, and drugs, while terrorist and militant groups from Libya and neighboring countries roamed freely, negatively impacting regional, national, and European security. Bocci (2019) concurred with these findings by determining that Fezzan overwhelming supported Hafter in the Libyan crisis and was widely welcomed because Fezzan tribes were tired of having to deal with gangs and criminals and wanted more security in the area. Implications from these two studies suggest that Hafter was aware of the significance of Fezzan to national oil production and made it a priority to garner support in this region, while also recognizing that there were many people in this region who were ambivalent to the ongoing power struggles between Cyrenaica and Tripolitania and would need more persuasion through offers of basic necessities and greater security. Further implications suggest that Fezzan was now not only mostly ambivalent but had also become a lawless region after decades of being ignored and marginalized that was increasingly dependent on an illegal economy for its survival.

Other studies in the current literature regarding Fezzan mostly spotlighted these security issues and how they impacted regional, national, and international interests. International Crisis

Group (2017) determined that Fezzan had become Europe's new border as their frontier against sub-Saharan African migrants and refugees traveling the Central Mediterranean route to Europe and further determined that any European effort to address governance and economic and security problems in Fezzan should be coordinated with the internationally recognized government and linked to wider, nationwide initiatives to address issues that negatively impacted the country as a whole. McGregor (2017) concurred that Fezzan had become Europe's true southern border and securing it was of enormous importance, but to do so would mean securing 2,500 miles of Libya's porous southern desert borders that were a haven for militants, smugglers, and traffickers, further concurring with the previous findings of Badi (2019) and Bocci (2019) that illegal trade had become a significant issue in Fezzan. Another study that explored the strategic role of Fezzan for European security also concurred that stability in this region was vital for Europe's security and Libya's national security because the region is home to two of the most important oil fields of North Africa and had become a hub for organized crime, with the smuggling and trafficking of people, oil, weapons, drugs, and gold trafficking across Africa and the Middle East and networks that extended to Mali, Niger, Chad and southern Europe (Zucconi, 2019). Zucconi (2019) also concluded that Fezzan's role in wider geopolitics has been underestimated because it is often represented as a zone of systemic insecurity, far and disconnected from Libya's national political issues. Other researchers examined economic conditions in Fezzan and noted that this region is still the poorest region in Libya despite having the largest oil field that is key to Libya's oil-based economy (Fitzgerald & Wilson, 2021). Fitzgerald and Wilson (2021) further determined that the youth in Fezzan have suffered the most from this region's development challenges, making them vulnerable to armed groups and criminal networks and drivers of conflict and instability in the region, with some resorting to

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confrontational tactics such as sabotaging energy infrastructure to make their grievances heard. Implications from this focus on security issues in Fezzan in the current literature clearly suggest that securing Fezzan is vital to reestablishing regional, national, and international security, particularly for Europe, making it another crucial issue that Libya's new national unity government must confront to ensure its lasting stability. Implications regarding the findings of Fitzgerald and Wilson (2021) further suggest that these security issues in Fezzan are directly related to income inequality relative to Cyrenaica and Tripolitania, and specific economic marginalization as part of the historic and ongoing marginalization of this region is what has created this illegally based economy, with a younger generation who is now more engaged in this underground economy than they are willing to believe that they will ever be treated more equitably by a national unity government.

Summary

Chapter 3 has revealed that the reshaping of federalist governance is being reexamined in the Middle East in the wake of the Arab Spring and as specific to Libya (Versteeg, 2018), and various related theories to federalism provided the opportunity to develop future scenarios of what may occur in Libya as this country attempts to address Fezzan's marginalization (Beramendi et al., 2017; Bolton & Roland, 1997; Wibbels, 2005). Unequal distribution among regions negatively impacts the ability to achieve national unity and balance (Bolton & Roland, 1997; Wibbels, 2005), supporting other findings of the need for centralized redistribution to promote long-term equity (Beramendi et al., 2017). When applied to Libyan federalist governance and better addressing the issue of Fezzan's marginalization, future scenarios were considered that would require centralized redistribution to effectively resolve the historic marginalization of Fezzan, along with Fezzan being willing and able to assertively engage the

other two more historically powerful regions of Cyrenaica and Tripolitania for more equality, while also making it a priority to develop their own regional resources more fully. A review of Libya in the current literature further revealed that external actors played the most significant role for Libya establishing a national unity government in 2021 in Tripoli, but more efforts are still needed to secure this new government and agree on the legal framework (Harchaoui, 2021; International Crisis Group, 2020, 2021; Mackinnon, 2020; Melcangi, 2021). The same historic Libyan regional conflict dynamic continues to exist among Tripolitania, Cyrenaica, and Fezzan, with power struggles mainly between Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, while Fezzan continues to be marginalized (Harchaoui, 2021; International Crisis Group, 2020, 2021; Mackinnon, 2020; Melcangi, 2021; Mezran & Melcangi, 2020). A specific focus on Fezzan in the current literature also revealed that Fezzan had overwhelming supported Hafter in the most recent Libyan crisis, placing it in conflict with the outcome of a national unity government that was established in Tripoli instead (Badi, 2019; Bocchi, 2019). Illegal trade and organized crime have become very significant security issues in Fezzan, making securing Fezzan vital to reestablishing regional, national, and international security (Badi, 2019; Bocchi, 2019; Fitzgerald & Wilson, 2021; International Crisis Group, 2017; McGregor, 2017; Zucconi, 2019). Implications were discussed of how these security issues in Fezzan are rooted in its historic and ongoing marginalization, particularly its economic marginalization, despite this region being a central gateway of trade and containing very important oil reserves that are key to Libya's oil-based economy. Fezzan gave support to Hafter mainly because of the need for much greater security due to this region becoming a hub for smuggling, trafficking, and organized crime that also significantly impacts the security of the entire country, its surrounding neighbors, and European security, making securing Fezzan vital to reestablishing regional, national, and international security (Badi, 2019;

Bocchi, 2019; Fitzgerald & Wilson, 2021; International Crisis Group, 2017; McGregor, 2017; Zucconi, 2019).

These key findings provide support for the conceptual framework of the proposed study to better understand Libyan federalism both as it is and as it could be to better address Fezzan's continued marginalization. These key findings also provide a current foundation for the purpose and problem to be addressed in the proposed study of the need for the new government in Libya to recognize the significance of the Fezzan region to reestablishing security and ensuring lasting stability and prosperity that must more equitably include Fezzan to truly be able to move forward into a better future as a unified nation. Chapter 4 will provide a detailed description and discussion of the methodology of the proposed study.

Chapter 4: Methodology

A. Method

The research method for the proposed study is that of qualitative research. The qualitative research method is open-ended and exploratory (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Qualitative research seeks to use rich descriptions and subjective human experiences to create a picture of subjective reality (Cypress, 2018). Rather than focusing on specific variables, qualitative research is generally focused on a broader phenomenon of interest (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). This phenomenon is then examined from the perspectives of those who have first-handed experience interacting with it in some fashion (Cypress, 2018). In this way, the qualitative researcher can draw upon real experiences, but also ask open-ended questions that center on the overall phenomenon, not just parts of it (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Hence, qualitative research is also holistic in the sense that the qualitative researcher explores the phenomenon in context rather than trying to abstract it and study it outside of that context (Cypress, 2018). Qualitative research is also exploratory in the sense that open-ended questions allow for a fuller spectrum of possible responses than do closed-ended questions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). As a result, the qualitative researcher captures a fuller range of possible responses and is not limited by their preconceptions as to which answers may arise in the course of the study.

Qualitative research is appropriate to the proposed study for several reasons. Firstly, the experience of marginalization is both broad and subjective. Although it would be possible to define marginalization in specific, closed-ended ways, this definition would be limited by my prior knowledge. By contrast, an open-ended, qualitative approach to research will allow me to explore the participants' understanding of Fezzan's circumstances and marginalization. Furthermore, the study is by definition contextual in nature, given its focus on Fezzan's

contextual relationship to the other two provinces of Libya. The subjective aspect of the study is also important because it will allow the research to better integrate different, potentially conflicting points of view. Overall, the qualitative methodology will offer an open-ended exploration of the study's central phenomenon and holistic integration of different perspectives, yielding a contextualized understanding.

The alternate methodological choice would be quantitative research. Quantitative research is closed-ended in nature (Balnaves & Caputi, 2001). Instead of studying a wide phenomenon subjectively, the quantitative researcher seeks to narrow the focus of the research to a much more specific set of variables and examine them with a modicum of objectivity (Apuke, 2017). This is achieved through the use of quantified, closed-ended data (Balnaves & Caputi, 2001). These data are powerful in the sense that they allow the researcher to draw statistically significant conclusions with a large sample. However, to be practical, a quantitative study must collect only short-form, closed-ended responses so that the research can be conducted at scale and a sufficiently large sample size achieved (Apuke, 2017). Quantitative research questions are also more specific, typically on the relationships between study variables (Balnaves & Caputi, 2001). Overall, quantitative research is a strong and empirical but narrow approach to research.

A quantitative methodology would be a poor fit for the proposed study for several reasons. First, the research questions guiding this study are broad and open-ended. They do not pertain to any specific variables nor the relationship between them, but rather the larger issues surrounding Fezzan. Moreover, the marginalization of Fezzan is in some ways the focus of the research. This focus, though, is implicit; if the relationship has been characterized by marginalization, this should emerge from the exploration. By contrast, in a quantitative study, the marginalization would need to be explicated to a greater degree when conducting the research.

This focus could be perceived as leading and decrease the overall efficacy of the inquiry. Therefore, a quantitative research method would be a poor fit for the proposed study. Instead of large sample size with closed-ended questions, it will be more informative to approach a small sample size with open-ended and in-depth questions.

B. Design

Within the qualitative paradigm of research are multiple research designs. The present study will employ a comparative multiple case study. Of qualitative designs, the case study is the most deeply contextual (Yin, 2017). Whereas most qualitative designs have a broad focus, a case study addresses one or more specific instances of the phenomenon (Merriam, 1988). These instances are understood as being important to the larger phenomenon either through being typical and hence representative or through being exceptional (Yin, 2017). In addition to only focusing on a single instance of the phenomenon, the case study is contextual because the case study researcher uses multiple sources of data to triangulate a more nuanced picture (Merriam, 1988). By combining multiple perspectives, the researcher can paint a richer and more complete depiction of the underlying subjective reality. The multiple data sources can also be varied, and the case study is the one qualitative method that can effectively make use of limited quantitative data in the form of contextualizing background information (Yin, 2017).

A case study research design is appropriate for this study for several reasons. Firstly, the present study is contextual because of its focus on the context-sensitive circumstances of the Libyan province of Fezzan. Secondly, the case study will allow for the use of multiple data sources, including contextualizing quantitative data such as budgets and other financial information. These data offer a rich window into certain aspects of the phenomenon under study, but are not, in and of themselves, complete enough to warrant a quantitative study. A case study

allows them to be integrated into a qualitative study of the issues. Thirdly, the proposed study is focused on a specific case, which is Fezzan. Though this case is of interest in and of itself, it could also have important implications for the broader phenomenon of regional interrelations in African countries, especially those with heavily minority regions such as Fezzan.

