

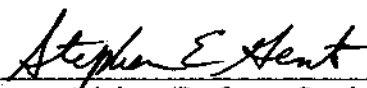
Civil Society, Stabilization, and Democratization: A Study of the Role of Civil Society
Organizations in the Middle East

By Caroline K. Zullo

A Thesis submitted to the faculty
of the University of North Carolina
in partial fulfillment of the require-
ments of a degree with Honors in
Political Science.

2015

Approved by


Adviser (Professor Stephen Gent)


Professor Mark Crescenzi


Professor Cecilia Martinez-Gallardo

Table of Contents

I.	Introduction	2
II.	Literature Review	4
III.	Theory	11
IV.	Case Study Selection	16
	• The Case of Syrian Civil Society	18
	• The Case of Libyan Civil Society	31
	• The Case Tunisian Civil Society	45
V.	Conclusions	57
VI.	References	62

I. Introduction

In the aftermath of widespread international conflicts and civil unrest, many have come to argue that civil society organizations play a fundamental role in facilitating stabilization and democratization in conflict-ridden areas (Belloni 2001, Dorner and List 2012). These organizations are known to enhance the pursuit of individual interests and opportunities for society as a whole, as exhibited in the successful democratization, peacemaking, and post-conflict regeneration of numerous countries throughout Eastern Europe and Latin America, such as in the breakup of Yugoslavia. Thus, the effective involvement of civil society has proven to be a vital contributor to the development, stabilization, and democratization of various countries.

However, civil society organizations have yet to have this similarly effective role in conflict-ridden and post-conflict countries throughout the Middle East (Hawthorne 2004). While there has been significant growth in the development and number of civil society organizations in the last decade throughout the Middle East, these groups have largely failed to become a driving force for democratization. Some have consequently questioned why there has been such a great proliferation of these organizations throughout the region, yet they have been unable to make substantial progress in organizing the community for democratization (Hamid 2010, Bailer, Bodenstein, and Heinrich 2009).

While there are a wide variety of factors that impact the role of civil society organizations that range from socioeconomic development to international involvement, there is an undeniable link between the political structure and political culture of a country and the relative strength and success of its respective civil society network. This is a result of the conditional relationship between political structure and political culture, in that the nature of the political structure provides the foundation for the necessary institutions, political behavior, and entry points for

civil society to flourish (Pateman 1971).

This thesis aims to explore the role of civil society in conflict and post-conflict areas of the Middle East, and the question as to whether the relationship between the political structure and political culture of a country is the primary determinant in the strength of civil society organizations. This study will examine the factors that have been known to influence the strength of civil society organizations and analyze the theory regarding the conditional relationship between political structure and political culture and its corresponding impact on the role of civil society organizations.

In the following sections, I first provide an overview of the previous literature regarding the dynamic role of civil society and the factors that affect its relative strength and success. I then present a theoretical perspective positing the relationship between the political structure and political structure to be the primary determinant of the strength of civil society organizations. I explore this theory through the case studies of three Middle Eastern countries, namely Syria, Libya, and Tunisia. Lastly, I conclude with remarks from these case studies and explore prospects for future research regarding the role of civil society organizations.

II. Literature Review

The role of civil society organizations in the stabilization and democratization of conflict and post-conflict ridden countries has been contested over the past several decades. In the past, many have traditionally supported political or military solutions to international conflicts; however, others have come to advocate for the promotion of civil society organizations in recent decades and their sustainable impact on conflict-ridden areas (Serwer 2014, Dorner and List 2012). These scholars argue that civil society organizations provide a lasting and grassroots approach to conflict management and resolution, and ultimately could play an invaluable role in both stabilization and democratization.

According to Dorner and List, the answer to dealing with prolonged conflict lies at the heart of organized civil society (2012). They contend that the conflict dimension of civil society is either downplayed or inadequately addressed in the analysis of current political processes and armed conflicts. “Research should explore the wider issue of the integration and the impact of civil society in the political system and in society more broadly, and the extent to which the conditions in which civil society operates contribute to a peaceful dealing with conflicts and hinder or support an escalation of conflicts” (2012).

Other scholars have come to agree that it is necessary for greater international recognition of the role and prospective contributions of civil society organizations. Fischer states that civil society cooperation with international organizations brings under-represented and marginalized issues to attention, while also making decision-making processes through the political system more transparent (2006). The potential role of these organizations in stabilization and democratization is defined by their political independence, the flexibility of their mandates, their impartiality and high standards of credibility (2006).

Van Tongeren detailed the vast abilities and strengths of these organizations, specifically including, "... a) function without being constrained by narrow mandates of foreign policy imperatives, b) achieve access to areas inaccessible to official actors, c) talk to several parties without losing their credibility, d) deal directly with grassroots populations, e) operate in confidentiality without media, parliamentary or public scrutiny, f) take the greatest risks, given their public advocacy and social-justice agendas, g) effectively network, given their longstanding relationships, built on trust, with civil society in the conflict zones, h) draw upon public opinion to galvanize political will to focus on a longer-term perspective than governments are able to..." (1998).

These organizations have many capabilities and have also played a pivotal role in conflict prevention, peacemaking, and post-conflict regeneration, which has ultimately had a sustainable impact on the rebuilding of society, namely in the breakup of Yugoslavia (Serwer 2014). Civil society organizations have allowed a variety of countries to flourish politically and socially in the past several decades, so much so that many attribute the transformation of the economic and political system in the Balkans to the post-conflict regeneration and strength of civil society organizations (Fischer 2006). Through the cooperation and coordination of many civil society organizations, these countries have been able to create sustainable progress that extends on a much broader scale, and in these cases, the impact of civil society had a more influential and successful role in the rebuilding of society than international intervention efforts did.

Civil society organizations have come to gain experience in responding to the greatest needs of the people in the absence of the government or in the face of great conflict. They also facilitate the pursuit of individual interests and opportunities, which range from the political to

economic to social spheres. Many therefore argue that they have played a dynamic, if not instrumental, role in past examples of conflict resolution in various areas of the world, which has ultimately garnered increasing levels of interest and recognition in regards to the potential strength and success of civil society engagement.

Measuring the Role of Civil Society

With the recent heightened attention on the impact of civil society, the CIVICUS Civil Society project was initiated in last two decades as a means to assess the role of civil society on an international scale and observe the relative strength of these organizations in various countries and regions. The project defines civil society as the arena, outside of the family, the state, and the market where people associate to advance common interests, and it uses a Civil Society Index (CSI) to assess the strength of civil society organizations and their connection to processes that strengthen civil society (Dorner and List 2012). The project recognizes that the understanding of civil society is still limited and there is little empirical knowledge on the direct impact of civil society organizations; thus, the project was created to measure the crucial aspects of the existing social and political systems, specifically in regards to the state of governance and social and political development (Bailer 2009).

This study of the role of civil society organizations has been applied to specific countries characterized by prominent civil society organizations that coordinate vital government, business, and developmental aspects of society (Bailer 2009). The index has been implemented in regards to the strength of civil society based upon four criteria for each respective country. These include the structure of civil society, the external environment in which civil society exists and functions, the values practiced and promoted in the civil society arena, and lastly the impact

of activities pursued by civil society actors (Bailer 2009). Each of these dimensions is used to score the strength of civil society to create a diamond framework as a means to rank different countries in terms of structure, environment, values, and impact.

Through the CIVICUS study, there has been greater knowledge acquired regarding the state of civil society globally and the linkages and networks between civil society stakeholders. It has laid the foundation to examine the structure, values, environment, and impact of civil society organizations on a global scale, which has ultimately provided information regarding the breadth and depth of citizen participation, the legal environment and culture, and state-civil society relations. This has set a basis for examining the necessary requirements and framework for civil society organizations to grow and thrive, namely in demonstrating the significance of the principles of democracy and transparency, as well as accessibility to influence public policy and hold state and private corporations accountable (Bailer 2009).

Civil Society in the Middle East

However, this CIVICUS index has been applied to a specific set of countries in which quantifiable information was available to observe the most crucial factors and the necessary framework determining the strength of civil society. In terms of the Middle East, the region as a whole lacks significant information on the recent growth of civil society organizations and thus their role in stabilization and democratization, namely as much of the region continues to struggle with instability and authoritarian regimes. These countries score low on the CIVICUS scale in terms of socioeconomic modernization and democratic governance while also falling significantly behind in terms of a cohesive global civil society in comparison to many other regions (Bailer 2009).

Therefore, there is little information on the strength and role of civil society organizations in specific countries in the Middle East not solely throughout the CIVICUS project, but also in modern studies that examine the specific elements that differentiate the insignificant role of civil society in this region from the successful role of civil society organizations in other areas of the world, such as Eastern Europe.

Factors that Influence the Role of Civil Society

After the launching of the CIVICUS study and the development of a framework that detailed the necessary conditions and environment for a successful role of civil society, a variety of societal and political factors have come to be contested in their impact on the strength of civil society organizations on an international scale. Over the last two decades, these factors have received greater attention and studies have arisen to examine the significance of each of these individual factors in both the micro and macro political processes. This has ultimately expanded into a debate over which of these existing factors is most influential in determining the role of civil society and how this relates to the differing successes of civil society in various regions throughout the world (Bailer 2009).

One theoretical approach is the role of socioeconomic development in the strength of civil society organizations and their impact on democratization. The classical modernization theory states that the higher the degree of socioeconomic development, the stronger the potential impact for civil society in that country (Bailer 2009). This has been postulated due to the theory that development results in middle class growth and social integration, which would then in turn yield a favorable environment for civil society to grow and flourish. This environment allows for the space and accessibility necessary for these organizations to enhance their involvement in

the political, economic, and cultural spheres. Thus, some scholars have come to argue that socioeconomic development is the primary factor and prerequisite for a flourishing democracy (Lipset 1959).

A second theory involves the role of the existing political culture of a country. This directly correlates to the strength of civil society because the political culture encompasses national traditions and cultural legacies, as well as the sociopolitical traditions and social interaction in society (Bailer 2009). The nature of the political culture establishes the framework that could either support or obstruct the role of civil society in stabilization and democratization. According to Putnam, this theory is known as the “bottom-up” approach for historical patterns of civic engagement, namely in that the role of civil society is determined from the underlying political culture developed by the population (1995).

Others argue the contrary in that the political structure and existing political institutions are the primary factors in determining the impact of civil society organizations (Bailer 2009). This theory is instead known as the “top-down” approach and contends that the key characteristics of a country’s political structure are crucial determinants on the role of civil society organizations (Skocpol and Fiorina 1999). The current political environment, specifically the democratic quality, the effectiveness of the state, and the strength of the rule of law are direct contributors to the growth of civil society (Hadenius and Ugglå 1996). These factors provide essential enabling conditions for the successful and sustainable role of civil society organizations.

Others have come to recognize the impact of international influences in determining the strength of civil society (Bailer 2009). They argue that the current international events and processes throughout the world result in a circulation of dominant cultural frames, customs, and

resources, which greatly influence the development of civil society (Schofer and Longhofer 1999). These dynamics significantly affect the number of international non-governmental organizations present in a country, which is a strong indicator of how civil society organizations operate both within the respective country and in the context of the international aid system (Bailer 2009).

Thus, it is still contested as to which factor in the political, economic, and social spheres is the most influential determinant of the relative strength and effectiveness of civil society organizations. While scholars have examined these factors and competing hypotheses in isolation from each other, little has been researched in the context of the conditional relationship between individual factors, namely in the association between the existing political structure and the consequent political culture that influences the role and strength of civil society organization in the Middle East.

III. Theory

The environment in which civil society organizations assist in the stabilization and democratization processes is contingent upon the political structure and consequent political culture of a country. There is an inherent relationship between both the political structure and political culture, which lays the foundation for the development and potential strength of civil society organizations.

The political structure determines the way in which a government is run and refers to the patterns of interaction within a political system and the regulations, laws, and norms present. This domain ultimately determines the development of institutions and the political climate, which ultimately allows for the norms, roles, practices, relationships, and competencies in society. It opens up the necessary space for socialization, association, and organized forms of communication (Cohen 1994).

This structure ultimately establishes the groundwork for the role of the corresponding political culture, which encompasses the set of attitudes and practices held by a people that shapes their political behavior (Cohen 1994). It is determined through the leadership and nature of the regime and has come to be categorized as the connecting link between micro and macro politics (Pateman 1971).

The relationship between political structure and the political culture has come to be instrumental to the process of political stability and change (Pateman 1971). As political scientists have placed a greater emphasis on the role of civil society organizations, many have come to determine that the success and strength of civil society is largely dependent on the way that a country's government rules over its people and how the social sphere has developed (Dorner and List 2012, Fischer 2006). Thus, a society in which the political structure fosters the

enhancement of action-orienting norms and political projects supports a corresponding political culture that can expand the existing rights, democratic institutions, social solidarity, and justice of a country (Cohen 1994).

Civil society organizations are the intervening variables that allow for this stabilization to occur and support the effective development of civil-state relations. Democratic processes rely on the strength of new autonomous forms of discourse, associations, and solidarity, which are the primary elements of civil society (Cohen 1994). It can thus be determined that the initial political structure of a state will help determine its respective process of stabilization through civil society organizations due to the fact that the political structure will determine the ability of civil society to work with and enhance the existing political culture and institutions present (Cohen 1994).

A previous lack of institutions and civil society organizations as a result of authoritarian regimes has been known to greatly influence this conditional relationship between the political structure and political culture, with the role of civil society organizations as the independent variable and democratization and stabilization as the dependent variable. This is incredibly relevant in the Middle East, especially in the period after the Arab Spring in which several countries overthrew authoritarian dictators and still remain in the process of rebuilding the political, social, and economic spheres of the respective countries. Civil society organizations have been limited in their impact and influence in these countries due to the internal fragmentation, lack of coordination, and ongoing instability and warfare (Fischer 2006). This has ultimately limited democratization and stabilization to impact small-scale and independent change, greatly impacting the connection between civil society and government and societal relations.

The process of the institutionalization of discourses of stabilization and democratization is possible only on the grounds of modern civil society, which Cohen defines as the sphere of social interaction between economy and state, composed above all of the intimate sphere, the sphere of associations, social movements and forms of public communication (1994). “Modern civil society is created through forms of self-constitutions and self-mobilization. It is institutionalized and generalized through laws, and especially subjective rights, that stabilize social differentiation” (1994). Thus, the relationships among societal plurality, individual autonomy, social movements, and a liberal, democratic political system are dependent on the existing political culture and structure present as a means to lay the foundation for communicative action and social change.

Some political scientists have come to argue that this structure of the political system is the primary factor that independently shapes the manner in which civil society organizations act (Skocpol and Fiorina 1999, Bailer 2009). This is namely due to the barrier to entry with greater restrictions and regulations on the activities and funding sources of civil society organizations that is characteristic of authoritarian or tyrannical regimes (Deane 2013). A lack of support from governments, specifically in cases where civil society organizations have failed to arise and have a vital impact on the democratization of respective countries, is said to correlate to the progress of civil society on both a political and institutional level.

On the other hand, in a political structure with a legitimate distribution of power, such as in a strong parliamentary system of government, civil society organizations are more likely to be viewed as agents who can inform the government by articulating the preferences of civil society (Deane 2013). Therefore, there are greater access points and opportunities for civil society organizations not only to multiply in numbers, but also to enhance public participation and

interest within the political and social spheres.

Dominant Factors that Influence the Strength of Civil Society

There are varying theories in political science and conflict resolution as to which factor independently is the most dominant in affecting the strength and effectiveness of civil society organizations (Cohen 1994, Bailer 2009). However, there are currently few theories present that detail the dynamic correlation in how these factors influence each other, and ultimately how this resulting relationship influences the role and strength of civil society.

In particular, the factor encompassing the political culture of a country focuses on the cultural institutions and legacies present as a means of social interaction and a foundation for the development of a vibrant civil society (Bailer 2009). However, this theory is not compared in relation to other factors such as the existing political structure, specifically in comparing cases in which the transformation of the political structure and regime type of certain countries had a direct impact on the strength of civil society. In these cases, civil society organizations have been strengthened as a result of the political climate and institutions that have developed through the opening of a supportive political culture.

On the other hand, the role of civil society has yet to play a direct role in the stabilization of countries that suffer from an existing authoritarian political structure or an absence of a legitimate political system, as well as the consequential lack of institutions and civic sphere present. This is a result of the fact that civil society organizations necessitate the means and accessibility to influence civic-state relations and public participation, which is not possible under the nature of the political structure and culture of many conflict and post-conflict ridden countries.

Conditional Relationship between Political Structure and Political Culture

While it is clear that there is an inherent relationship between the political structure and political culture categorizations, these factors that influence the strength of civil society have rarely been compared in the context of each other in specific case studies. They have rather been observed independently and in isolation from each other, which has yielded inconclusive results on an international scale and ultimately has overlooked the vital connection that leads to a strong civil society. Thus, my hypothesis predicts that the relationship between the political structure and the political culture of a country is the primary determinant in the strength and effectiveness of civil society due to the consequent environment that provides the basis for civil society to grow and thrive.

Based upon this argument, I will explore this conditional relationship between political structure and political culture that is essential for social change in the context of post-Arab Spring Middle Eastern countries, specifically in the case studies of Syria, Libya, and Tunisia. This study will explore the evolution of the political structures in each of these cases and the consequent development of either a supportive or obstructive political culture. It will then examine how the nature of the political culture has influenced the relative growth and strength of civil society organizations and it will ultimately test how the conjunction of these factors is the primary determinant of the role of civil society.

IV. Case Study Selection

This study will test the conditional relationship between political structure and the consequent political culture of a country in serving as the primary determinant of the strength of civil society organizations in stabilization and democratization. It will examine this relationship through a case study analysis of the role of civil society organizations in three post-Arab Spring countries in the Middle East: Syria, Libya, and Tunisia. These cases were selected as a result of the differing outcomes of the Arab Spring demonstrations in the attempts to oust each country's respective authoritarian regime, and how this shift in political structure, or lack thereof, has influenced the role of civil society organizations in each respective country.

This study will first examine the two cases in which civil society organizations have been unable to play a direct role in the stabilization and democratization processes, which include Syria and Libya. In regards to Syria, it will observe how the current political structure has greatly impeded the role and strength of civil society due to the ongoing civil warfare and severe fragmentation within the country. The nature of President Assad's authoritarian regime has dominated the political system and thus laid the foundation for the country's political culture. This study will then analyze how this dependent relationship has inevitably impacted the role of civil society organizations and inhibited their success over the years following their rise during the Arab Spring demonstrations.

In regards to the case of Libya, this study will observe the hindered role of civil society organizations as a result of the lack of a legitimate and authoritative political structure and consequent political culture. Although dictator Muammar Gaddafi was overthrown in 2011, Libya continues to suffer from a massive lack of political and social institutions and ongoing civil unrest and militia warfare. This study will consequently examine how Libyan civil society

organizations have struggled to influence the population and have a direct role in the stabilization and democratization of the country due to the lack of a legitimate political structure and the contingent political culture that has developed.

This study will lastly explore a case study example in which civil society organizations have played a vital role in the stabilization and democratization of the country, namely in Tunisia. Since Tunisia first ignited the wave of Arab Spring protests in 2011, the country has successfully overthrown the authoritarian regime and has paved a path to democratization in contrast to the majority of Arab Spring states. This successful transition in political structure has allowed for a supportive and favorable political culture to develop, which has fostered an evident strength and effectiveness for civil society, specifically through the recent parliamentary elections and ongoing attempts to rebuild the political, social, and economic systems. This study will analyze this successful case in which civil society organizations have played an incredibly demonstrative role, which was largely possible due to the nature of the political culture that was contingent on the shift in political structure after 2011.

Thus, this study will test the relationship between the political structure and political culture of these respective countries in the Middle East as the primary factor in determining the strength of civil society and its role in the democratization and stabilization of the post-conflict and conflict-ridden countries. The following three case study examples will observe the importance of this conditional relationship within each country in influencing the role and strength of civil society in post-Arab Spring countries throughout the Middle East.

The Case of Syrian Civil Society

The Syrian conflict has waged for over three years and has resulted in unprecedented levels of violence, destruction, and fatalities. While the international community has attempted to assist in facilitating peace talks and humanitarian aid, Syrians have responded within their own country through the creation of hundreds of independent civil society organizations that have sprung up since the start of the civil war. They have multiplied over the past several years to address the most pressing needs of the shattered Syrian state, ranging in purpose from civilian opposition goals to humanitarian aid services for the victims of the conflict (Serwer 2014). However, while they have ameliorated various aspects of the conflict on a smaller-scale, these Syrian civil society organizations have been greatly hindered by the oppressive nature of the country's political structure, as well as a severe lack of communication and resources, which has ultimately blocked any significant progress towards democratization.

Role of Civil Society prior to the Arab Spring

Prior to the start of the demonstrations and civil conflict in 2011, the Syrian public sought an avenue to protest the despotic Assad family rule and acquire a political voice (Hokayem 2013). They had long struggled with a great lack of participation and representation on an individual level throughout the country, which had been ingrained in Syrian society for several decades. This growing dissatisfaction was exacerbated by declining economic circumstances and rising levels of unemployment, as well as an absence of public organizations and institutions that typically serve to promote stability and civic involvement (Gelvin 2012).