As noted above, a case study can be single or multiple. The single case study design is ideal for examining a specific instance in great detail, but it requires that the instance in question have greater significance (Yin, 2017). By contrast, the multiple case study approach allows for the comparison of multiple contexts without knowing a priori which is most important (Merriam, 1988). In a multiple case study, several different cases of the same phenomenon are explored in parallel (Yin, 2017). When these separate analyses are complete, the different cases are then compared against each other, allowing the researcher to identify both points of commonality in ways in which the specific contexts of the different cases lead them to differ (Merriam, 1988).

In this study, a multiple case approach is the better choice. Although Fezzan is the only region under study, fully addressing the research problem will require studying Fezzan not just in one case, such as the Constitutional Monarchy era, but exploring it in all three parallel cases. By comparing and contrasting these three different political situations in Libya, it will be possible to better understand which aspects of Fezzan's circumstances are largely inherent, being continuous across all three cases, and which aspects are more circumstantial, being present in only one or two of the cases. This type of comparison is ideal for fulfilling the purpose of the proposed study.

In addition, other qualitative research designs would be less appropriate. The phenomenological design is based on the philosophy of the same name and offers a deeper understanding of experiences (Cypress, 2018). However, phenomenology lacks contextual focus

or comparative potential. Narrative inquiry addresses the narratives of participants' experiences (Clandinin & Caine, 2013). Such a research design could provide valuable insight into the narrative of Fezzan's circumstances but still lacks comparison. Finally, the grounded theory allows for the development of the new theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1997). This study is based on existing theory and so does not require the use of grounded theory.

C. Population and Sample

At the broadest level, the three cases under study in this research will be the three political eras of Libya. These eras are (a) the Constitutional Monarchy period (1952-1969), (b) the Gaddafi Era (1969-2011), and (c) the February Revolution Era (2011-2021). In all three cases, the specific phenomenon under study is the political and social circumstances of Fezzan relative to Tripolitania and Cyrenaica. Hence, the multiple case study will be divided along the temporal axis rather than the geographic axis.

The population under study for this research is individuals with a high degree of knowledge regarding Libya and Fezzan in particular during one or more of its political eras. This population is due to the study being focused on high-level political institutions and geopolitical interactions rather than day-to-day events. However, the population will also be limited to people who are from or have lived a significant amount of time in Fezzan. This stipulation will help to ensure that the knowledge brought to the table by all of the study's participants is first-hand and relevant. Over time, first-hand expertise on the Constitutional Monarchy era may be rarer, but such individuals should still exist, such as among tribal elders.

The sampling strategy for the study will involve purposive sampling and elite interviews. In elite interviews, the researcher foregoes a larger sample size in favor of a smaller sample with greater expertise (Harvey, 2011). In elite interview sampling, the participants should all have a

high degree of expertise, but maybe more difficult to access (Harvey, 2011). This will be the case for the present study, where the participants will be figures with firsthand experience in Libya, especially in positions of social or political power. I have, a priori, identified three potential candidates for the elite interviews: (a) A former Libyan minister from the Gaddafi era who was originally from Fezzan, (b) A minister from Fezzan with a high-level position in the current Libyan unity government, and (c) a Ph.D. holder from Fezzan who formerly worked at the central bank of Libya. The final sample size will likely range from 3-8 participants. Such a sample size falls within the range of case study sample sizes derived from a meta-analysis of PhD-level studies (Mason, 2010).

Regarding the three specific cases under study, each offers particular insights that may prove valuable in understanding Fezzan's positionality and marginalization. The first case is that of the constitutional monarchy era. This case should offer valuable insights into Fezzan's position under a more democratic government. During this era, there were components of the national government that empowered Fezzan, including the senate, and those which may have allowed for its marginalization, such as the concentration of governmental function in the other provinces. Understanding how this balance played out and what its ultimate result was in terms of Fezzan's positionality and potential marginalization may offer both a baseline and an aspiration goal to return to and surpass as Libya moves forward.

The Gaddafi era is the second case. During this era, Fezzan was marginalized in two keyways. Firstly, the national government in the Gaddafi era was Arabist, whereas Fezzan retained significant minority populations of non-Arabized Berbers. Secondly, to the extent that Gaddafi endorsed democratic rule, it was as direct democracy. Given Fezzan's low population, this form of democracy greatly disadvantaged the province. Therefore, the Gaddafi era case may

offer insight into how marginalization can be produced as a consequence of ethnocentric autocratic institutions and also how some democratic conventions can also be problematic.

Finally, the February Revolution era has been characterized by instability and strife. In this third case, there are effectively no dominant institutions at all. Therefore, the third case offers insights into how the breakdown of even marginalizing autocratic institutions may lead to worsened marginalization in some ways. At the same time, this case in comparison with the second case will offer insight into the particulars of how two different bad circumstances compare in terms of the degree of marginalization they create and the practical harm they result into a marginalized province such as Fezzan.

D. Sources of Data

Per Yin (2017), a case study should involve at least three sources of data. In this study, the three sources of data will be elite interviews, historical and academic literature, and archival records. Each component of the data collection will contribute significant insight.

Qualitative, semi-structured interviews are the standard method for collecting qualitative data in most research (Kallio et al., 2016). The semi-structured interview has both structure and flexibility. Structure derives from an interview guide developed in advance that includes sample questions and key topics that are used to ensure the interview flows appropriately and addresses all the key points, while flexibility comes from the ability to add additional questions as necessary at the moment. I will develop the interview guide in advance, and have it validated by three experts in the field to ensure that it is capable of yielding data that is appropriate to answer the study's research questions.

The secondary sources of data will be literature and archival data. There is, as previewed in the literature review section, extensive literature regarding the history of Libya, both

politically and socially. This literature is split between the academic discourse on specific topics and the broader grey literature on the area. Both these sources of data will be used to contextualize the study. Although academic data will be prioritized over grey literature, the academic discourse on Fezzan is not comprehensive enough to fulfill the need for historical sources on its own. The other source of secondary data will be archival records. Two types of records will be focused on: publicly known budgetary and policy documents and demographic information. The former category of records will be ideal for understanding the role of governmental efforts in shaping the status of Fezzan. Demographic data, on the other hand, will be more useful for understanding the role of Fezzan's minority community and the shifts caused by the policy.

E. Data Collection

Data collection for the proposed study will proceed as follows. I will identify potential participants based on publicly available data. At present, I have three candidates for participation: (a) A former Libyan minister from the Gaddafi era who was originally from Fezzan, (b) A minister from Fezzan with a high-level position in the current Libyan unity government, and (c) a Ph.D. holder from Fezzan who formerly worked at the central bank of Libya. Once approval is secured, I will seek to engage these three participants and also find others with similarly relevant credentials. Each participant will be contacted through his or her publicly available contact information, typically e-mail.

Owing to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the elite interview nature of the data collection, I will seek to conduct the interviews via Zoom or even in written form, though in-person may be considered if necessary. Before the interviews, each participant will be asked to read and sign informed consent documentation. Each interview is expected to last 30-60 minutes

and will be audio recorded. I will allow each participant to review their transcripts and make any necessary corrections. I will transcribe all the interview data myself and store it securely. All personally identifying information will be removed.

Insofar as the collection of secondary data, I will rely primarily on academic databases, government websites, and library archives. All of the literature used will be obtained either through academic databases or through a reputable provider such as Amazon. The archival records will be sought primarily in libraries and other historical archives. Web.Archive.org may also be used to locate past versions of relevant governmental websites. Resources such as the CIA World Factbook or the United Nations will also be consulted for demographic data.

F. Data Analysis

Once all data are collected, they will be analyzed. I will analyze data using Clarke and Braun's (2014) six-step data analysis combined with case study triangulation. All data analysis will be conducted with the assistance of NVivo qualitative data analysis software.

The six steps of thematic analysis will be carried out as follows. The first step will be to immerse me in the data (Clarke & Braun, 2014). This will involve carefully reading and rereading the transcripts to establish strong familiarity. Establishing familiarity ensures that the remainder of the analysis is strongly grounded in the actual data collected during the interviews. The second step in the analysis is coding the data (Clarke & Braun, 2014). Coding will involve using an initial codebook along with emergent codes to identify key ideas of interest throughout the data. Codes represent ideas that occur in multiple places in the literature, even if they are expressed differently in different places or by different participants. The initial codebook will be a list of codes that are expected to occur in the data based on the literature review, while emergent codes represent codes that emerge from the data themselves. Then, the third step will

be to develop themes (Clarke & Braun, 2014). Themes are broader ideas that represent a more complex interaction between the codes. Each theme also must relate to the central ideas found in the research questions. The list of themes will serve to answer the research questions.

The fourth step of the analysis will be to double-check the themes against the data (Clarke & Braun, 2014). In this step, each theme will be carefully compared back against the interview transcripts in order to validate that the ideas encapsulated in the code are actually reflected in the interview responses. This will ensure that the themes are an accurate reflection of the ideas in the data. In the fifth step, the themes will be cross-checked against each other (Clarke & Braun, 2014). This will involve looking over the themes relative to each other, checking that the themes represent ideas that are both complete in and if themselves and unique relative to the ideas expressed in every other theme. Cross-checking will serve to ensure that each theme is both unique and complete. Finally, the last stage is to compile and recontextualize the themes (Clarke & Braun, 2014). This step will be done with the presentation of the study results. Step six will comprise the results and discussion chapters.

Once the thematic analysis is complete for each separate set of data, I will apply case study triangulation and cross-case analysis. Triangulation within each case involves comparing and contrasting the results of each separate source of data (Yin, 2017). Ideas reflected in multiple data sources are considered to have especially strong validity. By contrast, places where the data conflict is also of interest but require further study. The cross-case analysis will be similar to triangulation except that it is the results of the different cases that will be compared and contrasted. Here, rather than strengthening or weakening conclusions, the similarities and differences between the cases are the points, as they allow for the identification of the aspects of the contexts that are shared and the identification of the aspects that conflict (Yin, 2017).

G. Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is the qualitative counterpart to reliability and validity (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Trustworthiness will be maintained by several strategies within the context of the present study. The primary strategy for achieving trustworthiness is alignment. Each component of the study has been carefully developed so that it aligns with the others. This type of internal consistency is paramount in ensuring the results reflect the actual research problem that was deemed to relevance. Another key strategy to ensure trustworthiness is that the data analysis strategy, qualitative thematic analysis (Clarke & Braun, 2014), contains two steps intended to ensure the data are reflected in the analysis. This principle will be further reflected by the judicious usage of exact quotes from participants to support the key themes and results that are presented in later chapters of the study. To minimize researcher bias, the quotes will also allow a reader to examine the participants' sentiments directly and assess whether or not they believe that the associated conclusions were appropriate and warranted.

Transferability is another dimension of trustworthiness. Transferability refers to the extent to which the results can be transferred elsewhere (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Unlike in quantitative research, a qualitative researcher does not seek findings that can necessarily be widely generalized (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Instead, the principle of transferability is that the researcher should carefully document the circumstances under which the results were obtained so future users can determine the similarity of those circumstances to the desired application. In this case, the study context has been very specifically explicated to be Libya. The results are such that they will have direct, real-world implications for Libya itself. However, the results regarding how marginalization is affected by different forms of government may have some wider

applicability to other federal governments with unequal and marginalized states. Hence, the specific conditions characterizing the three eras under study have been carefully explained.

H. Research Ethics

Ethical research practices will be followed at every stage of the research. Informed consent procedures will be followed with care, ensuring that each participant is fully aware of the study, its purpose, and any potential risks to participating prior to contributing data. Participants may withdraw their participation at any point prior to the publication of the study. They may choose to do this by contacting the researcher using contact information supplied in the informed consent documentation, which participants will retain a copy of.