As a result of this environment, few Syrian civil society groups existed throughout both Hafez al-Assad and Bashar al-Assad's authoritarian rule prior to 2011, and those that existed

were strictly controlled and monitored by the regime (Ahmado 2013). These organizations were not able to effectively operate under the authoritarian political structure of the country and were likewise unable to provide the impetus for the Syrian people to demand social change.

Development of Civil Society throughout the Arab Spring

However, with the spark of the Arab Spring in Tunisia and Egypt in January of 2011 and the wave of uprisings sweeping the region, Syrians came together to protest Assad's authoritarian regime and advocate for a new and representative nation through the awakening of civil society. Syrian lawyers, politicians, activists, and youth joined together to call for democratic change and utilize civil society organizations to advocate for voices that had long been silenced (Ahmado 2013). They peacefully demanded their own representative government through grassroots and student-led movements and came to develop a leadership structure on both a local and statewide level facilitated by civil society organizations. Syrian journalist, blogger, and activist Nisan Ahmado recounts, "the coordinators worked to teach people the culture of peaceful struggle, prepared signs and songs for the protests, delivered the aspirations of the people inside and outside the country via social media, worked closely with Syrian civil society groups established abroad to support those who are inside, and demanded the repeal of decades-long emergency law banning demonstrations..." (2013).

The developing network of civil society organizations carried the promise of a progressive and democratic Syria in the following months of the demonstrations. However, while this time was marked by the desire for peaceful change and institutional form for the Syrian people, the accelerating collaboration posed a great threat to Assad's regime and ultimately was countered by brutal force with no consideration for basic human or political rights (Hokayem 2013).

The violent attacks and acts of repression prompted an eventual shift to an armed revolution between Assad's regime and the Syrian opposition in the months following the initial demonstrations (Gelvin 2012). This ultimately forced civil society organizations to shift from forming public coalitions to working underground and reforming their structures and operations. They became required to continue their work and missions in a far less visible tone and adapt their activity to the severe lack of resources, forms of communication, and horrific oppression of the regime (Brandenburg 2014).

Development of Syrian Civil Society Organizations throughout the Ongoing Civil War

These civil society organizations have now adapted their purpose and strategies as the conflict has evolved over the past four years and as the revolution has changed in nature according to President Bashar al-Assad's violent rule. Many of these groups are not politically affiliated and have chosen to address their priorities in a neutral and independent manner in order to maintain their own mission (Brandenburg 2014). They have come to learn vital lessons from likeminded organizations and refine their approaches to operate more efficiently despite the significant hardships they face in terms of access to resources and the impending threat of violence and retaliation.

Syrian civil society organizations have also specialized in their intended goals and services since the initial demonstrations in 2011. These groups now vary in categorization from civilian opposition groups to human rights organizations to humanitarian aid and specialized services associations.

Civilian Opposition Groups

In response to President Assad's increasingly despotic and violent actions, the number of civilian opposition groups dramatically increased since the uprisings in 2011 (Serwer 2014). This form of civil society organizations include groups such as Building the Syrian State, the Syriac Union Party, and the Coalition of Forces for Peaceful Change, all of which work for a nonviolent, civil democratic state impartial towards all ideologies and doctrines.

These groups advocate for equality through fundamental democratic change, dialogue, and national reconciliation (Carnegie 2012). Over the past several years, they have openly opposed Assad's regime and have sought to establish an inclusive political process as a means to end the conflict. These civilian opposition organizations are known to operate both inside and outside of regime territory and are active on social media and other forms of communication to gain followers and spread awareness.

Human Rights Organizations

Other civil society groups are more centered on human rights, such as the Damascus Center for Human Rights Studies, the Syrian Human Rights Organization, and the Centre for Syrian Freedoms. These organizations call for upholding the inalienable human rights of all Syrians and equality in front of the law, rather than focusing solely on active participation and representation in political activities (Serwer 2014). They have worked to document crimes against humanity within Syria, as well as issue statements, publications, and reports on human rights violations throughout the conflict (Damascus Center 2014, Watan 2014). Their visions focus on informing Syrian citizens of their rights and building a documented foundation for this data in order to promote human rights activism. Through these documented reports, many civil society organizations, such as the Damascus Center and the Centre for Syrian Freedoms, have

now proposed bills that fit with internationally agreed upon human rights legislations (Damascus Center 2014).

Humanitarian Aid Organizations

There also has been a significant rise in the number of humanitarian aid oriented civil society organizations as the violence and fatalities have accelerated in Syria with each passing year. Every Syrian, Najda Now, Syria Charity, and many others work to provide relief and social services for civilians throughout the country regardless of race, ethnicity, or religion. These organizations work both within Syria and in the surrounding region in order to secure daily necessities and shelter for those affected by the loss of their families and homes (Daleel Madani 2014).

Many of these Syrian humanitarian groups have also developed more specialized philanthropic goals, namely for services that address women's or children's needs (Serwer 2014). Bas al Karama is an organization known to provide social and psychological services for children who have been displaced as refugees throughout the conflict, while Darayya's Free Women is an example of an organization that promotes female nonviolent involvement in the revolution and support for those in need of food, shelter, and assistance (Zaitouneh 2012).

Many of these humanitarian civil society organizations also partner with international organizations that are located outside of Syria, such as Every Syrian. These organizations have worked to achieve strategic partnerships with various international institutions and have pursued international funding to rebuild Syrian homes and businesses. Every Syrian in particular has become a well-known organization that provides unconditional aid to the most urgent and critical cases across Syria regardless of race, religion, ethnicity or politics (Every Syrian 2014). One of

its primary goals is to “help people help themselves,” emphasizing a level of sustainability in providing aid and necessary resources (2014). Every Syrian and other likewise civil society organizations seek to not only provide individuals and small businesses with the necessary funding to restart their businesses and spark employment, but also to instill a level of societal sustainability. They have attempted to consolidate resources and strategies on an international level as a means to provide aid to victims and reestablish civil society and institutions as effectively as possible.

Impact and Limited Capabilities of Syrian Civil Society Organizations

This wide variety of civil society organizations in Syria has played an important role in the country’s evolution and in providing humanitarian aid in the face of the conflict (Serwer 2014). They have created a growing network alongside traditional aid agencies both inside and outside of the country over the past several years; however, these organizations remain severely limited in development and success as a result of the existing authoritarian regime and the ongoing instability that plagues the country.

Syrian civil society organizations have been unable to fully execute their respective missions with President Assad still in power due to their inability to obtain the necessary resources, support, and specialized staff members (Brandenburg 2014). Funding and supplies are greatly limited for these groups and methods of communication and transportation are greatly restricted. Many of these organizations have also been forced to work underground due to the threats and fear of brutal retaliation on behalf of Assad’s security apparatus, making it exceedingly challenging to operate at a functional and effective level.

As a result of this absence of a stable and cohesive political structure, Syrian civil society organizations have been hindered by high levels of fragmentation and a lack of coordination over the past several years (Brandenburg 2014). The country remains divided between regime-controlled territory and opposition-controlled territory, and likeminded civil society organizations that range from civilian opposition groups to humanitarian aid organizations are unable to communicate with each other to facilitate institutional reform on both local and state-wide levels (Ruiz de Elvira 2013).

Exclusion of Syrian Civil Society on International Stage

The limited role of Syrian civil society organizations has further been obstructed after their exclusion from the Geneva II Middle East peace conference facilitated by the United Nations in 2014 (Brandenburg 2014). This conference aimed at ending the Syrian conflict was held exclusively between Assad's regime and the opposition, and civil society organizations that ranged from civilian opposition groups to humanitarian aid agencies were neither allowed to have an influential voice nor detail their extensive role in addressing the needs of Syrians on the ground over the past several years (Atassi 2014). While the conference sought to establish a transitional government and initiate a process towards a new Syrian republic, it was largely unsuccessful in ameliorating the crisis and providing a means for stabilization.

Some find great fault in this exclusion of civil society organizations throughout Geneva II because a comprehensive peace agreement cannot be sustained without the help and existence of these organizations. Wael Sawah, Executive Director of the USIP- led Day After Association in Syria, argued, "Civil society is what guarantees the sustainability of any agreement. Civil society has been responding to Syrians' needs and raising awareness about the situation in Syria

from the beginning of the revolution. Civil society played a role in the media, conveying to the world what was happening in Syria; took photos and published them to the entire world; helped refugees and those displaced; defended human rights; documented violations against human rights and crimes against humanity, all while the regime was killing people and the opposition was fighting over political positions. In order to sustain any agreement from Geneva, the world needs civil society to be involved” (Brandenburg 2014).

Necessity of the Role of Syrian Civil Society

Consequently, many have come to recognize the vital contributions of Syrian civil society in rebuilding the political, economic, and social spheres of the country from the ground up (Serwer 2014, Ruiz de Elvira 2013). These advocates commend the role that civil society organizations have played thus far and the significant experience and knowledge they have attained in addressing the ongoing conflict.

Stimson Center Expert Mona Yacoubian built upon this recognition of civil society in her report “Lessons Learned for Stabilization in Syria” and emphasized the vital incorporation of local politics in future efforts (2014). She highlighted the essential involvement that civil society organizations have played in greater community-level mapping in Syria and their fundamental role in transitioning the country from an authoritarian political structure on a local and small-scale level. It is therefore necessary for the long-term stabilization and democratization of Syria to take an integrated approach and incorporate peace-building, security, and development principles undertaken by local actors, namely by the wide array of developing civil society organizations (2014).

Role of Syrian Political Structure and Culture

While many activists, scholars, and political leaders have come to acclaim the potential role of Syrian civil society organizations in the stabilization of the country, these groups remain severely hindered by the current state of the country. Syria has become a war-torn and oppressed land that continuously struggles with human rights violations, a growing refugee problem, and brutal acts of oppression carried out by the regime still in power. While there are many factors that affect the success and impact of Syrian civil society organizations, the linkage between the existing authoritarian political structure and political culture in Syria has dominantly impacted, and more specifically hindered, the role and strength of these organizations.

The existing authoritarian political structure under President Assad has played a direct role in the lack of success of Syrian civil society organizations in the stabilization and democratization of the country. Assad's despotic and increasingly brutal regime has not only dominated the political structure of the country, but also laid the foundation for the limited and fragmented role of the corresponding political culture and institutions. This conditional relationship between the oppression of the political structure and the corresponding political culture present for civil society organizations to work within has inevitably proven to be the primary determinant in the strength and effectiveness, or lack thereof, of Syrian civil society.

Impact of an Authoritarian Political Structure on Civil Society

Since President Bashar al-Assad's assumption of power in 2000 after the death of his father, he has held virtually all power as the head of state and chief executive officer of the government, as well as the commander in chief of the armed forces (Gelvin 2012). This tradition of authoritarianism was likewise present during the repressive regime of Hafez al-Assad from 1971

to 2000, which has further established a deeply rooted sense of authoritarian dominance and lack of political rights and participation among the Syrian population.

However, the true nature of the Assad regime was revealed after the start of the Arab Spring in 2011, in which President Assad retaliated with ruthless and violent measures against many students and demonstrators that had come together to peacefully protest the ongoing regime (Gelvin 2012). These initial clashes developed into an atrocious civil war over the past four years, in which hundreds of thousands of people have been killed in merciless acts of violence with no imminent prediction of the toppling of the regime.

The political structure of Syria has come to be characterized by the authoritarian dominance of the executive, as well as the unprecedented levels of brutal and indiscriminate violence over the past several years. This existing system has confined power solely in the hands of Assad's executive and has utilized fear and violence to avert any forms of competition or opposition to the regime. The structure of this political system has also posed countless barriers to entry for organizations and institutions, which has influenced the political culture of the country and ultimately deterred the advancement of Syrian civil society.

Conditional Relationship between Political Structure and Political Culture

As a result of the relationship between the authoritarian political structure that exists within Syria and its impact on the political culture, Syrian civil society groups have been significantly hindered in their role in the stabilization and democratization of the country. Repression and despotism have long been ingrained in the Syrian political structure, which has inevitably determined the characteristics of the political culture and set of attitudes and practices held by the population.

Due to the oppressive regime's struggle to maintain complete power, as well as the ongoing warfare waged on civilians and the Syrian opposition, there is a great disconnect between the political structure of the country and the grassroots development of civil society organizations and institutions. Civil society groups have not been able to effectively rise up and unite in mission and common goals because the political sphere has long been dominated by the repressive regime. They have been forced to work underground and are unable to collaborate in a way to promote the exchange of various political perspectives and encourage dialogue and political participation due to the existing political culture.

As a result of the relationship between political structure and political culture, civil society inherently cannot make the effective and substantial changes necessary for stabilization and democratization under a despotic or authoritarian political structure. This type of regime cannot produce the supportive political culture necessary for enhanced civil society involvement and engagement, namely through increased accessibility and fewer restrictions and regulations for these organizations.

This directly relates to the absence and limitations of Syrian civil society over the past decades and why these organizations have not been able to assume a more direct role in fostering democratic change. Thus, the connection between the political structure of Assad's highly oppressive and authoritarian regime and the consequent repercussions on the country's political culture remains the primary factor in determining the relative strength and role of civil society organizations.

Conclusions

The Syrian civil war has persisted for four horrific years and has taken a brutal toll on the lives of the population. The Syrian people have withstood the horrors of an oppressive regime, continuous human rights violations, a lack of basic human necessities, and a complete absence of involvement in the political arena. President Assad's despotic regime has shown no mercy or respect for inherent human rights and therefore has left the Syrian people to fend for themselves with very limited resources and no governmental assistance.

Syrian civil society organizations have thus come to assume this responsibility and have worked to provide the necessary services and resources to the ailing population. They have evolved over the past four years as the conflict has changed in nature and have come to learn vital lessons and strategies from the extensive network of civil society organizations that has developed over the past several years (Brandenburg 2014). This wide array of organizations have unified under the demand for political and social change, ranging in concentration from civilian opposition groups to humanitarian aid agencies to human rights centers.

While these organizations have engaged in significant efforts to ameliorate the conflict, they have been severely restricted in capacity as a result of the political structure and ongoing civil warfare. These groups have endured high levels of fragmentation and a lack of coordination due to the hostility of the regime and the inability to work above ground.

These limitations in the role of civil society are a result of the authoritarian political structure of the country and the consequent political culture. Assad's despotic regime has not only dominated the political structure of the country, but it also has laid the foundation for the limited and fragmented role of the corresponding political culture and institutions. This has provided minimal space for civil society organizations to truly bring about political and social change as a result of the oppression of the political system and the ongoing instability and violence. This

confirms the prevailing significance of the relationship between the political structure and political culture of a state, specifically in that an authoritarian political structure does not provide the necessary involvement and supporting political culture to facilitate the successful impact of civil society organizations.

The Case of Libyan Civil Society

With the onset of the Arab Spring in Egypt and Tunisia in early 2011, Libya joined its North African neighbors in popular demonstrations over the political corruption and a lack of representation under dictator Muammar Qaddafi. After four decades of a regime plagued by deteriorating economic conditions, nepotism, and tyranny, Libyans came together not only to overthrow the existing authoritarian government, but also to rebuild the political, economic, and social spheres from the ground up (Gelvin 2012).

With the removal of Qaddafi, there became a political vacuum within the executive leadership, as well in the public sphere as a result of the complete barring of institutions and organizations under the previous regime. Thus, a great outpouring of newly established civil society organizations swept the country in the following years as the political space opened and the potential role of civil society in Libya's stabilization became clear (Foundation 2011). However, while these groups have arisen in large numbers to address the needs of Libyan society, they have had been greatly hindered in stabilizing the country and assisting in the path to democratization as a result of the significant void in the political framework and the ongoing civil unrest.

Absence of Civil Society under the Qaddafi Regime

Since Muammar al-Qaddafi's assumption of power through a coup d'état in 1969, Libya's political structure had been characterized by corruption, repression, and megalomania (Gelvin 2012). Qaddafi governed according to theories of Islamic socialism and his own definition of direct democracy, which was specified in his "Third Universal Theory" in the Green Book in 1977. In this publication, Qaddafi necessitated the complete restructuring of the Libyan political,

economic, and civil spheres, in which all representative institutions and economic structures were demolished in order to establish a “rule by the masses” (Gelvin 2012).

Due to this totalitarian rule, Libyan civil society was virtually nonexistent prior to Qaddafi’s eventual overthrow in 2011. There were a very scarce number of regime-controlled organizations present that completely lacked independence, specifically in which nepotistic leaders and members of the security apparatus dictated activities to guarantee a commitment to the Green Book (Gelvin 2012). Consequently, by the time of the Arab Spring, there was essentially a nonexistent framework of organizations and institutions that were severely restricted in all activities under the authoritarian political structure.

Gradual Development of Civil Society throughout the Arab Spring

The wave of demonstrations calling for an end to the Qaddafi regime commenced in Libya in February 2011 under a coalition of various groups entitled the National Conference for the Libyan Opposition (Gelvin 2012). The coalition marked a significant step toward civil society collaboration within Libya and was united under increasing dissatisfaction with the dire political and economic conditions of the country. However, its cooperative efforts and demonstrations were halted by the violent retaliation of the regime’s security forces, which prompted waves of protests throughout the country calling for an end to the tyrannical rule (Gelvin 2012).

Violence and civil warfare ensued for several months, which not only garnered international attention and NATO involvement, but also a surge in civil society organizations aimed at addressing the most urgent needs, such as food, shelter, and medical attention, of the Libyan people (Petré 2014). These groups centered around humanitarian aid ultimately initiated the

gradual development of Libyan civil society throughout the Arab Spring until Qaddafi was captured and killed in the fall of 2011.

With the end of Qaddafi's infamous regime, the main opposition group, the National Transitional Council, became the de facto government to fill the void in the Libyan political leadership. The Council delivered a constitutional declaration the same month of Qaddafi's death, laying the foundation for the transition of the country to a constitutional democracy with an elected government (Foundation 2011). Libyans were optimistic in the following months regarding the future political transformation and network of civil society organizations, especially as an estimated sixty countries recognized the National Transitional Council as the new legitimate Libyan authority (Gritten 2011).

Growth of Civil Society after Qaddafi's Removal

Alongside the initial political progress on behalf of the National Transitional Council, there was also significant growth for Libyan civil society organizations following Qaddafi's removal. This development was facilitated by the termination of Qaddafi's legislative framework regarding civil society organizations, which had previously required a lengthy and tedious process to register under the regime, as well as the mandatory incorporation of regime members in the leadership of the organization (IRIN 2011). However, as soon as the regime was ousted in 2011, the National Transitional Council worked to establish new laws of associations to facilitate greater entry points and opportunities for the involvement for these organizations (Foundation 2011).

By November 2011, 361 Libyan civil society organizations had been registered in Benghazi, and an additional 500 were registered in Tripoli (Foundation 2011). This surge was not simply

due to the legal right to now establish civil society organizations, but also a result of the vital interest of the Libyan population to participate in the reconstruction and development process needed throughout the country (Petré 2014). Some of these newly established organizations focused on issues that ranged from human rights protection and the promotion of civic participation, while others centered on the immediate care and services for victims of the ongoing civil conflict.

These civil society organizations made significant efforts to fill the void in the Libyan political structure and establish a set of institutions in the country. They assumed a direct role in mobilizing the urban and rural segments of society during the time of the demonstrations and have now adapted to assist the Libyan people with the significant humanitarian concerns due to the ongoing violence and instability (Foundation 2011). These groups have not only maintained an active presence on the ground, but they have also arisen to fit the needs of society in the event that the acting government is either unable or unwilling to do so (IRIN 2011).

With this growing number of registered civil society organizations within Libya, many groups have formed coalitions in order to create a national network of cooperative organizations. They have aimed to promote regional collaboration through conferences and workshops that engage in dialogue, training sessions, and shadowing throughout the region (Foundation 2011). Through these efforts, Libyan organizations have come to focus on three broad themes to best assist the population, which include women's participation, youth education, and political and civic participation (Foundation 2011).

Women's Participation

After the removal of Qaddafi's totalitarian regime, countless Libyan activists joined together in Benghazi and Tripoli to counter the restrictions on the political and social participation of women (Foundation 2011). They sought to combat the deeply embedded traditional culture that had socially excluded women in the past, as well as advocate for the integrated role of women in the transitioning political system (Petré 2014). In urban areas, significant progress has been made, in which Libyan women have attended trainings on various aspects of the constitution as a means to voice their demands for the new amendments. However, it is necessary for great strides to be taken outside of these urban centers, in which there is a deeply-rooted patriarchal culture to overcome (Foundation 2011).

The Libyan Women Forum and Women for Libya, or W4L, are key examples of these efforts on behalf of civil society organizations to lobby for the meaningful inclusion of women in the transition process. They were established in response to the absence of women in the National Transitional Council, and they remain active in society through writing letters to politicians and creating online petitions as a means for women to spread their mission. Many of these groups have also formed coalitions and organized conferences to emphasize the necessity of female representation and empowerment within the political, social, and economic spheres of a new and democratic Libya (Petré 2014).