Participant confidentiality is a primary concern when conducting the study. The proposed study is not wholly without risk, primarily for those from the February Revolution era who may still reside in Libya and, to a lesser extent, for the officials from any era still residing in the country. As their responses may be critical of a former government whose members still hold some power in a highly unstable country, protection of the participants' identities will be paramount. To achieve this, all identifying information, including the specific governmental position the participant held, will be redacted from the data. In addition, each participant will be assigned a codename for use in the analysis and reporting of study data. The participants' real names and contact information will only be known to the researcher.

All data collected for the study will be stored securely. Virtual data will be stored in a password protected folder on a flash drive. When not in use, the flash drive will be kept in a locked drawer in the researcher's desk. All physical materials will also be stored in the locked desk drawer when they are not actively in use. All data will be kept for 5 years following the

publication of the study, then fully deleted. For any participant who chooses to withdraw their participation prior to publication, those data will be destroyed completely.

I. Summary

In summary, the purpose of the proposed qualitative case study is to understand and compare the positionality and marginalization of Fezzan relative to the other Libyan regions of Cyrenaica and Tripolitania and how this positionality has shaped Fezzan through the Constitutional Monarchy era (1952-1969), Gaddafi era (1969-2011), and February Revolution era (2011-2021). This chapter, Chapter 4, addressed the key methodological aspects of the study and how it will be carried out. The research methodology will be qualitative, with the research design being that of a case study. In alignment with the case study design, three sources of data will be used: elite interviews, historical and academic literature, and archival records. The population for the study will be individuals with a high degree of knowledge regarding Libya and Fezzan in particular during one or more of its political eras. Once the data are collected, they will be analyzed using qualitative thematic analysis with the help of NVivo software. The results of the individual analyses will be compared and contrasted using case study triangulation. Throughout the research process, careful efforts will be undertaken to ensure that the data and analyses are trustworthy and that ethical research practices are adhered to.

Chapter 5: Results

Historically, Fezzan has been experiencing marginalization relative to Cyrenaica and Tripolitania despite playing minor roles in the power struggle across the three regions of Libya. Fezzan's status may have been affected by geography, the tribal culture, the form of Libyan government, as well as internal and external actors (Ababukar, 2021; Badi, 2020; Ben Lamma, 2017; Greenberg, 2019; Melangi, 2021; Mezran & Varvelli, 2017; Oxford Analytica, 2020; Wilson & Pack, 2019). The purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand and compare the positionality and marginalization of Fezzan relative to the other Libyan regions of Cyrenaica and Tripolitania and how this positionality has shaped Fezzan through the Constitutional Monarchy era (1952-1969), Gaddafi era (1969-2011), and February Revolution era (2011-2021). The research questions that guided this study were:

RQ1. What was the status of the Fezzan region of Libya relative to Cyrenaica and Tripolitania during the Constitutional Monarchy period (1952-1969)?

RQ2. What was the status of the Fezzan region of Libya relative to Cyrenaica and Tripolitania during the Gaddafi era (1969-2011)?

RQ3. What was the status of the Fezzan region of Libya relative to Cyrenaica and Tripolitania during the February Revolution era (2011-2021)?

The research questions will be answered in this chapter. Descriptions of the sample, data collection, data analysis, and trustworthiness techniques are included in this chapter. A sample of four participants with firsthand experience in Libya, especially with high degree of expertise in positions of social or political power, was purposively selected to participate in elite written interviews. The written interview data were triangulated with secondary sources containing discourses on Fezzan relative to the social and political history of Libya. Both peer-reviewed

articles and grey literature were collected. The interview and secondary data were imported to NVivo 12 qualitative data analysis software and analyzed using thematic analysis. The themes that emerged from the analysis are presented in this chapter.

A. Sample of the Study

The sample of this study was selected from two data sources. The first source was drawn from interviews of prominent Libyan scholars and political analysts who have profound knowledge of the social, political, and economic structures of Libya and Fezzan during the Gaddafi era and the February Revolution. The second data source was peer-reviewed academic articles and grey literature that contained discourses on Fezzan in relation to the social and political history of Libya.

All four interview participants were born and raised in Al-Shatti, Fezzan. P1 is a Member of The Libyan Political Dialogue, a teacher, and an employee of the ministry of media and culture. P2 held many positions in the Congress and the education section during Gaddafi's era. He claimed to be knowledgeable in all three eras, but had the "most knowledge" in what he described as the "mass era" of Gaddafi. P3 held various positions in the academic, corporate, and government settings. He claimed to be the most familiar with the Gaddafi era. P4 has a doctorate degree in economics and held various positions in the financial sector locally and overseas. P4 is currently a faculty member. He admitted to being too young to remember much from the Constitutional Monarchy era, but answered the interview questions in writing as honestly and accurately as possible.

For the secondary data, a total of 28 articles with 16 peer-reviewed studies and 12 grey literature was selected. The literature search strategy involved using a combination of the following keywords: *Libya, Fezzan, political status, social status, economic status, political*

conflicts, foreign policy, political policies, economic policies, Constitutional Monarchy, Gaddafi era, and *February Revolution era.* The search yielded 271 results. Specifically, 128 peer-reviewed articles and 143 grey literature resulted from the search. I screened the articles based on being available in full-text and in English. A total of 152 articles were eliminated. Next, I screened the remaining 119 articles for eligibility based on the criterion that the articles must contain discourses on Fezzan relative to the social and political history of Libya, particularly the economic and sociodemographic status of Fezzan relative to the rest of Libya. A total of 91 articles were excluded from the analysis, as seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Literature Search
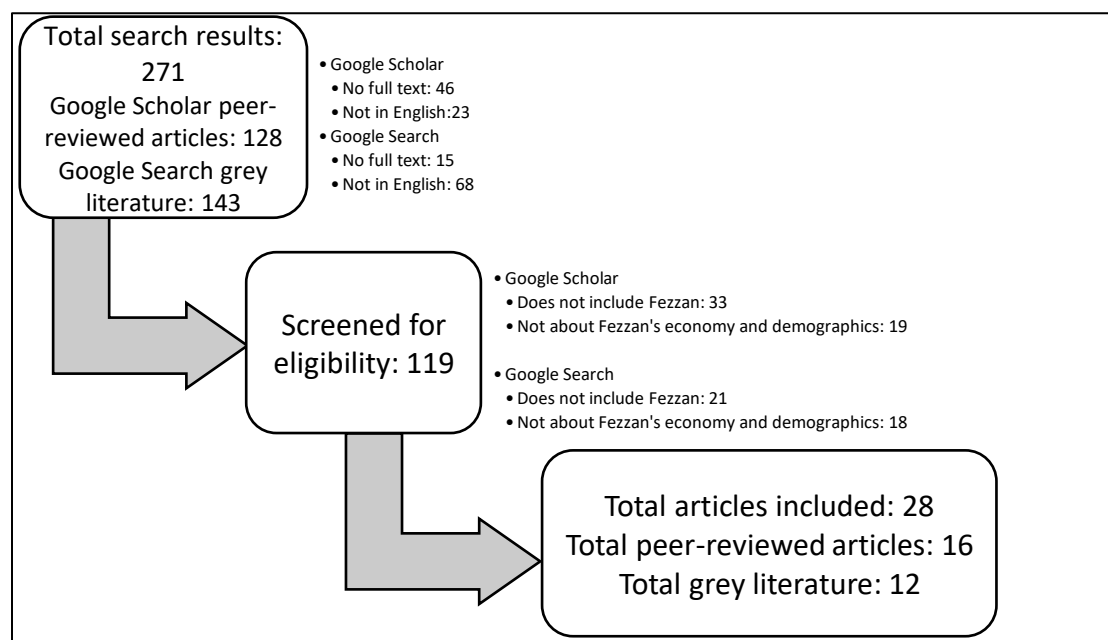
B. Data Collection

        This qualitative comparative multiple-case study was conducted to explore and understand the positionality and marginalization of Fezzan as compared with Cyrenaica and Tripolitania in Libya under the Constitutional Monarchy, Gaddafi, and February Revolution

periods. The sources of data were semi-structured individual elite written interviews and secondary data.

I recruited and selected individuals with high degree of expertise in the social and political status of Fezzan during the Constitutional Monarchy era, Gaddafi era, and/or the February Revolution era. The selection process involved the use of purposive sampling. Four participants served as the sample for the elite interviews.

In addition, I utilized academic databases, government websites, and library archives in gathering peer-reviewed articles and grey literature for the collection of secondary data. I obtained all literature used in the study from academic databases or through credible sources such as news sites. I looked for archival materials connected to the research topic in libraries and other historical archives and used eeb.Archive.org to find previous versions of significant governmental websites. I used CIA World Factbook and United Nations for demographic data. Upon obtaining all the necessary data from the elite written interviews and secondary data sources for the study, I compiled and prepared all these data for the data analysis process.

C. Data Analysis

The data analysis procedures involved the thematic analysis framework devised by Clarke and Braun (2014). The framework was a six-step approach that entailed data familiarization, code generation, theme identification, theme review, theme naming and definition, and report production (Clark & Braun, 2014). I performed the data analysis through the use of NVivo qualitative analysis software in organizing and categorizing the data. I used the same six-step procedure to analyze both the written interview and secondary data and triangulated the data sources.

The first step suggested by Clarke and Braun (2014) is data familiarization which involves engaging oneself in the facts in numerous ways. I became familiar with the data by examining the transcripts to understand the whole data set. I established familiarity with the secondary data by gathering the data from academic databases, government websites, and library archives. I read and reread the transcripts and the secondary data to gain insights about the general patterns across the data that I used in the next step, the code generation process.

In generating codes, I imported all the data to NVivo. I read each line of the texts and highlighted words, phrases, or paragraphs relevant to the research topic from both the elite written interview transcripts and secondary data. I created a codebook (see Appendix A) based on the literature and emergent codes or the unexpected ideas that emerged from working with the data in the initial coding process. I identified several codes that pertained to the political and social status of Fezzan relative to Tripolitania and Cyrenaica during the three political periods under investigation.

The third step was the identification of themes. I examined the codes generated to find relationships based on similarities in meanings. For instance, the codes internal political polarization, tussle for oil, and foreign intervention through Government of National Accord (GNA) vs. Libyan National Army (LNA) referred to the power struggles that occurred during the February Revolution era. Thus, using the hierarchy feature in NVivo, the codes were grouped together under the initial theme power struggle.

The fourth was to review the themes against the data (Clarke & Braun, 2014). I evaluated each initial theme in comparison with the written interview transcripts and archival documents to confirm that the themes were grounded to the data. Next, I reviewed the themes against each

other to verify that the themes were unique and comprehensive to describe the status of Fezzan relative to Tripolitania and Cyrenaica during the three political periods.

Next, I identified several finalized themes addressing the research questions of the study. I gave each theme a name and a brief description to avoid overlapping among these finalized themes. I then produced a report on these themes, their descriptions, the number of participants who contributed, and the number of coded texts that answered the research questions.

D. Evidence of Trustworthiness

I used various techniques and strategies to fulfill the trustworthiness criteria and to address the issues of trustworthiness by establishing the reliability and validity of the study. One technique employed in this study is the rigorous integration of the research components wherein the researcher secured and maintained the study's internal coherence through alignment. The objective of the study was derived directly from the problem, and the research question instantly operationalized the purpose of the study.