Youth Education

Libyan civil society organizations have also recognized the importance of laying the foundation for younger generations in regards to education, participation, and community involvement (Foundation 2011). These groups have sought to include the youth in this process of democratization and integrate a "civic spirit" into the upbringing of Libya's future

generations. They emphasize instruction on topics that include democracy and political representation, namely as a result of the fact that Libya's youth have never experienced a democratic election nor participated in civic engagement activities (Foundation 2011). This specialized education seeks to provide the youth with a comprehensive understanding of their own political rights and freedoms, as well as rational expectations for future political and economic transformations.

These youth empowerment organizations have arisen both within Libya and in a diaspora movement across the world to inspire younger generations of Libyans to take an active role in democratic change (Foundation 2011). H20 is an example of a youth engagement organization established in September of 2011 that emphasizes the voices of Libyan youth and how to translate individual thoughts into propositions for the government. The organization has partnered with a coalition of other similar youth-related organizations in initiating the project "Role of Youth in Drafting the Constitution" to involve children of all ages in understanding the creation of a new constitution (Libya CDGP 2013).

Political and Civic Participation

Lastly, the majority of civil society organizations have focused on political and civic participation within Libya's transitional process. This theme is viewed as an exceedingly pressing aspect of restructuring the political, economic, and civic spheres of the country, specifically due to Libya's lack of experience in holding elections and establishing a new constitutional framework (Foundation 2011). Civil society groups consequently organized behind the civic and political education of leaders, activists, and all facets of the population alike

so as to foster knowledge of democracy and human rights, as well as encourage greater political participation at this transformative time in the country's history.

Many of these organizations that concentrate on political and civic participation also promoted political party activities that ranged from drafting platforms to electoral campaigning and voter education (Foundation 2011). Local civil society organizations organized instructive workshops regarding the necessity of these skillsets and the transformative impact this knowledge could have in the country's political structure and culture. The Foundation for the Future, a non-profit organization centered on supporting civil society in the Middle East, further emphasized, "This is especially accurate since transforming the political culture of a society who is deeply engrained by practices built-up over forty-two years is one of the most difficult aspects of any post-conflict transition. A number of extensive civic education, and engagement awareness campaigns, at a local and national level are therefore essential components of any strategy to be implemented..." (2011).

Many of these likeminded organizations unified under the coalition of the Libyan Civil Society Organization (LCSO) to focus on social justice, equal opportunity, and effective and sustainable civic participation (Tripoli Post 2011). The alliance has remained incredibly active over the past several years and has worked to promote engagement and mobilization opportunities for all members of the population. Thus, this coalition of civil society organizations has become the frontrunner in campaigning for civic participation, human rights, transparency, and the deepening of democratic values in Libya.

Limitations of Libyan Civil Society

While the previous themes lie at the pinnacle of restructuring the political system and civic-state relations, these civil society organizations have been greatly limited in their impact throughout the country. Although they have served as the primary actors in fostering a sense of belonging and nationalism, many of these civil society organizations struggle with the absence of existing institutions and the ongoing political warfare and instability that continues to plague the country.

Many of these civil society organizations are newly established and have struggled with a lack of experience and adoption of a clear agenda (Foundation 2011). These groups require guidance and institutional support to determine organizational logistics, goals, and approaches; however, the political culture necessary to strengthen these organizations is only recently developing due to the absence of institutions prior to Qaddafi's overthrow. This has greatly impeded the ability of these groups to establish themselves and create coalitions as a result of the gradually emerging institutional support and political culture.

These civil society organizations also suffer from a lack of sufficient funding to play an integrated role in the rebuilding of the country. The majority of these groups rely solely on local donors and avoid foreign funding sources so as to retain their autonomy and preserve the intended mission of the organization (Foundation 2011). However, there is very little local funding available due to the lack of economic opportunity and declining conditions, which has resulted in hampered capacities in the transition process for Libyan civil society organizations.

Impact of the Ongoing Violence and Instability

Lastly, Libyan organizations are also deterred as a result of the ongoing violence and instability that plague the country, as in the case of Syria. Beginning in early 2012, clashes

erupted between former rebel forces and the National Transitional Council over the lack of significant political and economic transformation after the end of Qaddafi's rule (Gelvin 2012). Violence escalated over the following two years, culminating with the refusal of the General National Congress, the acting government, to disband despite the end of its mandate in 2014. Militia groups took to the streets and launched military assaults in Benghazi, which resulted in the resignation of the prime minister and further violence with the parliamentary elections in June 2014 (Al-Ghwell 2015).

The past several years of violence and instability have greatly restricted the progress of civil society organizations in restructuring the country. With the constant outbreaks of fighting and the deteriorating security system, Libyan organizations have had to resort to operating underground despite the provisions made to eliminate Qaddafi's restrictive policy regarding civil society. This instability has also forced these organizations to focus on the most urgent needs of the people during periods of civil unrest, namely in providing food, shelter, and medical supplies rather than concentrating on political participation, education, and empowerment. Thus, the role of Libyan civil society in the democratization process has been hindered by the lack of security due to the void in a legitimate political structure and the urgency in addressing civilians' basic needs.

Role of Libyan Political Structure and Political Culture

This variety of limitations that inhibit the success and strength of Libyan civil society organizations has greatly obstructed substantial progress and stabilization over the last several years. The void in an authoritative and legitimate political structure after the removal of Qaddafi has played a direct role in the restrictions and challenges that Libyan civil society organizations

have come to face since 2011. The absence of a stable political structure has inevitably resulted in ongoing instability and militia warfare, which has not only dominated the political system but also the nature of the political culture. The conditional relationship between the lack of a defined and legitimate political structure and the consequent political culture defined by instability and violence has proven to determine the environment for Libyan civil society organizations to work within, which ultimately has defined their limited and largely insignificant role thus far.

Impact of a Nonexistent Political Structure on Civil Society

The oppression and dictatorship of Muammar Qaddafi stifled the establishment of an auxiliary and favorable environment for Libyan civil society over the course of several decades. These organizations were impeded by the lack of a constitution, stable political system, and civil institution system. This authoritarian political structure also significantly influenced the political culture of the country, specifically in not allowing a place for the exchange of political opinions and perspectives or a framework for socialization and association. However, with the capture and killing of Qaddafi in 2011, a space in the political structure opened and provided the necessary legal framework for civil society to engage in civil-state relations (Foundation 2011).

While this change in political structure was initially considered promising for the country, neither a legitimate political system nor a redistribution of power has developed over the past several years since the Arab Spring. Although the National Transitional Council first took action in assuming power in Libya in 2011 and successfully transitioned to the General National Congress, there now exists an absence of a defined political structure and authoritative leadership within the country. The councils and transitional bodies have been unable to address the great void in power as the political structure began to lose its legitimacy in the eyes of the population

and civil warfare broke out. Freedom House Director of Middle East and North Africa programs, Charles Dunne, remarked, “Libya’s problems go even deeper as armed groups continue to play a destabilizing role in Libya politics. The crisis of security... has also been accompanied by a crisis of governance. The General National Congress is widely seen as paralyzed and unresponsive and key issues have faced serious delays. There are real costs to these crises...” (2013).

Conditional Relationship between Political Structure and Political Culture

With this forced removal of the regime in 2011, a power vacuum was created in Libya that allowed for a new executive leadership to take hold, as well as a legal framework for institutional reform. However, this transition was hindered by the lack of an existing political culture and auxiliary organizations to support a stable and sustainable shift. This ultimately forced Libyan civil society organizations to lay the foundation for a supportive political culture as they established themselves, which proved difficult in terms of experience, funding, and resources (Foundation 2011).

This process was also exacerbated due to the ongoing unstable nature of the political structure even after Qaddafi’s removal. Libya has come to be defined by a continuous state of civil unrest and armed warfare among militias due to the dominating power vacuum. There is a growing state of political chaos accompanied by a deteriorating security system within the country, which has challenged the public confidence in government institutions (Dunne 2013). This crisis in security has had a significant impact on the developing political culture of the country, specifically in that there is a distrust of institutions, a crisis of confidence in the government, and consequently decreased political participation.

Thus, it is evident that a stable and supportive political culture had yet to develop in Libya, which ultimately is necessary to strengthen the role of civil society in the processes of stabilization and democratization. President of the Benghazi Citizenship Forum for Democracy and Human Development, Aly Abuzaakouk acknowledged, “There is increasing skepticism of political parties attributed to forty-two years of indoctrination that partisan politics are undemocratic and treasonous. Forty-two years of indoctrination cannot be wiped out in one or two years. Parties have not yet learned how to work together... the consensual culture of democracy has not yet taken root in Libya” (2013).

This dependent linkage that has resulted in an adverse political culture has not only inhibited Libyan civil society organizations, but also those that have arisen in Syria since the Arab Spring. While both have been obstructed by the fragmentation of the political system and the continuous instability and warfare, these cases differ in the political structure and thus the causal role of civil society. In the case of Libya, the population was able to overthrow the tyrannical ruler and had a limited political space for civil society to take an active role; however, the previous lack of institutions under Qaddafi and the ongoing void in a legitimate political structure has greatly impeded the strength and impact of developing civil society organizations.

On the other hand, Syrian civil society organizations have not been able to oust President Assad’s oppressive regime and therefore do not have the necessary entry points in the legal framework to engage in civil-state relations. These organizations are forced to work entirely underground without basic resources and methods of communication. This has greatly restricted the political culture of the country, specifically in that it has failed to provide these organizations with the environment to develop and support the successful role of civil society in the stabilization and democratization processes.

There is an undeniable link between the political structure and political culture of a country, which ultimately lays the foundation for either the success or failure of civil society organizations. It can therefore be determined through this case of Libyan civil society that the relationship between the absence of a defined political structure in the transition after Qaddafi's removal and the political culture present for civil society organizations to work within has proven to be the primary factor in the strength and effectiveness, or lack thereof, of the developing Libyan civil society.

Conclusions

Similar to other Arab states in the region throughout the twentieth century, Libya was controlled by a despotic and corrupt regime that repressed political representation and engagement in civil-state relations. The country lived under deteriorating economic conditions and tyranny for decades until the wave of popular demonstrations and successful overthrow of authoritarian regimes in both Tunisia and Egypt provided the impetus for Libyans to come together and demand an end to Muammar Qaddafi's infamous regime.

After the successful removal of Qaddafi in 2011, Libyan civil society organizations were able to emerge during this time of political transition in the hopes of taking an active role in the establishment of the civic sphere and the eventual stabilization and democratization of the country. These organizations sprung up in exponential numbers since the uprisings and have come to engage in electoral monitoring, women's rights, civil liberties, civic education, and countless other spheres. Many have taken an increasingly active role in addressing the crucial needs and inherent rights of the population, specifically in female and youth empowerment, as well as in political and civic participation (Foundation 2011).