Credibility refers to the degree of accuracy and truthfulness of the findings of the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). A strategy used by the researcher to establish trustworthiness in this study is in the method of data analysis wherein by using Clarke and Braun's (2014) thematic analysis process, I conducted steps to ensure that the data collected were reflected in the analysis. I also provided exact quotes from the participants to support the themes generated during the data analysis. This strategy also minimized the researcher's bias since the direct quotes allowed the readers and other researchers to examine the responses of the data gathered directly.

Transferability refers to the external validity and generalizability of the findings in qualitative research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). In this study, I documented all the methods and processes used to obtain the results. Providing thick descriptions of the study's procedures allows

other researchers in similar situations and fields to use it and find the same themes in their research. The results of this study can have direct and real-world implications for Libya. On the other hand, the findings specifically on the effects of the different forms of government on marginalization may have some wider applicability to other federal governments with unequal and marginalized states.

Confirmability refers to the impartiality and consistency of the data and the findings of the study (Noble & Smith, 2015) while dependability describes the consistency of the study findings throughout time (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). In this study, I employed case study triangulation and cross-case analysis to ensure the objectivity and reliability of the findings in this study. The researcher also recorded every stage of the study's conduct that was crucial for data analysis in developing codes and themes to solve the research questions and to improve the study's soundness and usefulness for future studies.

E. Results

This section contains the results that represented the positionality and marginalization of Fezzan relative to the other Libyan regions of Cyrenaica and Tripolitania and how this positionality has shaped Fezzan through the Constitutional Monarchy era (1952-1969), Gaddafi era (1969-2011), and February Revolution era (2011-2021) based on elite written interviews with four experts on Fezzan and on secondary archival data. The two data sources were triangulated to strengthen the credibility of the results, as information on Fezzan remains limited. The analysis revealed six themes that answered the three research questions. The themes were: Fezzan was underpopulated with lacking social and political actors, Fezzan's marginalization was impacted by King Idris I from Cyrenaica, Foreign sanctions against Gaddafi's neoliberal ideas impacted Libya, Reconciliation with the West improved the standard of living in Libya, Fezzan remains a

pawn of the power struggle of internal and external actors, and Fezzan plays a role in the prevalence of crime, corruption, and terrorism. Each theme is described in the following sub-sections. An overview of the themes with the number of supporting participants and documents, the number of occurrences in the dataset, as well as the research question answered by each theme is provided in Table 1.

Table 1

Overview of Themes

RQ alignment	Theme	No. of supporting participants and documents	No. of occurrences in the dataset
RQ1	Fezzan was underpopulated with lacking social and political actors	17	36
RQ1	Fezzan's marginalization was impacted by King Idris I from Cyrenaica	5	10
RQ2	Foreign sanctions against Gaddafi's neoliberal ideas impacted Libya	15	44
RQ2	Reconciliation with the West improved the standard of living in Libya	9	26
RQ3	Fezzan remains a pawn of the power struggle of internal and external actors	18	51
RQ3	Fezzan plays a role in the prevalence of crime, corruption, and terrorism	9	20

Fezzan Was Underpopulated with Lacking Social and Political Actors

During the Constitutional Monarchy era, the prominent status of Fezzan relative to the rest of Libya was being a region that was hardly habitable and lacked notable social and political representatives. According to Participant 1, "The [underpopulation] of Fezzan and almost lacking effective elite [sic] led to the marginalization of Fezzan." However, Participants 1, 2, and 3 also believed that Fezzan played a significant role in the unification of Fezzan, Tripolitania, and Cyrenaica, the creation of the 1951 Constitution, and the establishment of the Constitutional

Monarchy. To be specific, Participant 2 perceived that Fezzan was the "balancer" between Tripolitania and Cyrenaica. Participant 3 stated, "Fezzan had the biggest role in unifying the three regions, led by Muhammad al-Said, the prime minister at that time." However, no supporting peer-reviewed article or grey literature was found.

Nonetheless, corroborating evidence was found to support that Fezzan was socially and politically marginalized during the Constitutional Monarchy era. The four participants shared that Fezzan had poor educational and healthcare system and had limited natural resources. According to O'Neill (2009, p.1), "The southwestern region, called Fezzan, is the heart of the Sahara and almost entirely inhospitable."

Fezzan is separated from Tripolitania and from Cyrenaica by large dune seas (Chakrow, 2011). Apart from geography, Fezzan was also separated from Tripolitania and Cyrenaica by history. During World War I, Italy colonized Libya. Italy relinquished its control over several areas in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica after their defeat (Winter, 2011). After World War II, Italy renounced its claims on the entire Libyan territories in which Tripolitania and Cyrenaica then became British colonies, while Fezzan became a French colony (Morone, 2020; Saleh, 2017). The three regions became united under the ruling of the United Nations in 1949, but Libya was left with economic difficulties and Fezzan continued to be marginalized (Oliveri et al., 2013). According to Participant 3, apart from poor education of the Fezzani, Fezzan was far from the center of power during the Constitutional Monarchy era. Participant 3 stated, "The factors that led to the marginalization of Fezzan during the period of the monarchy are the poor level of education - and the distance of Fezzan from the center of decision-making in the capital." Oliveri et al. (2013, p.3) wrote, "For example, the three-province system could not work properly because there were no telephone services in the major cities of Fezzan."

Furthermore, Fezzani were believed to have a strong sense of tribal ties (Morone, 2020; Saleh, 2017; Taylor, 1961). As a result, they tended to be hesitant to be involved in sociopolitical movements (Morone, 2020). Morone (2020, p. 104) reported:

> Although the nationalist parties had referred to the Arab League, and to ideas, passions and slogans of the broader pan-Arab movement, the capacity for political and social mobilization of modern nationalism remained limited among Fezzani. The vote was characterized by a political and often conceptual horizon that did not supersede clans, reputations or bonds of patronage.

Fezzan's Marginalization Was Impacted by King Idris I From Cyrenaica

King Idris I, born and raised in Cyrenaica, impacted the status of Fezzan relative to Tripolitania and his home province during the Constitutional Monarchy era. King Idris I served as Emir of Cyrenaica and Tripolitania from 1920 to the establishment of the Constitutional Monarchy (The Oil Drum, 2011). Cyrenaica and Fezzan favored a federal system due to concerns of Tripolitania's domination, as Tripolitania had the largest population. On the contrary, Tripolitania favored a unitary system after King Idris I established the monarchy in Benghazi, Cyrenaica due to concerns that the king might not act for national interest (Gatehouse, 2012; Masli, 2021). After the discovery of oil in 1960, oil production activities centered on Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, while Fezzan remained agricultural. Participant 4 stated:

> The country's economy was generally simple, the state's resources were limited, and public expenditures as well. The first shipment of oil produced on economic bases and exported was in 1965, and economic activity in general was dominated by the private sector and mostly endemic to Tripoli and Benghazi. As for Fezzan, the economic activity was dominated by simple agriculture.

Chakrow (2011) and Saleh (2017) wrote that King Idris I had conservative sociopolitical feelings by maintaining strong diplomatic ties (Chakrow, 2011). Saleh (2017) wrote:

The most important thing that can be referred to, during the period of the monarchy, that Libyan state maintained in its pro-Western foreign policy through diplomatic efforts and public relations as well as building good neighborly relations, especially with Egypt, Tunisia, and Algeria. The monarchy signed many treaties of friendship with a number of countries, for example, it signed a coalition agreement and friendship with Britain in 1953 for a period of twenty years through which it received financial and military aid in exchange for building military bases in Libya. In 1955, Libya established full diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union as an outcome of the diplomatic efforts dealt between the two countries and that the Soviet Ambassador papers were accepted in January 1955 Exchange.

In the late 1950s, King Idris I also permitted USA and the UK to build military bases in Libya in exchange for economic assistance (Ahmed, 2013; Caspell, 2006; The Oil Drum, 2011). Libya, from being one of the poorest countries, became one of the richest in terms of gross domestic product (GDP) per capita (The Oil Drum, 2011). Despite Libya's economic growth, Fezzan remained marginalized, which led to resentment and dissatisfaction that resulted in the coup d'état that overthrew King Idris I in 1969 (Caspell, 2006; The Oil Drum, 2011). Caspell (2006) and Chakrow (2011) also wrote that King Idris I was hardly involved in the day-to-day affairs of the monarchy, which left his relatives with the authority to control the nation's resources. Chakrow (2011) reported, "This led to a certain over-concentration of state resources on Cyrenaica, which was obviously resented in the other regions and led to a lot of corruption." Lastly, King Idris I had more interest in religious affairs than political affairs (Chakrow, 2011).

Foreign Sanctions Against Gaddafi's Neoliberal Ideas Impacted Libya

During the first few years of the Gaddafi era, Fezzan was impacted socially and politically the same way Tripolitania and Cyrenaica were impacted. As Fezzan continued to be marginalized, Participants 3 and 4 stated that Gaddafi's ascent to leadership did not have much impact on Fezzan. Participant 3 stated:

I do not think that the transfer of the decision from Cyrenaica to Tripoli has led to the marginalization of Fezzan. The economic situation of Fezzan under Gaddafi's rule is like other regions. There were no specific laws or regulations that were issued during the rule of Gaddafi and affected Fezzan, but the state of fluctuation and instability in the ministries, the lack of policy development and failed experiments all affected the entire Libyan people.

Authors also wrote about the disorganized leadership during the beginning of Gaddafi's rule. Rebellions also generally occurred in Tripolitania (Webb, 2011; Winter, 2011). Winter (2011) reported:

Fezzan remains quiet and out of the spotlight. Cyrenaica largely fell out of Qaddafi's hands early on and was quick to set up a transitional government that has received increasing levels of international recognition. Tripolitania has been more divided. Residents took over several cities after they were abandoned by security forces early in the protests. Some were retaken by Qaddafi forces after heavy fighting (e.g. Zawiyya), while others have been held by rebels despite continuous regime offensives (e.g. Misratah). (p. 3)

Rebellions were believed to be caused by strong tribal identities among Libyans, but Gaddafi also used tribal conflicts to divide and conquer Libya (Wehrey, 2017). Barber (as cited

in Webb, 2011) described Gaddafi as a "crafty and intelligent survivalist" for adapting to problems and maintaining his leadership role. Braun (as cited in Chakrow (2011) stated:

> We know that tribalism was crucial in the politics of Libya … [and Gaddafi] was rather clever in exploiting tribal differences, and this was one way in which they kept control…I think we miss the big picture when we say people in the eastern part of the country are more intent on having democracy or preserving their dignity than people in Tripoli, under [Gaddafi's] control.