Nevertheless, while Libyans were able to overthrow the authoritarian regime, these civil society organizations have been significantly hindered in their role in the stabilization and democratization of the country. This is a result of the instrumental relationship between the political structure and political culture of the country and the consequent environment these factors create for the involvement of civil society.

Libya has not yet developed the necessary political culture to support and strengthen the role of civil society organizations as a result of the ongoing void in power and absence of a legitimate political structure. Thus, the environment necessary for civil society to play a successful role in stabilization and democratization has not yet arisen, which clarifies the hindered progress of Libyan civil society organizations over the past several years. This confirms the vital relationship between the political structure and political culture of a state, specifically in that the absence of a legitimate form of political authority does not provide the necessary involvement and supporting political culture to facilitate the successful impact of civil society organizations.

The Case of Tunisian Civil Society

With the spark of the Arab Spring in 2011 through Tunisian street vendor Mohamed Bouazizi's self-immolation, Tunisia initiated a movement that resonated deeply throughout the region. After decades of dissatisfaction with the corrupt dictatorship, the country came together to protest the oppression and lack of representation under the authoritarian rule. They united under the decisive call to overthrow Ben Ali's despotic regime and became the first country in the Arab Spring to take a stand against years of political, economic, and social injustices.

Throughout the course of the demonstrations, Tunisian civil society organizations arose and played a vital role in the mobilization and unification of the country in 2011. They united wide varieties of the population not only in overthrowing the authoritarian regime, but also in moving forward in the development of a new and democratic political system. These groups heightened their levels of involvement and collaboration after the successful removal of Ben Ali, and they ultimately were able to facilitate institutional reform and bridge the political landscape on unprecedented levels (Deane 2013).

Over the last several years, these organizations have come to play an invaluable role not only in merging the gap in opposing ideologies and groups in the political sphere, but also in laying the groundwork for a stable transition into a democratic and representative government. Thus, Tunisia is a leading example of a country in the Middle East that overthrew the authoritarian regime and is successfully on the path to establishing a new and democratic political structure through the successful role of civil society organizations over the last several years.

Role of Civil Society prior to the Arab Spring

Preceding Tunisia's vital role in igniting the Arab Spring demonstrations, Tunisians had long suffered from a lack of political voice and declining economic opportunities under President Ben Ali's fraudulent regime (Gelvin 2012). Corruption and a highly overbearing security apparatus dominated Tunisia's political structure, and the involvement of civil society was dictated by authoritarian control. The limited number of existing civil society organizations were severely monitored by the regime and restricted in purpose and activity; however, they were still able to benefit from the relatively unified and tolerant nature of Tunisian society, which greatly contrasted many other countries in the region (Foundation 2013).

This political environment was a result of Ben Ali's adoption of "selective liberalization" and a state-controlled civil society framework as a means to evade criticism regarding the country's lack of democratic institutions (Deane 2013). Thus, by the time of the Arab Spring in 2011, there was a limited presence of Tunisian civil society organizations that operated in a restrictive manner due to the nature of the authoritarian political structure.

Development of Civil Society throughout the Arab Spring

The Tunisian dissatisfaction regarding the authoritarian, corrupt, and unrepresentative regime also extended on a regional level throughout the Middle East. Thus, with the impetus of the international broadcasting of Tunisian street vendor Mohamed Bouazizi's self-sacrifice, a wave of demonstrations transpired in several countries to demand political representation and democratic political structures (Gelvin 2012).

While demonstrations quickly surfaced in Egypt, Yemen, and Libya, Tunisia executed its desire for change at an unrivaled pace with the help of civil society organizations. These groups were able to collectively organize various demographics and bridge the gap between a variety of

organizations around their opposition to the regime. They emphasized the inherent right to call for democratic change and political and socioeconomic freedoms as citizens, which facilitated a diverse and progressive unity of the Tunisian public (Deane 2013).

From the start of the demonstrations in late 2010, Tunisian civil society played an essential role not only in the organization and mobilization of the population, but also in the successful overthrow of the authoritarian regime just one month after the protests had begun (Gelvin 2012). These organizations unified to meet the needs of the population and came to facilitate the restructuring of state-society relations on a more engaging and inclusive level (Deane 2013). They assumed an instrumental role not only in implementing the necessary political and institutional reforms, but also in aiding the transition to establish a newly democratic Tunisian government and inclusive public sphere.

Role of Civil Society after the Removal of the Authoritarian Regime

After the success of the demonstrations and the removal of a decades-long corrupt regime, Tunisian activists, lawyers, and civil society leaders came together to establish an interim government and initiate the process of political and institutional development (Foundation 2013). The reforms led by civil society organizations began with constitutional reorganization, which entailed reallocating the unlimited power of the president to public representatives elected by the Tunisian people (Deane 2013). These developments came to center upon the primary concerns based upon past Tunisian authoritarian regimes, namely in corruption and electoral viability. Thus, the participating organizations established committees and institutionalized frameworks to address constitutional proceedings and future elections.

The first National Constituent Assembly was established in 2011 to facilitate the first free and fair elections in Tunisia, in which the En-Nahdha, or Renaissance, party won more than 41 percent of the vote (Deane 2013). With En-Nahdha's victory, Tunisia was to be governed primarily by the Islamist opposition party, which raised numerous qualms on an international level regarding the ideology and goals of the newly elected leadership. However, En-Nahdha united with two other parties after its triumph in the first election, the secular Congress for the Republic and the secular center party El-Takatol, or the Democratic Forum for Labor and Liberties (Deane 2013). Under this majority coalition, En-Nahdha not only worked to represent the wide array of Tunisian political perspectives, but also recognized the vital engagement of civil society organizations.

Strengthening of Civil Society through Laws of Association

The Islamist En-Nahdha party prioritized the linkage between Tunisian civil society and a democratic and inclusive government during this transitional period. Their efforts in engagement built upon the interim government's first action in 2011 in instituting new laws of association under the Higher Authority for the Realization of Revolutionary Objectives, Political Reform and the Democratic Transitions (ICNL 2012). These new laws detailed the specific freedoms and roles of civil society organizations, as well as provided greater accessibility for various facets of the population.

With these new provisions, there were countless new capabilities and intended responsibilities for Tunisian civil society organizations. According to International Alert Middle East Adviser Shelley Deane, "Civil society organizations are encouraged to testify, comment on, and influence pending government policy and legislation... Civil society organizations are now

free from oppressive legal impediments and obstructive state registration requirements, while donors and funders of civil society organizations are free from state pressures. Provision is made for associations to access information, evaluate the role of state institutions and submit proposals to improve performance, and organize meetings, conferences, demonstrations and all kinds of civic activities” (2013).

These amendments also specified that both domestic and foreign civil society groups have the ability to register with the Tunisian authorities under the newly established and progressive civil framework. Under these new laws, organizations would be able to maintain their independent mission and agenda and would also be granted significant autonomy in financial support (Deane 2013). While both domestic and foreign funding had previously required approval, the amended law of association declared that authorization was not necessary so long as the funding originated from countries with diplomatic ties to Tunisia (Brudzińska 2014).

These new laws ultimately aimed to provide greater opportunities and autonomy for Tunisian civil society organizations rather than to hinder the capacity of these groups as under Ben Ali’s dictatorship. Thus, the democratic transition in political structure in 2011 laid the groundwork for Tunisian civil society organizations to collectively reshape the country and transform the political culture, as well as facilitate the transition from an ingrained autocratic regime to a representative and democratic republic (Brudzińska 2014).

Growth and Advancement of Tunisian Civil Society

As a result of these positive protections, many new civil society organizations sprung up in Tunisia in the following years as other traditional civic groups magnified their scope and

involvement throughout the country. They worked to inform government decision makers and create a new political system centered on the mutual relationship between civil society organizations and state institutions. This network also focused on the rights of the individual and his or her guaranteed public participation, while also recognizing the right of association and assembly on both an individual and civil society level. These efforts inevitably led to a cooperative and inclusive environment and political culture that stimulated institutional change within the country (Deane 2013).

This developing network of Tunisian civil society organizations also came to gain extensive knowledge in how to best interact with the political structure of the country and coordinate each group's activities around unified objectives. Many of these organizations worked to rally behind representation and the restoration of social justice, as well as in relieving unemployment and regional inequalities (Deane 2013). They became connected under the precepts of economic and social demands for change and were able to establish countless coalitions, which was largely facilitated by the cooperation of activists and civil society groups on both a statewide and virtual level.

Many traditional civil society groups that had narrowly existed during Ben Ali's regime also welcomed greater involvement and took significant steps to facilitate the exchange of ideologies, resources, and different forms of dialogue within the new civil society-governmental relations. Organizations that range from the General Union of Tunisian Workers to the Tunisian League for Human Rights have fostered greater collaboration across a wide array of civil society organizations and advocated for political change and reform (Al-Youssoufi 2014). They have worked to create unparalleled levels of political participation and representation, as well as instill

a new “spirit of solidarity” to emphasize the necessity of freedom of association and community empowerment (Deane 2013).

These organizations have also worked to adopt their own levels of autonomy not only in purpose and involvement, but also in the international funding sphere. Many of these civil society organizations have avoided foreign funding sources as a means to maintain their own initiatives and goals (Deane 2013). They seek to maintain their own agenda and their “home-grown civil society initiatives” rather than becoming tied to international strategic interests as a result of outside funding. Nevertheless, while this growing network of civil society organizations has prioritized its right to autonomy under the new legal framework, there is still significant collaboration between Tunisian groups and international non-governmental organizations (Deane 2013).

Positive Role of Civil Society in the Political Transition

Other Tunisian civil society groups have arisen in response to the growing demand for new political bodies and institutions, namely in the electoral sphere. Tunisia’s political transition has necessitated supportive associations in both the political and civic spheres, and civil society organizations have adapted in purpose and strategy in order to facilitate the comprehensive election process (Deane 2013). Over the past several years, new political organizations have been established and coalitions have formed in order to encourage political participation, as well as monitor electoral probes and verify the official election count (National Democratic Institute 2014).

This sector of civil society has fostered a pluralistic nature in the establishment of the new Tunisian political system. The structure of the power-sharing coalition has provided greater

access for newly established civil society groups, promoting high levels of public participation and engagement. This involvement momentarily aided in publicizing the parliamentary elections and encouraging voter turnout through targeting various population groups, specifically regarding both women and youth (National Democratic Institute 2014).

With this developing political environment, Tunisia held its second round of parliamentary elections in October 2014 that were widely considered successful with seventy percent voter turnout (Ibish 2014). These elections were considered free and fair, and both politicians and civil society organizations alike encouraged voter participation without any form of intimidation or violence. Beji Caid Essebi, leader of the secular Nidaa Tounes party, took the victory with 85 seats in the People's Assembly, marking a peaceful transition in power from the Islamist En-Nahdha party (Marks 2014). Over the months following this monumental election, there was great progress and cooperation between the new government and civil society, and Tunisia put itself on track to being the single country that has been considered a success story since the Arab Spring (Zakaria 2014).