Smuggling and illegal immigrants were overlooked because of profitability (Serra, 2021). Authorities controlling oil prices tended to be corrupt (Participant 4; Ahmed, 2013). Ahmed (2013; p.239) stated, "Despite the increase in the oil revenues, the selected policies were formulated in the form of annual policy plan, and their financial allocations not been properly provided from the public treasury." Caspell (2006, p.7) wrote, "What is clear is that for the first three years of his rule, [Gaddafi] himself did not appear to have an idea of how the country should be run." The leadership was disorganized due to the lack of a formal government. Webb (2011) reported:

> Gaddafi overtook power in a 1969 coup that ousted Libya's monarch, King Idris, in the era of Arab nationalist leaders who used anti-imperialist and socialist rhetoric along with political repression. He does not hold a formal government position but is officially referred to as Guide of the First of September Great Revolution of the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

The Jamahiriya System formed in 1977 involved the establishment of the Basic People Congresses (BPCs) in which all Libyans, in theory, had the opportunity to have political authority through membership in the Congress (Ahmed, 2013). Gaddafi, however, was described

as a dictator in both academic and grey literature. Saleh (2017, p.42) specified, "However, and in spite of this agreement, Gaddafi became a dictator acting as a head of the Revolutionary Command Council." Gaddafi banned political parties, marginalized Benghazi for dissent, refused foreign investments, and was associated with several violent incidents involving terrorist groups and illegal immigrants (Ahmed, 2013; Chakrow, 2011; Gatehouse, 2012; Masli, 2021; Saleh, 2017; Webb, 2011; Wehrey, 2017). Particularly, Gaddafi's political beliefs resulted in the isolation of Libya from the rest of the world (Masli, 2021). Libya suffered economic sanctions issued by the UN after being implicated in various bombings (Ahmend, 2013; The Oil Drum, 2011; Webb, 2011). Oil production and revenue declined (The Oil Drum, 2011).

Reconciliation With the West Improved the Standard of Living in Libya

In the early 2000s, Gaddafi again showed how he adapted to the problems faced by Libya and developed "neoliberal economic policies" to reconcile with the West (Webb, 2011). His policies included the privatization of oil companies and advocating for human rights (Oliveri et al., 2013; Webb, 2011). Oliveri et al. (2013, p.143) wrote, "In 2004, the [UN Security] Council withdrew the sanctions over Libya due to Gaddafi's opening toward more liberal and democratic policies: for example, he interrupted the Libyan nuclear program and commit himself in the implementation of the human rights." The privatization of the oil industry was supported by foreign investments; thus, oil companies received government aids (Participant 4; Ahmed, 2013). As a result, inflation was controlled, oil prices dropped, and prices of basic commodities also went down (Participant 4; Ahmed, 2013). Participant 4 stated:

> There was a sharp drop in oil prices during the nineties, and subsidies for basic commodities were introduced, which made the living situation generally acceptable…
> Then the value of the Dinar Libyan currency was devalued at the beginning of the last ten

years, and there were successive increases in salaries and the minimum wage, but gradually so as not to create a situation of inflation.

As foreign investments continued, projects and developments also flourished throughout Libya (Participant 1; Participant 2; Ahmed, 2013). Developments mostly focused on the health, education, housing, and agricultural sectors (Ahmed, 2013). Participant 1 shared, "The most important thing was the increase in income, the spread of projects such as housing and agriculture, the high level of education and health development in Libya in general." For Fezzan, the socioeconomic gap between the urban and rural areas shrank (Ahmed, 2013). Ahmed (2013, p.198) reported:

> Accordingly, the government essentially aimed to realize its vision through the application of social justice by achieving self-sufficiency in production, and equity in income distribution particularly between the rural and urban areas…These aims were demonstrated in a range of sequential development plans…which were adopted as a method for policy preparation and planning.

With Gaddafi being local to Fezzan, the majority of his supporters were also from Fezzan (Basic, 2015). He also made "lifelong friends" in Tripolitania after attending high school in Misrata (Basic, 2015, p.21). Gaddafi established the center of his political rule in Tripolitania. Participants 1 and 2 perceived that the shift of power from Cyrenaica to Tripolitania impacted Fezzan because of proximity. Participant 2 explained, "The transfer of power to Tripoli affected the situation of the Fezzan, as it made it closer to the central government, which became more capable of perceiving problems and directing development."

Fezzan Remains a Pawn of the Power Struggle of Internal and External Actors

During the February Revolution era, Fezzan continued to have less influence than Tripolitania and Cyrenaica. Internally, political polarization existed between pro- and anti-Gaddafi (El Gamaty, 2016). This conflict was fueled by external support. Participant 3 shared, "The politics of polarization from the influential forces in the East and West on individuals, entities and social components, and the invasion of political money has clearly begun to play its role." Participant 1 stated:

Fezzan didn't play a major role in February at the grassroots level. However, some of Gaddafi's opponents who are originally from Fezzan who are too little that you can count them on the fingers of a hand, had a strong relationship with the French citizen Bernard Levy, who in turn persuaded the then French President Sarkozy to intervene directly even before the security council resolution to intervene was issued. This is on one hand, on the other hand, the former representative of Libya at the United Nations then (Abdelrahman Shalgham) who's also from Fezzan is the one who begged for the intervention in Libya in 2011.

After Gaddafi's fall, Libya was in a "political vacuum" in which conflicting groups had problems with power sharing (Zafar, 2017, p.46). Libya's resource distribution in 2011 was inequitable, and Fezzan received the least resources (Wehrey, 2017). Participant 1 elaborated:

The collapse of security institutions is the essence of the rule of mafias and the authority of the militias. Fezzan is the weakest and most affected link due to its poverty of leadership, weakness of will and disease of dependence on others. Libya will not exist unless the security institutions are rebuilt, and the regional and tribal militias disappear, and Fezzan is the biggest loser.

External actors have been supporting Cyrenaica's call for a federal government to allow "regional autonomy" to Libya's three provinces (Gatehouse, 2012; Reiling, 2021, p.8; Toaldo, 2017). Reiling (2021, p.8) stated:

Egypt wants to see a more autonomous status for Cyrenaica under a new government. They are concerned by the rise of radical Islam in the eastern regions supported by groups such as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Egyptian diplomats pay lip service to UN-efforts at national reunification while their military continues to support military advances by the Libyan National Army. This possibility might resemble a Swiss canton system or the original U.S. Articles of Confederation, with a weak central government over three or more strong autonomous regions. Such a plan would have to encapsulate Tripolitanian and Fezzani concerns that their oil revenues will be reduced or eliminated.

Internal and external actors also used Fezzan as a pawn in their tussle for oil (Mezran, 2019; Toaldo, 2017; Wehrey, 2017). Wehrey (2017) reported, "The outbreak of fighting among Arab, Tabu, and Tuareg tribes across the south can be largely attributed to competition for fixed economic streams derived from smuggling routes and access to oil fields." UN supported the establishment of GNA to prevent Libya's collapse (Basic, 2015; El Gamaty, 2016; Zafar, 2017). El Gamaty (2016) noted, "The GNA is an outcome of a broad national political dialogue that produced an agreement based on compromise and consensus between the main opposing political and military groups that divided Libya." Fezzan was strategic to Tripolitania's oil industry, Basic (2015, p.79) reported, "Finally, the southern province of Fezzan is often overlooked, but is important to the stability of Libya. It contains the fossil water that supplies the north, has oil refineries." The LNA led by General Khalifa Haftar and supported mainly by UAE

and Egypt, attacked Fezzan in early 2019 for control of the local oil industry (Gebremichael et al., 2018; Mezran, 2019; Yasar, 2020). Mezran (2019) reported:

The military forces under the command of General Khalifa Haftar launched a large-scale attack on the Fezzan region in January, with the aim of taking control of the main areas of local oil production. Officially motivated by the need to strike at terrorist units operating in the region, the mission led by General Haftar has two main objectives. The first consists of securing the local oil installations, thus subtracting a substantial quota of production technically under the control of Tripoli—even if operated by the National Oil Corporation (NOC), which continues to exercise its functions in a paradoxical dual mode at the service of both political entities. The second objective is to extend the territory under the control of the so-called Libyan National Army (LNA), thereby lessening an opportunity for the Tripoli authorities to maneuver while consolidating the political and military capacity of Benghazi's forces.

Fezzan Plays a Role in the Prevalence of Crime, Corruption, and Terrorism

Having nearly inhabitable deserts and mountains, Fezzan became a strategic location for terrorist groups, as well as a gateway for smuggling and illegal migration to Europe (El Gamaty, 2016; Mezran, 2019; Wehrey, 2017). Gebremichael et al. (2018, p.4) described Fezzan as a "safe haven" for the al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) terrorist group, and wrote, [Fezzan is] a logistical base to facilitate its operations and trafficking routes in the neighboring Sahel region." Fezzan was also not the center of political power in Libya, and with the experience of marginalization and poverty, criminal activities such as trafficking and smuggling became sources of profits (Serra, 2021). Serra (2021) concluded:

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Furthermore, in many areas the trafficking sector has emerged as a substitute for the

formal economy, representing the only relief for a battered civilian population. In the

words of a Libyan professor interviewed by the International Crisis Group, "smuggling

here is a job; it is not a crime."

Humans, weapons, and illegal substances were smuggled to and from Fezzan. Serra

(2021) specified:

In the months after the 2011 civil war, the growth of arms smuggling was mainly

dependent upon the fact that militias had seized control of national stockpiles. Weapons

started to circulate uncontrolled within Libya and towards its neighbors, fueling armed

insecurity in northern Mali, Niger, and Tunisia. However, these weapons often arrived far

from Libya. For example, through eastern Egypt, rifles and man-portable missiles

reached the Sinai and Gaza, while until 2014, light weapons were smuggled to the Syrian

opposition.[2] As the conflict raged newly in Libya, the demand for light arms and

ammunition rose steadily. In the past years, it seems that this rising demand has been

only partially met by the existing supply.

Illegal immigration became prevalent due to Libyans' fear for instability and collapse.

Participant 3 stated, "The fears are many, and they are security and geopolitical represented in

the foreign communities, especially Africans enjoying the rights of citizenship, like the Libyans,

without a legitimate basis." Fezzan and its local tribes are important to controlling the illegal

activities occurring in Libya (Basic, 2015). Basic (2015, p. 82) specified:

Securing the borders to prevent the flow of fighters and contraband is critical to

stemming the spread of ISIS. The Tubu community "now has a dominant position in

providing security at energy infrastructure, in border areas, and on key roads leading into

Chad, Niger and Sudan."218 If granting rights and citizenship, as mentioned earlier, is

successful, then the Tebu (and likely the Tuareg) community may play an active role in

securing Fezzan.

The European Union (EU) and the interim GNA worked together to control the borders

of Libya and prevent further trafficking and smuggling involving terrorist groups (Zafar, 2017).

Zafar (2017, p.47) stated:

> In 2013, the EU set up the Integrated Border Assistance Mission in Libya (EUBAM
>
> Libya), the objective of which was to improve and develop the security of the country's
>
> borders. Though the mandate of EUBAM Libya is limited to the Libyan borders, from the
>
> EU point of view it has a wider regional importance. EUBAM is meant to encourage
>
> Libya to become part of efforts to promote regional and international cooperation, but it
>
> also implicitly expresses the European strategic concern about controlling migration.
>
> Libyan authorities worked closely together with the European Union's European Border
>
> and Coast Guard Agency.

F. Summary

This chapter contained the presentation of the results of this qualitative case study that

explored and compared the positionality and marginalization of Fezzan relative to the other

Libyan regions of Cyrenaica and Tripolitania and how this positionality has shaped Fezzan

through the Constitutional Monarchy era (1952-1969), Gaddafi era (1969-2011), and February

Revolution era (2011-2021). The results were derived from the triangulation and thematic

analysis of elite written interview and secondary data. Four participants with firsthand

experiences in the political and social status of Fezzan during one of the three eras explored in

this study were purposively selected for the interviews. Twenty-eight articles consisting of 16

peer-reviewed articles and 12 grey literatures were selected as secondary data. The data were analyzed thematically in which six themes emerged to answer the three research questions. The themes were: Fezzan was underpopulated with lacking social and political actors, Fezzan's marginalization was impacted by King Idris I from Cyrenaica, Foreign sanctions against Gaddafi's neoliberal ideas impacted Libya, Reconciliation with the West improved the standard of living in Libya, Fezzan remains a pawn of the power struggle of internal and external actors, and Fezzan plays a role in the prevalence of crime, corruption, and terrorism.

During the Constitutional Monarchy era, Fezzan's separation from Cyrenaica and Tripolitania was prominent particularly because of geographical and historical contexts. Fezzan is isolated from Cyrenaica and Tripolitania by large dune seas. Cyrenaica and Tripolitania were British colonies while Fezzan was an Italian colony. Fezzan had a strong tribal culture despite being underpopulated. King Idris I had conservative sociopolitical beliefs and had more interest in religion than politics, which led to further marginalization of Fezzan as USA and the UK acted to use Tripoli, Tripolitania and Tobruk, Cyrenaica as their military bases, thus, the centers of power were not in Fezzan.

During the Gaddafi era, minimal political and social changes were observed in Fezzan relative to Cyrenaica and Tripolitania. Fezzan remained in poverty along with the rest of Libya particularly until the 2000s. Gaddafi was portrayed and described as an authoritarian leader, but Gaddafi himself did not perceive himself to be a political leader. Gaddafi, in 1977, established the Jamahiriya System in which the common Libyans were given an opportunity to select a representative in Congress. Nonetheless, researchers reported that the final decisions were made by Gaddafi. From 1969 to the 2000s, Gaddafi implemented economic and political policies based on his neoliberal beliefs. Gaddafi's ideals coupled with his authoritarian leadership resulted in

violence, rebellion, and prevalence of corruption. Foreign intervention led to economic sanctions that had consequences on the oil production and export industry. However, in 2003 when Iraq's Hussein was captured by the US military, Gaddafi worked to reconcile with the West. Libya received foreign investments for projects and developments, as well as aids to subsidize the oil industries. The economic gap between the rural and urban areas was addressed, and Fezzan gained representation in the government. However, the government overlooked the continued illegal activities in Fezzan because of the profitability of smuggling and trafficking. Because of the continued corruption and foreign intervention, anti-Gaddafi actors emerged and overthrew their leader in 2011.

During the February Revolution era, Fezzan continued to play a supplemental role in the political and economic status of Libya relative to Cyrenaica and Tripolitania. Fezzan was a pawn in the power struggle of internal and external actors. Fezzan was a tool in either the unification or the collapse of Libya. Fezzan became a "safe haven" of traffickers, smugglers, and terrorists because of being geographically isolated from Cyrenaica and Tripolitania, yet also being a gateway to Europe.

Chapter 6: Discussion

The Fezzan region of Libya remains consistently marginalized, creating inequality and fomenting conflict and instability (Ben Lamma, 2017; Carboni & Moody, 2018). One of the possible reasons for the regions' marginalization is the high concentration of tribalism culture of the Tuareg and Toubou peoples, who remain non-Arabized (Hüsken, 2019; Morone, 2020; Saleh, 2017; Taylor, 1961). While the political landscape has changed in Libya over the past decades, the marginalization of Fezzan has not. Insights into what forces maintain Fezzan's marginalization from without and without the region are needed to provide solutions. This study drew data from elite written interviews with former Libyan government members as well as secondary data from the academic and professional/international literature on Libya and archival information such as demographics and budgetary data. The data was analyzed using the qualitative thematic analysis of Clarke and Braun (2014), case study triangulation, and case study comparison between the three main political eras of Libya.

This qualitative case study aimed to understand and compare the positionality and marginalization of Fezzan relative to the other Libyan regions of Cyrenaica and Tripolitania and how this positionality has shaped Fezzan through the Constitutional Monarchy era (1952-1969), Gaddafi era (1969-2011), and February Revolution era (2011-2021). The three qualitative research questions frame the three key comparative periods in which the study addressed the status of Fezzan and its positionality within the larger Libyan state. This study has significance in the domains of academics, theory, and real-world policy applications. Information on Fezzan remains limited, and this study provides valuable insight from insiders' perspective. The results of this study may help shed light on how the Fezzan region came to its current ruinous circumstances and how the geopolitical and socioeconomic dimensions therein can be more

effectively managed by current and future Libyan governments to support sustained improvement.

The findings of this study provided six core themes. The themes were: Fezzan was underpopulated with lacking social and political actors, Fezzan's marginalization was impacted by King Idris I from Cyrenaica, Foreign sanctions against Gaddafi's neoliberal ideas impacted Libya, reconciliation with the West improved the standard of living in Libya, Fezzan remains a pawn of the power struggle of internal and external actors, and Fezzan plays a role in the prevalence of crime, corruption, and terrorism. How these findings expand on, correlate with, and contradict information gathered in the literature review of this study will be expressed in the following chapter.

A. Interpretation of the Findings

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework supporting this study synthesizes and expands on three theories of federalism. These theories are Lijphart's theories of Democracy in Plural Societies (1977) and Patterns of Democracy (1999) along with Weingast and Montinola's (1995) *The Economic Role of Political Institutions: Market-Preserving Federalism and Economic Development.* This study tested if these theories help explain Libya's flawed federalism. Lijphart (1977) references Aristotle when he points out that, "a state aims at being, as far as it can be, a society composed of equals and peers" (p. 1). This point emphasizes why the marginalization of Fezzan undermines the Libyan nation as a whole. If one region of the country experiences consistent underrepresentation in government they are more likely to break away from the nation in terms of values, behaviors, and aims. That trend was observed through theme six detailing how Fezzan plays a role in the prevalence of crime, corruption, and terrorism in their region (El

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Gamaty, 2016; Mezran, 2019; Participant 3; Serra, 2021; Wehrey, 2017). Without adequate representation in government and an equal share of resources and opportunities, Fezzan cultivated an economy founded on criminality. The criminality of smuggling, trafficking, and illegal immigration was chosen to help balance the perceived threat from the corruption in government and local mafia and terrorist groups (El Gamaty, 2016; Mezran, 2019; Participant 3; Serra, 2021; Wehrey, 2017). The citizens of Fezzan did not feel on equal footing with their government, and acted independently in ways they believed would provide them a future.

Lijphart's (1977) concept of a consociational democracy may be appropriate for the plural society present in the three Libyan regions. A consociational democracy is only achievable if the national leader works to counteract the divisive tendencies present in contrasting ethnicities sharing a locality. A national leader must apply fair and balanced elite cooperation with local representatives of each territory, finding ways to bring into balance the rights and contribution of each region with the whole (Lijphart, 1977). Examples of consociational democracies include Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Switzerland in the 20th century. These nations have begun to shift away from the consociational approach, but its example remains valid for a reflection on the challenges of Libya (Lijphart, 1977). However, without a strong moral leader, consociational democracy is not usually successful in pluralized nations.

Weingast and Montinola's (1995) *The Economic Role of Political Institutions: Market-Preserving Federalism and Economic Development* shed perspective on the challenge of marginalization in Libya. Weingast and Montinola (1995) point out, "The fundamental political dilemma of an economic system is this: A government strong enough to protect property rights and enforce contracts is also strong enough to confiscate the wealth of its citizens" (p. 1). This point was experienced firsthand by those in Fezzan dealing with The Libyan National Army

(LNA) for control of the local oil industry and its fossilized water (Basic, 2015; Gebremichael et al., 2018; Mezran, 2019; Yasar, 2020). Supported mainly by the UAE and Egypt, the LNA did not in this case protect the citizens' rights in their nation but appeared to defend the rights of foreign investors against citizens' rights. In this case, the government at the time was made strong by foreign investments and was beholden to their interests rather than the interests of their citizens.

Researchers and economists have been investigating the contexts that support sustained economic growth. Weingast and Montinola (1995) point out that without secure protection for their investment, economic development is resistant to thrive in chaotic regions. This was observed in the literature when Hafter had accused the Tripoli government of mismanaging hydrocarbon revenues and state funds and had blockaded oil production in response, causing the dramatic plummet of oil production to less than 100,000 barrels per day (bpd) from the previous 1.2 million (Mezran & Melcangi, 2020). This action represents a lack of trust between government, economics, and citizens which results in stagnation and violence.

As theme five revealed, there was a power vacuum that was present when Gaddafi was a forced to leave office (Zafar, 2017). Without government security institutions to protect citizens' rights the resources and power of the nation were siphoned off by mafia groups during the Revolutionary period (Participant 1). This led to an increase in criminal behavior in Fezzan to create their economy and sense of security in uncertain times, as theme six shows (El Gamaty, 2016; Mezran, 2019; Wehrey, 2017).

Weingast and Montinola (1995) ask the question of what type of government must be in place to protect the private market economy of a nation. They answer that "The central component of a credible commitment to limited government is that these limits must be self-

enforcing" (Weingast & Montinola, 1995, p. 2). The literature reinforces this and shows how during the latter part of Gadhafi's leadership he organized development plans encouraging policies that encouraged self-sufficiency (Ahmed, 2013). This is one key aspect of what has gone wrong in Libya, in that their economy has been enforced by outside funds from foreign investors and has yet to achieve self-sufficiency. As theme four showed reconciliation with the West improved the standard of living in Libya (Participant 1; Participant 2; Ahmed, 2013). However, without a stable and uncorrupt government, the funds this reconciliation brought into the country led to increases in criminality when the oversight was removed in the Revolutionary period (El Gamaty, 2016; Mezran, 2019; Participant 1; Toaldo, 2017; Wehrey, 2017).

First Theme. The first theme revealed by the findings was Fezzan was underpopulated with lacking social and political actors. The largest cities in Fezzan are Sebha, with 210,000 citizens (Aita, 2018). One of the reasons Fezzan may be underpopulated is that it is deep in the Saharan desert is almost entirely inhospitable. Being an underpopulated region, Fezzan did not have enough diversity in its community to produce the activists that are needed to address systematic social and political marginalized during the Constitutional Monarchy era. This manifested in poor conditions in education, health care, and economic opportunities (Oliveri et al., 2013). The economic output of the Fezzan region was limited to agriculture.

Being far from the capital where policies are debated and made, and without the leverage of natural resources and political actors, Fezzan's needs were ignored during the Constitutional Monarchy era. Most recently, Fezzan had overwhelming support for Hafter, which placed it in conflict with the outcome of a national unity government established in Tripoli (Badi, 2019; Bocchi, 2019). No supporting peer-reviewed article or grey literature was found to support Participant 3's belief that "Fezzan had the biggest role in unifying the three regions, led by

Muhammad al-Said, the prime minister at that time." However, corroborating evidence was found to support that Fezzan was socially and politically marginalized during the Constitutional Monarchy era. Conflict and power struggles in the three Libyan regions of Cyrenaica, Tripolitania, and Fezzan increased during the Constitutional Monarchy Period, with Fezzan playing a consistently minor in which the trend of marginalization deepened (Bell &Witter, 2011; Grigoriadis & Kassem, 2021; Said, 2020).