Role of Tunisian Political Structure and Political Culture

Many political scientists have come to question how civil society organizations were able to play an instrumental role in the stabilization and democratization of Tunisia and how this differs from various other cases of demonstrations throughout the Arab Spring. While some argue that economic factors or international influences play a principal role, it is evident that the political structure of Tunisia and its transition from an authoritarian regime to a freely elected parliament was the primary determinant in strengthening the role and involvement of civil society organizations.

In the case of Tunisia, the existing political structure was and continues to be the crucial factor in the success and strength of civil society organizations. This is attributed to the conditional relationship that exists between the political structure of a state and its political culture (Pateman 1971). Under the authoritarian reign of dictator Ben Ali, Tunisian civil society organizations were present, yet operated in very limited and restricted forms and were unable to bolster the necessary level of support to facilitate democratic change. However, with the removal of Ben Ali and the transition into a democratically elected parliamentary system, civil society organizations have been able to assume an indispensable role in the political structure of Tunisia and transform the political culture of the population.

Impact of a Strong Parliamentary System on Civil Society

Through this restructuring of a strong representative assembly, power has been distributed throughout the Tunisian political system over negotiations and the development of formal codes, laws, and regulations (Deane 2013). This has provided an open environment for independent political institutions and civil society organizations to access the government. As International Alert Dr. Shelley Deane states, “The structure of the political system shapes the way civil society organizations act. A strong parliamentary system tends to have fewer barriers to entry for civil society organizations, with fewer restrictions and regulations on civil society organizations, activities and funding sources... In a strong parliamentary system of government, civil society organizations are more likely to be viewed as agents who can inform government by articulating the preferences of civil society.” (2013).

This new presence of a strong parliamentary structure in Tunisia has fostered greater access points for civil society organizations with fewer restrictions and regulations on their

activities and funding resources. Tunisians have been able to target investment in institutional reform and have evaluated the role of state institutions as a means to improve their effectiveness and performance throughout a wide array of civic activities (Deane 2013). This stable balance and distribution of power has allowed for a more fertile terrain for pluralism, which ultimately has laid the foundation for institutions and civil society organizations to strengthen the country's democratic transition (Zakaria 2014).

Conditional Relationship between Political Structure and Political Culture

Despite this linkage between the political structure and political culture, some political scientists continue to question how Tunisia's success story differs from those of other Arab Spring states who were able to overthrow the authoritarian ruler, but were still unable to facilitate the successful involvement of civil society organizations in the stabilization and democratization processes, namely in the case of Egypt (Zakaria 2014). The difference between the successful impact of Tunisian civil society in the democratization process as compared to the Egyptian failure is a direct result of the respective political structures of the countries and the corresponding level of freedoms and involvement of the political culture.

In examining the case of Egypt, the Islamist Muslim Brotherhood party won the first parliamentary election after the removal of dictator Hosni Mubarak, as in the case of En-Nahdha in Tunisia. Upon taking power, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood sought complete control of the country and continuously resorted to authoritarian tactics throughout its short-lived rule. Little progress or development had occurred in terms of the political structure of the country, and just one year after taking power, the Muslim Brotherhood was overthrown in July of 2013 after another great wave of protests and civil unrest.

On the other hand, the Islamist En-Nahdha party won a plurality of the votes in Tunisia and consequently shared power under a coalition with a wider array of parties as a precept of the newly established parliamentary assembly. This transition to a system of power sharing and pluralism inevitably provided Tunisian secular parties with the opportunity to voice their opinions, as well as obtain a majority in future elections. Consequently, these sentiments regarding the new political framework provided the Tunisian public with the hope and confidence that their vote would be represented, which greatly influenced the political culture of the state (Zakaria 2014).

While some argue that the significant contrast between Egypt and Tunisia in the success of the political transitions was a result of the ideologies of the Islamist parties, it is evident that the political structure of each respective country was the primary determinant in the political culture in both Egypt and Tunisia, which establishes the foundation for civil society involvement. Thus, the combination of Tunisia's shift to a strong parliamentary system in political structure and the corresponding increase in governmental confidence and involvement within the political culture was essential to the success and strength of civil society organizations within the country.

Conclusions

After four years of efforts to establish a new political system and a framework for civil society and state institutions to co-evolve, Tunisia has successfully held two rounds of parliamentary elections and is adapting in its transition into a democratic government. It currently stands as the sole success story of the Arab Spring demonstrations, specifically in that Tunisian political leaders, activists, students, and countless facets of the population united under

civil society organizations to overthrow the authoritarian regime and pave the way to democratization.

Tunisian civil society organizations have played a vital role in the transition from Ben Ali's corrupt and authoritarian regime to the newly developing and freely elected parliamentary system. The transformation in the political structure of the country from an autocratic executive to a strong parliament provided Tunisian civil society with greater opportunities and freedoms in shaping the new civil-state relations. Through these increased entry points, they were able to transform the political culture of the country to support institutional reform and enhanced political participation, which culminated in the facilitation of the country's first free and fair parliamentary elections in 2014.

This successful involvement on behalf of Tunisian civil society organizations was initially possible as a result of the transition in political structure. This transition did not simply entail the overthrow of an authoritarian ruler, but rather the restructuring of the political leadership, namely in the shift from an authoritarian regime dominated by the executive leadership to a strong parliamentary assembly. Tunisia's new parliamentary system has allowed for parties to govern by coalitions and power sharing approaches, which has fostered unprecedented levels of pluralism and cooperation. This shift in the political structure ultimately transformed the political culture of the country and provided Tunisian civil society organizations with the foundation to take an active and integrated approach in aiding the democratization process. Thus, the development of a supportive political culture is contingent on a country's political structure, and this relationship is the primary factor in determining the relative strength and impact of civil society organizations.

V. Conclusions

As quests for democratization and the upholding of inherent human rights have turned violent with no end in sight, the potential role of civil society organizations has evolved as a major facet of conflict resolution. Civil society organizations have come to play a successful role in the aftermath of conflicts that span from Eastern Europe to Latin America, namely in emphasizing community-based contributions to peace building and laying the foundation for democracy and individual empowerment (Belloni 2001).

However, as armed conflicts have developed in increasing numbers throughout the Middle East, the role of civil society organizations has been greatly hindered in serving as a driving force for democratization. The relative strength of these organizations is dependent on a variety of factors, which include the role of socioeconomic development, the existing political environment, and international influences (Bailer, Bodenstein, and Heinrich 2009).

Each of these factors has the potential to influence the strength of civil society organizations in the stabilization and democratization processes; however, this study has come to examine the relationship between the political structure and political culture as the primary factor in determining the role of civil society organizations in both conflict-ridden and post-conflict Middle Eastern countries in the last several years.

This relationship between the political structure and political culture is instrumental in establishing the environment for civil society organizations to arise and assist in the process of development and stabilization. The political structure of a country determines the patterns of interaction within a political system and the regulations, laws, and norms present. It ultimately determines the role of the corresponding political culture and institutions, which incorporates the set of attitudes and practices held by a people that shapes their political behavior (Cohen 1994).

Therefore, a political structure that fosters action-orienting ideals and encourages political participation can facilitate a political culture that expands the existing rights, democratic institutions, and social solidarity for the population (Deane 2013).

In this study, I selected three case studies of countries in the Middle East that each experienced a rise in the number and activity of civil society organizations prompted by the events of the Arab Spring. I examined the existence of civil society organizations alongside each country's respective political structure and consequent political culture both before and after the Arab Spring, as well as the relative strength and limitations of these organizations. From the role of civil society in these three case studies, I conclude that the conditional relationship between the political structure and political culture of each case study is the primary determinant of the strength of civil society organizations in the stabilization and democratization processes.

Impact of the Conditional Relationship between Political Structure and Political Culture

The application of this relationship is instrumental to the role of civil society organizations throughout various phases of conflict and post-conflict transitions. As seen in Syria, Libya, and Tunisia, the status of each country's respective political culture is dependent on the political structure of the country. In all three of these cases, an authoritarian regime had reigned over the country for extended periods of time, each with a tyrannical ruler. This dictated the political structure of each country, namely in establishing the oppressive manner in which the government ruled over the people and stifled participation and opposition.

The respective political structures that had long been ingrained in Syria, Libya, and Tunisia served as the primary determinant in how the social sphere developed, namely the political culture. Because of the authoritarian and corrupt nature of these regimes, there was a significant

lack of space and legal provisions for socialization, association, and organized forms of communication, all of which encompass the political culture. Organizations and institutions did not have accessibility to engage in state-society relations under the authoritarian political structures, which created an absence of independent civil society organizations for several decades.

However, the Arab Spring provided the impetus for civil society organizations in Syria, Libya, and Tunisia to rise up as a means to advocate for democratic change and assist in bringing an end to the authoritarian regimes. They multiplied with the wave of demonstrations in each of these cases and have worked for the past several years to provide the necessary services and resources depending on the greatest needs and priorities of the respective populations.

While these civil society organizations were able to grow and engage in shaping civil-state relations during the period of transition, both Syrian and Libyan organizations were greatly limited in their involvement, while Tunisian organizations were successful in assisting the stabilization and democratization of the country. This differentiation in the role of civil society is a consequent result of the relationship between the political structure and culture of each of these cases. The political structures of both Syria and Libya have determined the political climate and institutions of each country, specifically in the nature of Syria's authoritarian and repressive regime and Libya's significant lack of a legitimate political framework. These structures have contributed to ongoing instability and warfare and have ultimately not provided the necessary norms, roles, practices, and competencies for a supportive political culture to take place. Thus, civil society has been greatly impeded in progress towards stabilization and democratization within these two cases as a result of this conditional relationship.

On the other hand, in the case of Tunisia, the transition to a strong parliamentary political

structure after the Arab Spring opened up the space for socialization, association, and organized forms of communication within society. This allowed for a political culture that facilitated public participation and pluralistic ideals, which came to provide Tunisian civil society organizations with the foundation to play an active and successful role in the stabilization and democratization process.

Some American scholars have argued that a variety of factors individually influence the strength of civil society organizations, such as the independent role of political culture in the “bottom-up” approach of civic engagement (Putnam 1995); or in contrast, the sole impact of political institutions in influencing civil society in the “top-down” approach (Skocpol and Fiorina 1999). Focusing on these contesting theories in isolation from each other has yielded inconclusive results on an international scale and ultimately overlooks the vital conditional relationship that leads to a strong civil society (Bailer, Bodenstein, and Heinrich 2009). Thus, this study determines that the competing bottom-up and top-down approaches must be viewed in conjunction with each other—specifically in terms of the causal relationship between the political structure and political culture—in order to examine the consequent political, social, and economic environment that determines the role of civil society.

Moving Forward

The conclusions reached regarding the relationship between political structure and political culture and its impact on the role of civil society are based on the studies of only three countries in the Middle East. Each of these cases is characterized by a different political structure and consequent political culture, and accordingly has resulted in varying levels of success in the role of civil society organizations. There are limitations to this study, namely in

the subjectivity regarding the relative strength and success of civil society organizations. A scale to measure the scope, breadth, and collective activities of civil society organizations has not yet been adapted in the region and research is limited in empirical information. There is also restricted access to information because the work of these civil society organizations frequently cannot be made public due to the nature of the regimes.

Future research will ideally include additional case studies of various other countries in the region and the role that civil society organizations play in stabilization and democratization. Further examples of successful civil society involvement could be analyzed in comparison to those cases in which civil society organizations have been limited, which can also be extended on an international scale. Studying cases throughout history and other regions of the world in both conflict-ridden and post-conflict areas may provide more information about the conditional relationship between political structure and culture and how to best facilitate the future successful role of civil society organizations.

Thus, this study concludes that the dependent relationship between the political structure and political culture is the primary factor in determining the role of civil society in the stabilization and democratization processes. The critical connection between the two factors determines the nature of the political environment for civil society and can either result in an adverse and encumbering system, or rather a supportive and accessible framework for successful civil society involvement.

VI. References

- Abuzaakouk, Aly. 2013. "The Role of Civil Society in Libya's Transition." *Project on Middle East Democracy*. August 7, 2013. <http://pomed.org/featured-content/event-notes/pomed-notes-the-role-of-civil-society-in-libyas-transition-2/> (November 10, 2014).
- Ahmado, Nisan. 2013. "Civil Society in Syria: A Milestone for Sustainable Peace." *Building Peace*. September 2013. <http://buildingpeaceforum.com/2013/09/civil-society-in-syria-a-milestone-for-sustainable-peace/> (December 13, 2014).
- Atassi, Basma. 2014. "Explaining the Geneva II Peace Talks on Syria." *Al-Jazeera*. January 19, 2014. <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2014/01/explaining-geneva-ii-peace-talks-syria-2014118142853937726.html> (August 3, 2014).
- Bailer, Stefanie, Thilo Bodenstein, and V. Finn Heinrich. 2009. "What Makes Civil Society Strong? Testing Bottom-up and Top-down Theories of a Vibrant Civil Society." *Conference of the Swiss Political Science Association* (January).
- Belloni, Roberto. 2001. "Civil Society and Peacebuilding in Bosnia and Herzegovina." *Journal of Peace Research* 38 (2): 163-180.
- Brandenburg, Rachel. 2014. "Syria's Civil Society: Wael Sawah on the Push for Influence." *United States Institute of Peace*, February 27, 2014. <http://www.usip.org/olivebranch/syria-s-civil-society-wael-sawah-the-push-influence> (June 23, 2014).
- Brudzińska, Kinga. 2014. "Support for NGOs in Tunisia after the Arab Spring." Polish Institute of International Affairs. May 8, 2014. <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?ots591=0c54e3b3-1e9c-be1e-2c24-a6a8c7060233&lng=en&id=180051> (December 10, 2014).
- Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. 2012. "Building the Syrian State." September 28,

2012. <http://carnegieendowment.org/2012/09/28/building-syrian-state> (August 2, 2014).
- Cohen, Jean L. 1994. *Civil Society and Political Theory*. Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press.
- Daleel Madani. 2014. "Najda Now International." <http://daleel-madani.org/profile/najda-now-international> (July 20, 2014).
- Damascus Center for Human Rights Studies. 2014. <http://www.dchrs.org/english/news.php?aboutus> (July 20, 2014).
- Deane, Shelly. 2013. "Transforming Tunisia: The Role of Civil Society in Tunisia's Transition." *International Alert*. <http://www.international-alert.org/sites/default/files/publications/Tunisia2013EN.pdf> (October 10, 2014).
- Dorner, Wolfgang, and Regina A. List. 2012. *Civil Society, Conflict, and Violence*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Dunne, Charles. 2013. "The Role of Civil Society in Libya's Transition." *Project on Middle East Democracy*. August 7, 2013. <http://pomed.org/featured-content/event-notes/pomed-notes-the-role-of-civil-society-in-libyas-transition-2/> (November 10, 2014).
- Every Syrian. 2014. http://www.everysyrian.org/#!about_us/csgz (July 25, 2014).
- Fischer, Martina. 2006. "Civil Society in Conflict Transformation: Ambivalence, Potentials and Challenges." Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management. October 2006. http://edoc.vifapol.de/opus/volltexte/2011/2566/pdf/fischer_cso_handbook.pdf (June 10, 2014).
- Foundation for the Future. 2011. "Assessing Needs of Civil Society in Libya." November, 2011. <http://www.foundationforfuture.org/en/Portals/0/PDFs/ASSESSING%20NEEDS%20OF%20CIVIL%20SOCIETY%20IN%20LIBYA.pdf> (September 10, 2014).

Foundation for the Future. 2013. "Study on Civil Society Organizations in Tunisia." January 2013.

<http://www.foundationforfuture.org/en/Portals/0/Publications/Etude%20SC%20english%20Version%20Finale.pdf> (August 29, 2014).

Gelvin, John. 2012. *The Arab Uprisings*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Al-Ghwell, Hafed. "Libya is Now Beyond Any Easy Solutions." Atlantic Council. February, 19, 2015. <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/libya-is-now-beyond-any-easy-solutions> (February 19, 2015).

Gritten, David. 2011. "Key Figures in Libya's Rebel Council." BBC News: Africa. August 25, 2011. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-12698562> (September 5, 2014).

Hadenius, Axel and Fredrik Uggla. 1996. "Making Civil Society Work, Promoting Democratic Development: What Can States and Donors Do?" *World Development* 24, no. 10 (1996): 1621-1639.

Hamid, Shadi. 2010. "Civil Society in the Arab World and the Dilemma of Funding." Brookings Institute, October 2010.

<http://www.brookings.edu/research/articles/2010/10/middle-east-hamid> (June 20, 2014).

Hawthorne, Amy. 2004. "Middle Eastern Democracy: Is Civil Society the Answer?" *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Papers*, Number 44.

<http://carnegieendowment.org/files/CarnegiePaper44.pdf> (August 10, 2014).

Hokayem, Emile. 2013. *Syria's Uprising and the Fracturing of the Levant*. New York: Routledge.

Ibish, Hussein. 2014. "Tunisia's Triumph." *Ibishblog*. October 28, 2014.

<http://ibishblog.com/2014/10/28/2074/> (December 10, 2014).

- International Center for Non-Profit Law (ICNL). 2012. "Global Trends in NGO Law."
<http://www.icnl.org/research/trends/trends3-1.html> (November 10, 2014).
- IRIN: Humanitarian News and Analysis. "Libya: Civil Society Breaks Through." August 16, 2011. <http://www.irinnews.org/report/93513/libya-civil-society-breaks-through> (September 28, 2014).
- Libya CDGP. 2013. "H2O Organization: Engaging Youth." <http://libyacdgp.com/2013/10/h2o-organization-engaging-youth/> (November 10, 2014).
- Lipset, S. M. 1959. "Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy." *American Political Science Review* 53, no. 1 (1959): 69-105.
- Marks, Monica. 2014. "The Tunisian Election Result Isn't Just a Victory for Secularism over Islam." *The Guardian*. October 29, 2014.
<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/oct/29/tunisian-election-result-secularism-islamism-nidaa-tounes-ennahda> (December 10, 2014).
- National Democratic Institute. 2014. "Tunisia." August 2014. <https://www.ndi.org/tunisia> (December 10, 2014).
- Pateman, Carole. 1971. "Political Culture, Political Structure and Political Change." *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 1, No. 3: 291-305.
- Petré, Christine. 2014. "Civil Society Struggles for Greater Role in Libya's Transition." *Middle East Monitor*. October 17, 2014.
<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/articles/africa/14712-civil-society-struggles-for-greater-role-in-libyas-transition> (November 3, 2014).

- Putnam, Robert. 1995. "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital." *Journal of Democracy* (January 1995): 65-78.
<http://archive.realtor.org/sites/default/files/BowlingAlone.pdf> (August 10, 2014)
- Ruiz de Elvira, Laura. 2013. "The Syrian Civil Society in the Face of Revolt." October 2013.
<http://lettre.ehess.fr/6410?file=1> (June 28, 2014).
- Schofer, Evan and Wesley Longhofer, 1999. *Structural Sources*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Serwer, Daniel. 2014. "The Role of Civil Society in Syria." *Peacefare.net*. April 1, 2014.
<http://www.peacefare.net/?p=19279> (June 25, 2014).
- Skocpol, Theda and Morris P. Fiorina, eds. 1999. *Civic Engagement in American Democracy*. Washington: Brookings Institution Press.
- van Tongeren, Paul (ed.) 1998. *Prevention and Management of Violent Conflicts. An International Directory*. Utrecht: European Platform for Conflict Transformation.
- The Tripoli Post. 2011. "Libyan Civil Society Group Calls for Transparency, Accountability in Government Dealings." December 20, 2011.
<http://www.tripolipost.com/articledetail.asp?c=1&i=7521> (November 10, 2014).
- Watan. 2014. "The Centre for Syrian Freedoms." <http://www.watansyria.org/en/category/horiat/>
 (July 20, 2014).
- Yacoubian, Mona. 2014. "Lessons Learned for Stabilization in Syria." *Stimson Center*.
http://www.stimson.org/images/uploads/Lessons_Learned_for_Stabilization_in_Syria.pdf
 (July 28, 2014).
- Al-Youssoufi, Hala. 2014. "Tunisia Labor Union Serves as Political Mediator." *Al-Monitor*.
 March 14, 2014. <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/politics/2014/03/tunisia-labor-union->

political-balance.html (December 10, 2014).

Zaitouneh, Razan, 2012. "Darayya's Women Step Forward." July 20, 2012.

<https://damascusbureau.org/en/3927> (July 25, 2014).

Zakaria, Fareed. "Tunisia's Civil Society as a Success Story." *Newsmax*. October 31, 2014.

[http://www.newsmax.com/FareedZakaria/Cairo-Egypt-Middle-East-](http://www.newsmax.com/FareedZakaria/Cairo-Egypt-Middle-East-Tunisia/2014/10/31/id/604387/)

[Tunisia/2014/10/31/id/604387/](http://www.newsmax.com/FareedZakaria/Cairo-Egypt-Middle-East-Tunisia/2014/10/31/id/604387/) (November 22, 2014).