 Second Theme. The second theme revealed by the findings was Fezzan's marginalization was impacted by King Idris I from Cyrenaica. During King Idris I reign Libya's economy grew with the discovery of oil in Tripoli and Benghazi. King Idris I maintained conservative sociopolitical feelings by cultivating strong diplomatic ties that favored his home region of Cyrenaica (Chakrow, 2011). This resulted in treaties of friendship being signed with many Western countries and Russia which resulted in financial aid in return for permission to build military bases (Saleh, 2017). However, during this period of growth and diplomacy, Fezzan was largely ignored. Researchers who explored the roots of rebellion in Libya have determined that enmity between Cyrenaica and Tripolitania continued to increase after Libya gained its independence, as both regions continued to struggle for control of national leadership, despite Cyrenaica officially being granted the seat of power under the rule of King Idris I from 1952-1969 (Bell & Witter, 2011). In this struggle Fezzan's needs and voice was largely ignored.

 Third Theme. The third theme revealed by the findings was foreign sanctions against Gaddafi's neoliberal ideas impacted Libya. Seizing power in a 1969 coup that overthrew King Idris I, Gaddafi did not know how to use the power he had gained (Webb, 2011). The beginning of Gaddafi's leadership was disorganized, leading to many rebellions that undermined interior security (Caspell, 2006; Wehrey, 2017). Participant 3 shared that the rule of Gaddafi was one of

a constant state of fluctuation and instability in the ministries, and the lack of policy development and failed experiments affected the entire Libyan people. Gaddafi used civil unrest as a tool of fear to maintain power (Chakrow, 2011). This led to a general culture of corruption in which smuggling and illegal immigrants were overlooked because of profitability (Serra, 2021), and corruption was rampant in authorities controlling oil prices (Participant 4; Ahmed, 2013). Corruption funneled state profits away from the people and renewable sources and into the hands of corrupt officials (Ahmed, 2013). This period of corruption left Fezzan with no foothold or political voice.

Gaddafi was described as a dictator by many prominent scholars and analysts. To consolidate power, Gaddafi banned political parties, marginalized Benghazi for dissent, refused foreign investments and treaties, and was associated with several violent incidents involving terrorist groups and illegal immigrants (Ahmed, 2013; Chakrow, 2011; Gatehouse, 2012; Masli, 2021; Saleh, 2017; Webb, 2011; Wehrey, 2017). When Libya suffered economic sanctions issued by the UN after being implicated in various bombings, oil production and revenue declined (Ahmend, 2013; The Oil Drum, 2011; Webb, 2011). Isolating Libya from the rest of the world like this gave the Fezzan region fewer opportunities to address policies resulting in marginalization from the past.

Fourth Theme. The fourth theme revealed by the findings was reconciliation with the West improved the standard of living in Libya. Unable to resist the tide of globalization at the turn of the millennium Gaddafi adapted to the problems faced by Libya by developing "neoliberal economic policies" to reconcile with the West (Webb, 2011). New political approaches included the privatization of oil companies, interrupting the nation's nuclear program, and advocating for human rights (Oliveri et al., 2013; Webb, 2011). This led to the withdrawal of

UN sanctions, which allowed the oil industry to receive foreign investment support. These changes resulted in the successful management of inflation, oil prices dropped, and prices of basic commodities were reduced (Participant 4; Ahmed, 2013).

Gaddafi's improved policies invited more foreign investments, which led to projects and developments flourishing throughout Libya (Participant 1; Participant 2; Ahmed, 2013). These developments focused on healthcare, education, housing, and agricultural sectors (Ahmed, 2013). These are the fundamental building blocks of equality in any nation, and this led to improvements for Fezzan as well as the socioeconomic gap between urban and rural areas shrank (Ahmed, 2013). The corrupt policies of the past had led to stagnation, and reunification with the West encouraged government policies that encouraged self-sufficiency laid out in development plans (Ahmed, 2013). Being that Gaddafi was from Fezzan the majority of his supporters were there (Basic, 2015). However, Gaddafi established the center of his political rule in Tripolitania, resulting in Fezzan being closer to the central government (Participant 2). This increased proximity enabled Fezzan to be more involved in the process of perceiving problems and directing development (Participant 2). While this change was helpful for Fezzan, it would not bring systemic changes that would end the region's marginalization.

Fifth Theme. The fifth theme revealed by the findings was Fezzan remains a pawn in the power struggle of internal and external actors. During the Revolutionary era in Fezzan political polarization existed between pro- and anti-Gaddafi (El Gamaty, 2016). Examining the impact of foreign actors in the Libyan conflict, Harchaoui (2021) concurred with the International Crisis Group (2020) that Turkey had backed the Tripoli government, and Russia and the United Arab Emirates backed Hafter's Bengazi government. With the Libyan government being pulled in many directions by outside influences, Fezzan's needs most likely did not make it into the

discussion. The former representative of Libya at the United Nations at the time, Abdelrahman

Shalgham, was from Fezzan and played a role in the then-French President Sarkozy intervening

directly in 2011 (Participant 1). When Gaddafi left power Libya became a political vacuum in

which many groups conflicted for control of power and resources (Zafar, 2017). The 2011

resource distribution was unequal, with Fezzan getting the least.

With Libya lacking security institutions the resources and power of the nation are being

siphoned off by mafia groups (Participant 1). Knowing that to divide is to conquer, external

actors have been supporting Cyrenaica's call for a federal government to allow "regional

autonomy" to Libya's three provinces (Gatehouse, 2012; Reiling, 2021; Toaldo, 2017).

However, Egypt is concerned about the rise of radical Islam, and the impact it will have on its

national security (Reiling, 2021). External actors each have their motivations in their desire to

control the fate of the freedom of Libya and must not be allowed to direct the nation to their own

ends.

Fezzan has been used in the struggle with outside influence related to oil profits (Mezran,

2019; Toaldo, 2017; Wehrey, 2017). Fighting among Arab, Tabu, and Tuareg tribes are

attributed to access to smuggling routes and oil fields (Wehrey, 2017). The Libyan National

Army (LNA), supported mainly by UAE and Egypt, attacked Fezzan in 2019 for control of the

local oil industry and its fossilized water (Basic, 2015; Gebremichael et al., 2018; Mezran, 2019;

Yasar, 2020). Recent efforts have been made to reestablish stability and security in Libya by

creating a national unity government in Tripoli in 2021, and continuing efforts to strengthen the

self-sufficiency of this government are needed (International Crisis Group, 2021). Since the

upheaval of the Arab Spring, federalism appears more politically feasible, and international

trends observe federalism being proposed in one way or another throughout Lebanon, Yemen,

and Libya (Versteeg, 2018). A consensus was found in the literature that the end of the Gaddafi regime resulted in Libyan chaos, a security crisis, and a power void that multiple external and internal actors have attempted to fill, with Fezzan frequently being used as a bargaining chip among these actors (Badi, 2020; Ben Lamma, 2017; Greenberg, 2019; Melangi, 2021; Mezran & Varvelli, 2017; Oxford Analytica, 2020; Wilson & Pack, 2019).

Sixth Theme. The sixth theme revealed by the findings was Fezzan plays a role in the prevalence of crime, corruption, and terrorism. Due to the mountainous desert terrain and lack of governmental presence, Fezzan has become a haven for terrorists and smugglers (El Gamaty, 2016; Mezran, 2019; Wehrey, 2017). Without a voice in governance and denied opportunities for economic advancement, criminal activities such as trafficking and smuggling became sources of profits in Fezzan (Serra, 2021). The literature emphasized Fezzan's trafficking sector has become a substitute for the traditional economy, representing the only relief for a marginalized civilian population (Serra, 2021). Human trafficking and the smuggling of illegal substances in Fezzan is considered legitimate job and not a crime (Serra, 2021).

Fezzan holds a strategic position for European security in that this region is vital for Europe's security and Libya's national security. This is because the region is home to two of the most important oil fields of North Africa and has become a hub for organized crime that extends criminal networks across vast tracts of Africa and the Middle East extending into Mali, Niger, Chad and southern Europe (Zucconi, 2019). Without the protection of national security institutions and without access to secure government, Fezzan has criminalized its economy to fill a void and to protect itself from increased weapon mobilization of Libya. After the 2011 revolution, weapons began to circulate unregulated within Libya and migrate into the surrounding regions, contributing to armed insecurity in northern Mali, Niger, and Tunisia

(Serra, 2021). Rising in response to the organized mafia, Fezzan and its local tribes play a role in controlling the illegal activities occurring in Libya (Basic, 2015). Criminalizing the local economy empowers local citizens in Fezzan who are threatened by illegal immigrants coming in and seizing control without oversight (Participant 3). The Tubu community now guards its borders and provides local security at key infrastructure locations (Basic, 2015).

There is evidence to suggest that Fezzan desires stability and a reduction of their criminal economy. The literature showed that Fezzan gave support to Hafter due to their need for greater security due to it becoming a hub for terrorists, smuggling, trafficking, and organized crime. This economy grew from necessity but undermines both local and national security, as well as surrounding nations. However, despite the efforts of Libyan tribes to provide security and justice after 2011 (Ben Lamma, 2017), they are unable to effectively do so to meet all the security challenges of their region. The citizens of Fezzan most likely understand that greater security and governmental accountability are needed for sustained economic growth (Badi, 2019; Bocchi, 2019; Fitzgerald & Wilson, 2021; International Crisis Group, 2017; McGregor, 2017; Zucconi, 2019).

B. Recommendations

The multiple ethnicities in Libya contribute to the challenge of representation in a centralized government. From the conceptual framework support, Lijphart's (1977) example of a consociational democracy may remain valid for the challenges of Libya as a pluralist society. This approach requires a dynamic and moral leader who engages in elite cooperation with diverse leaders from each region comprising the nation (Lijphart, 1977). If a leader from Fezzan could be held in the same regard as leaders from Cyrenaica and Tripolitania, an uncorrupted

national leader could engage in a dialogue that would bring more balance to the equation of resources and opportunity.

The aspect of a consociational democracy is also supported by Wibbels' (2005) model that examined the interaction between decentralized governance, constitution formation, and redistribution. This approach found that the balance achieved at the time of constitution writing is rooted in the factors of the number of conflicting geographically salient endowments, the distribution of inter-regional inequality, and the degree of intra-state inequality within rural and urban regions (Wibbels, 2005). This aspect must be considered when and if a new Libyan constitution is being written to consider the marginalization of Fezzan and bring a new balance to how all regions are supported and governed.

Support from the conceptual framework from the work of Weingast and Montinola (1995) emphasizes the need for Libyan policies to be self-sufficient. Any reliance on foreign investment acts as a dividing force for the national economy, and interference from those investors creates instability (Mezran, 2019; Toaldo, 2017; Wehrey, 2017). It is recommended that future Libyan national policies attempt to be as self-sufficient as possible to remove the chaotic force of outside interference. Stability is necessary for economic growth to occur in Libya which will provide opportunities for Fezzan to limit their criminal investments (Weingast & Montinola, 1995). However, the literature found that external actors played the most significant role in Libya establishing a national unity government in Tripoli in 2021 (Harchaoui, 2021; International Crisis Group, 2020, 2021; Mackinnon, 2020; Melcangi, 2021). The presence of external actors undermines Libyan self-sufficiency.

Participant 1 provided valuable insight into Fezzan's systemic marginalization. Participant 1 commented that the collapse "of security institutions is the essence of the rule of

mafias and the authority of the militias... Libya will not exist unless the security institutions are

rebuilt, and the regional and tribal militias disappear, and Fezzan is the biggest loser." This

finding emphasizes the need to empower Libyan security institutions to manage in-fighting and

corruption that limits the effectiveness of external aid. Empowering security institutions that

represent the holistic needs of the entire nation will help reduce the power of the foreign-backed

Libyan National Army from perpetrating indiscriminate violence against Libyan citizens

(Mezran, 2019).

     Emerging from theme six is the role that Fezzan plays in maintaining criminal activity in

the region. Militarizing to fuel the local economy and address local security fears, the Tobu

group acts as border control (Basic, 2015). If and when the Libyan government installs

appropriate security institutions the Fezzan economy can be legitimately supported by enlisting

these local militias in the security sector. This act would legitimize those local Fezzani pushed

into crime to make ends meet and protect their families while helping to address trafficking,

smuggling, and illegal immigration. However, the Tebu and Tuareg groups must be protected by

the rights and privileges of full citizenship to accomplish this (Basic, 2015). This effort to create

national security institutions can be supported and merged with the Integrated Border Assistance

Mission in Libya (EUBAM Libya) the EU set up in 2013 (Zafar, 2017). The EU believes that

instability in Libya weakens the entire region and offers a haven for terrorists, human trafficking,

and the drug trade (Zafar, 2017). Increased security and localized engagement throughout the

region may go a long way toward ending this cycle of criminalization and marginalization in

Fezzan.

C. Future Scenarios

There are many loose ends considering the marginalization of Fezzan that must be considered when imagining possible future scenarios. The state of Fezzan today is lawless, dangerous, and a hotbed for illegal activity. However, this is due in part because the region was not protected under the blanket of their own government but rather left to be bullied by foreign powers and their own leaders. The local Fezzan tribal leaders who have turned to trafficking and smuggling did so because they saw no other opportunities to provide for themselves and their families. Without protection from their government and with dangerous immigrants/terrorists migrating into the country fleeing from violence in their own countries, these tribal leaders believed they had to choose a violent path to protect themselves from regional annihilation. As such, Fezzan's tribal leaders cannot be removed but must be empowered and supported by their government. These leaders cannot be removed, or the region may become overrun by terrorists migrating from other countries who are cracking down on terrorist strongholds. This emphasizes that Fezzan is a critical point of power and influence in regard to the balance of peace in the Middle East.

The oil resources in Fezzan may be its greatest tool for negotiating a just inclusion resolution due to the continued demand for oil from abroad. These oil resources are considerable at 400,000 barrels per day, and when managed effectively should provide the region with the resources it needs to improve the citizens' quality of life and safety. However, the fact remains that the government authorities controlling oil prices tended to be corrupt (Participant 4; Ahmed, 2013). The question remains how can Fezzan gain adequate representation for its region's rights and resources if those representing them are corrupt?

Firstly, it is critical to establish a two-way dialogue between the local tribes in Fezzan and the government in Tripoli. For too long Fezzan has been ignored by those in power, denying the citizens their voice in the seats of power. Strengthening these ties through communication and shared decision-making will help lay the groundwork for Fezzan to gain a balanced voice on behalf of their region. This type of dialogue is essential to call out the marginalization of the region amongst those who will make decisions that can change the future of the nation. A voice of protest and dissent may be enough to alert other government leaders that denying Fezzan social and economic justice may lead to long-term consequences. Fezzan citizens being ignored by their government is what has led to the current situation.

If Fezzan's voice, advocates, and needs continue to be ignored by its government they may engage in a civil war in which they attempt to break away from Libya proper. In a vulnerable and weakened condition such as this, the region would be ripe for takeover from a foreign power. Fezzan has been denied its rightful share in the profits from the oil in its region. As this resource is its only bargaining tool Fezzan tribal leaders may use it to connect with a foreign power they may be able to negotiate with for partial control and profits. This move would most likely lead to conflict with the Libyan National Army who have already attempted to seize this resource by force in the past. Choosing to engage in civil war is unlikely to help elevate the Fezzan region out of abject poverty and help the region to modernize and improve its infrastructure, healthcare, and education. In this possible scenario, an attempt to break away from a government that consistently disregards their needs, Fezzan may look to foreign countries as allies to help them establish independence. However, the promises garnered from foreign powers looking for an inroad to oil or to one-up Russian interests may not hold to their promises, placing Fezzan under siege in a sense.

Taking advantage of the political polarization existing between pro- and anti-Gaddafi groups, foreign powers negatively have influenced politics in Libya for their own gain in the past (El Gamaty, 2016). With Russia currently engaged in violence in Ukraine, mobilizing to move on interests in Libya is not outside of the scope of their possible actions as it would secure a much-needed oil resource. However, it would undermine Fezzan's autonomy if Russia or a different foreign power were to gain control of these resources. The foreign power may use the opportunity to funnel oil back to themselves or their allies in ways that do not reflect the needs of Libya or the sovereignty of its citizens. Worse still, the Libyan government may attempt to violently and forcibly eject foreign support from Fezzan, further alienating this region from the possibility of Federalism's reconciliation. Russian interference in Fezzan may further destabilize or radicalize the local area as well. This may in turn lead to local militias becoming more empowered and violent. However, if local militias are overrun the area may remain open to immigrants, other gangs, terrorist groups, and other such influences.

One way this complicated future scenario may be avoided is through the Libyan government choosing to empower security institutions with the authority to negotiate with local leaders in Fezzan. Acting as a go-between Fezzan tribal leaders and Tripoli politicians, security institutions could expand their role to advocate for the citizens' autonomy, carrying their voices and needs with authority back to the capital. Security institutions could cultivate trust with Fezzan citizens through securing their border against dangerous migrants and end human trafficking. However, accomplishing this would require the cooperation and agreement of the Fezzan leaders who have taken over this practice so they do not fall prey to it. Having citizens from Fezzan in the security institutions may help the region be better represented. After all, it

was the collapse of security institutions that allowed for the current rule of mafias and the authority of the militias (Participant 1).

However, the regional and tribal militias will not disappear, but they could be legitimatized if pulled into security institutions. Tribal militias rose to protect and serve their communities. Convincing them that they would be better equipped to do that in governmental security institutions may help to reduce the region's reliance on crime and simultaneously give them a voice and leadership in government. One way to ensure this is to place governmental security institutions in each region to support the citizens and act as liaisons between the government and its people. Important to consider is that this future scenario would require retraining of the security institutions, which have been used in the past in ways that ignored or abused Fezzan's autonomy. Rebuilding trust between the Fezzan population and the security institutions would be the first step towards enabling the security institutions to preserve the peace and advocate for the region. This would be aided by aligning the incentives of Fezzan citizens with those of the security institutions.

However, that would only occur if the core corruption in the government that has allowed Fezzan's continued marginalization is allowed to continue to thrive unchecked. The Libyan National Army (LNA) must be aligned with the rule of law and removed from foreign influence. The LNA led by General Khalifa Haftar was supported by the UAE and Egypt in their unjust attack on Fezzan in early 2019 for control of their oil resources (Gebremichael et al., 2018; Mezran, 2019; Yasar, 2020). This is a wound that has yet to heal in Fezzan, and only entrenched their fear and mistrust of the government.

This analysis may help to add to the understanding of what types of conditions contribute to the successful adoption of federalism. Fezzan is an example of flawed Federalism. While there

is general support for federalism in the Middle East (Versteeg, 2018), the balance of power between citizens and their government can only undermine the mafia and terrorist groups' influence when the government does not act like the mafia itself. Fezzan endured a great deal of marginalization throughout the Constitutional Monarchy Period, Gaddafi Era, and February Revolution Era. This marginalization entrenched the region further against trusting the Federalism of the capital and turned it inwards to find and create new resources. This turn has pushed Fezzan further away from Federalism as they embrace tribalist militia to protect their region and create opportunities where none existed before. Turning this around may require a shift of political power and design that is not done from the top down but from the ground up.

D. Implications

A theme that ran through each of the themes of this study is that Libya, especially the Fezzan region, suffers more in isolation when cut off from relations with the rest of the world. However, even during the reign of King Idris I, the cultivation of strong diplomatic ties favored his home region of Cyrenaica (Chakrow, 2011). This is evidence of favoritism and corruption in leadership that does not consider each of its regions equal to governmental support. This finding has implications for practice that emphasize Libyan government practices and policies need greater accountability to its people in all regions.

One implication of this study is the general support of federalism in the Middle East (Versteeg, 2018). Helping to improve the balance of power between citizens and their government has the potential for undermining the mafia and terrorist groups' influence. This change would help citizens feel more engaged and protected by their government, which may play a role in reducing citizen crime in response to organizational corruption. Improving the

quality of life and rule of law throughout the region is likely to improve citizens' health, education levels, and economic opportunities.

These six key themes provide support for the conceptual framework of this study to better understand Libyan federalism's challenges and opportunities in light of ongoing marginalization. Fezzan's marginalization represents a lack of creativity and engagement from national leaders and emphasizes the need for the new government in Libya to recognize the significance of the Fezzan region to maintaining security both locally and for the entire region. Supporting prosperity for Fezzan is essential for Libya's future as a unified nation.

A methodological implication from this study emphasizes the value of gaining precision insider data from within the nation being studied. This study cultivated unique data from elite written interviews with former Libyan government members, which provided valuable insight into the plight of Fezzan and how it is interconnected with the nation and surrounding region. The secondary data from academic and professional/international literature about Libya and archival information (demographics/budgetary data) helped to provide support and context for the written interviews with former Libyan government members. While sometimes the grey literature did not reflect the same information as the former Libyan government members, this may be due to the insider knowledge and lived experiences of those on the inside as opposed to journalists who may be observing and reporting from outside.

E. Conclusions

The Fezzan region of Libya remains consistently marginalized and experiences instability, conflict, and reduced quality of life as a result (Ben Lamma, 2017; Carboni & Moody, 2018). This study drew data from elite written interviews with former Libyan government members as well as secondary data from the academic and professional/international

literature on Libya and archival information such as demographics and budgetary data. The data were analyzed using the qualitative thematic analysis of Clarke and Braun (2014), case study triangulation, and case study comparison between the three main political eras of Libya. The eras of the Constitutional Monarchy era (1952-1969), Gaddafi era (1969-2011), and the February Revolution era (2011-2021) each played a role in Fezzan's marginalization. The conceptual framework supporting this study synthesizes and expands on three theories of federalism. These theories are Lijphart's theories of Democracy in Plural Societies (1977) and Patterns of Democracy (1999) along with Weingast and Montinola's (1995) *The Economic Role of Political Institutions: Market-Preserving Federalism and Economic Development.*

The findings of this study provided six core themes. The themes were: Fezzan was underpopulated with lacking social and political actors, Fezzan's marginalization was impacted by King Idris I from Cyrenaica, Foreign sanctions against Gaddafi's neoliberal ideas impacted Libya, reconciliation with the West improved the standard of living in Libya, Fezzan remains a pawn of the power struggle of internal and external actors, and Fezzan plays a role in the prevalence of crime, corruption, and terrorism. These themes were found to largely correlate with the literature reviewed.

Recommendations from the findings were provided that emphasize the need to cultivate Libyan governmental self-sufficiency, a balanced constitution representing all regions equally, and governmental protection against outside influence. One way to accomplish this is through empowering strong national security organizations that can incorporate citizens into border patrol, protection of infrastructure, security of citizens, and the protection of the law. When this is accomplished Fezzan will likely abandon the criminality it has adopted to protect itself and create economic opportunities. One element of this project is the importance of highlighting the

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crucial nature of Fezzan to the United Nations and the rest of the world. When Fezzan's

positionality is understood, their empowerment will reduce continued escalation of crime in the

entire region.

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